

BUILDING UP YOUR NETWORK

WHAT DOES BUILDING A PROFESSIONAL NETWORK MEAN TO YOU?

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT?

WHEN SHOULD I START NETWORKING?

HOW COMFORTABLE ARE YOU WITH THE CONCEPT OF NETWORKING?

These are key questions that all emerging professionals must answer for themselves as they pursue their goals. The wisdom of elders who have successfully passed this stage in their careers is always helpful. In this issue of Emergence, we discuss these topics with four emerging professionals who successfully navigated them. Their perspectives are definitely worth sharing.

All the participants in this conversation, have seen the positive effects of early networking in their careers. Starting to network, while still in school, had an incredible impact on their career trajectory. Networking is beyond making cold connections to seek a job. Both Monique and Magdalena agree that it is about building genuine and strong relationships based on friendship. You should start networking early on in your path. Monique started building up her network unintentionally while still in school. She began connecting with people as she pursued her interests and passions. She believes it starts with just getting to know people. After that, you can develop a genuine and strong relationship, at which point you can seek them out as a mentor. Magdalena started to build her network during her second year in college. This started when she actively engaged with ASLA student chapter. She believes that it starts with building relationships in a social way.

Angelica and Mercedes both emphasize on the value of volunteering. Angelica believes that you can start in your local community. Identify their needs and find ways to lend your skills to help them solve their problems. To Angelica, building a network is akin to the design process. It is iterative and requires a positive attitude. Mercedes finds it quite helpful to get engaged in events and gatherings related to your areas of interest, then set a goal for yourself to communicate with people at all levels and voice your goals. She also sees strong value in virtual networking via Linked-In.

These young professionals have shared what they have learned from their past experiences and have important messages for you:

Build friendships first. You need to make authentic relationships beyond cold connections. Then stay connected! Your connections become part of your system of resources that you constantly and genuinely interact with. There should be mutual respect in the relationship. Just as you see value in them, they will see value and potential in you. Those who you enjoy hearing from and seeing at conferences are ultimately who you should feel comfortable seeking out to get help from.

Be confident and bold. At times, emerging professionals can be undervalued or underrepresented, especially if they are minorities. Avoid comparing yourself unfairly to your peers. Be confident from the beginning and share your small successes to improve your professional self-esteem.

Stay professional. Be prepared for the struggles of the design industry. Stay focused on your path. Take all the praise and all the criticism with professionalism.

Do a lot of selfcare! In the beginning of your career you may need to adjust to a wide range of situations to show your competence and capabilities. Take things at your own pace and do not overstretch yourself. Be intentional about the number of opportunities you accept and protect your mental wellbeing to avoid burnout. Burnout is not an urban legend. It is real and it happens to those 2 year in and 20 years in, if you do not take the proper preventative measures.

Believe that it will pay off. It is easy to get discouraged at the beginning because success is not something tangible. Consider the iterative nature of networking and the time and patience it needs. Believe that step-by-step, you will be able to create a safety net through which you can handle challenging professional conditions in your path to success.



Magdalena Aravena is a landscape designer with Lamar Johnson Collaborative, and an active leader and advocate for ASLA based in Illinois. She earned her Bachelor of Landscape Architecture from the University of California at Davis in 2015. She is passionate about exploring the role that landscape architecture plays in improving disadvantaged communities through education, advocacy, and collaborative design.



Monique Bassey is from California, and is a landscape designer at SmithGroup. She earned both her Bachelor of Architecture and Master of Landscape Architecture from the University of Arizona in 2011 and 2014. She is an active leader in the field of landscape architecture and is currently the Vice President of the ASLA Northern California Chapter and serves on ASLA Committee of Education as well as Policy Committee.



Angelica Rockquemore is a planner and landscape designer at HHF Planners based in Honolulu, Hawaii. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology from Pacific University in 2010, and her Master of Landscape Architecture from the University of Washington in 2014. Having served on the ASLA National Diversity Summit from 2015-2017, Rockquemore is also a leading voice advancing the American Society of Landscape Architecture's goal of drawing more African American and Hispanic practitioners into the field.



Mercedes Ward is a registered landscape architect at NYC Parks & Recreation. She earned her Bachelor of Landscape Architecture from Penn State University in 2011. She has experience in updating and redesigning neighborhood parks and playgrounds in Brooklyn, New York, as well as contract and construction management for these projects. She had previously worked on residential environmental and economic sustainability initiatives for New York City.

With the Conference on Landscape Architecture fast approaching, these are a few of the events we'll be attending. Consider adding them to your calendar.

Landscapes With an Edge

Friday November 15, 2019
1:30 pm - 3:00 pm

Student Climate Crisis Forum
Room 24 BC

Friday, November 15, 2019
5:15pm - 6:00 pm

Allies, Advocates, and Stakeholders:
Building Up Women in Landscape

Saturday November 16, 2019
2:00 pm - 3:00 pm