



## HOW TO USE ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE WASHINGTON FOREIGN LAW SOCIETY (WFLS) TO NETWORK

Thank you for attending the panel on networking at the International Legal Careers Symposium organized by GULC and GW Law LL.M or watching the recording. Feel free to visit our website at [www.wfls.org](http://www.wfls.org), check out past and upcoming events and become a member if you wish to be further involved with the Society's activities. Students pay only \$25 to become a member.

Here is a summary of the tips shared on February 4, 2021.

Why network?

- a. The job you will have in five to ten years may not yet exist, being involved with organizations opens horizons and alerts you to new fields of practice. New areas of the law may be more welcoming to foreigners/people with a non-traditional career path than established areas of the law.
- b. Camaraderie, especially now that we are more at home during the pandemic.
- c. Provides you with a reality check in terms of your ambitions/chosen career path and puts you in touch with people who are looking for employees with your skill set.
- d. Networking goes in both directions: you might end up helping the person you reached out to, before getting helped, and this is a good situation to be at.

Adapt to the country where you are networking. For instance, in the USA, always attach your CV when sending someone an email asking for an "informational interview". Keep it short and to-the-point. Ask for a short (15') informational telephone interview not Zoom, which is more intrusive.

Focus on what you are bringing to the table, not on what people can do for you. Things naturally flow from there. Do not think in term of a transaction, but more to establish a long-term connection with the person.

Even if you contact a person for the position she/he is currently in, try not to focus on that position only, but instead look at the person as a human being who might have had the same struggles you are having in establishing her/his career.

When you join an organization, roll up your sleeves and volunteer to help with logistics and the like. This will put you in touch with many people and will be an opportunity to show that you are a doer.

Attend online seminars dealing with topics that might interest you and then send LinkedIn invitations to connect with any speakers whom you found interesting. When sending a LinkedIn request, add a little note as to why you would like to be connected with that person.

When going to an in-person meeting, plan to arrive early and leave late so that you can have conversations with people who are there.

Do your homework before approaching someone. Read up on what they have done and/or their organization. This helps to establish a connection. Avoid overdoing it, it might be perceived as stalking!

Do not be shy. Networking is a common practice in the USA, and more often than not people are more available and happier to chat with you than you might think – so it's always a good idea to send that email or that invitation on LinkedIn. The worst that can happen is that you don't get a reply; and even in that case, it might be because the person you reached out to missed your email (or it ended up in the spam folder).

When writing to someone, make sure that there are no spelling/grammar mistakes in your email. Make sure to spell the name of all recipients correctly.

Before you finish the conversation with a new contact, ask whom else they suggest you talk to. Doing such can have an exponential effect.

Always circle back to the people who have helped you. When people help you, they always want to hear back from you.