

Topic 6 - Success in your career rests on a three-legged stool

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Your career represents a three-legged stool. You need all three legs to have a strong foundation, which allows you to succeed and manage any setbacks.

First leg: credentials. This is your education and degrees. For many, where they obtained their degree is a key driver for the types of opportunities that exist after graduation. We see this (especially in the US) where so many people are drawn to “big name” schools to obtain their degree.

Second leg: experience. This is the expertise and/or skill that you bring. The longer you work in your profession, the more experience you gain.

Third leg: network. This is the part that you don’t really learn in school. But it’s so important because this is what sets you up for success as your career develops and progresses.

Why is your network important?

- Transitions. Very few people stay at their first job until retirement. Your network will help you when making a transition. That means maintaining contact with mentors, classmates, friends, former colleagues, and current or former bosses. All of these people can assist when you’re ready to make a transition.
- Business Development. If part of your job entails generating business, connections are (obviously) important. But even if you don’t generate business, connections can assist you in your job by giving you someone to “bounce ideas off of,” or brainstorm.
- Service to the Community. People in your network can provide volunteer/pro bono opportunities.
- Resiliency. Your network provides support. Sometimes this is a person that acts as a cheerleader, or maybe it’s someone that is promoting you to others. People in your network are there for you when you need professional (and even sometimes personal) mentoring.

Questions for discussion:

--Which of these legs do you think is most important to career success?

--Which is the hardest for you (with respect to career success)?

--Which is the easiest for (with respect to career success)?

--How do you build your external personal/professional network?