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Women can build professional networks





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Established professionals often tout the importance of building strong networks. In fact, a 2017 global survey from LinkedIn found that nearly 80 percent of professionals consider professional networking to be important to their career success.

Professionals may see networking as a great way to land their next job, but establishing strong networks can pay dividends even for those people who have no immediate plans to leave their current companies. Small Business BC, a resource that caters to entrepreneurs in British Columbia, notes that successful networking can lead to referrals and new partnerships and raise the profiles of professionals and the companies they work for. The LinkedIn survey supports that notion, noting that one-quarter of professionals across the globe have established new business partnerships through LinkedIn Messaging. Of course, networking often helps people find new jobs as well, as the LinkedIn survey also found that 70 See **NETWORKS** on Page 3

TIMES NEWS

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NETWORKS

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percent of people hired in 2016 found work at companies where they had existing connections.

Women can employ strategies various build strong networks and maintain those networks once connections are established.

1. Join professional organizations.

Professional organizations provide great networking opportunities, serving as avenues to begin new business relationships. Many such organizations host annual conferences, and attending these conferences can help women maintain the relationships they develop through their participation in these groups. That's an important benefit, as the LinkedIn sur-



they find it hard to stay in touch with their network.

2. Offer help as much as vou seek it.

The LinkedIn survey found that only 48 percent of professionals keep in touch with their networks when things are going well in their career. By reaching out to a vey found that 38 percent network when things are of professionals admitted going well, women are

showing a willingness to offer help as much as seek it. That can lead to stronger, more easily maintained networks.

3. Schedule networking each week.

Build networking into your weekly schedule. Even the busiest professionals can find time each week to email someone

in their network to see how things are going or share updates on previous collaborations. That's a quick and easy way to maintain connections.

The value of networking is undeniable. Women can take various steps to build strong networks and maintain those relationships for years to

Like an Old Fashioned **Country Store**

Stoves n Stuff on Rt. 309 in South Tamaqua recently expanded their product offerings to include farmhouse and country décor, unique gifts, seasonal decorations, amish furniture and specialty food products, offered under their new Country Hearth and Home branding. The idea for this new concept came about when co-owner Pete Carmean's wife Doreen, the business' Office Manager, was looking to decorate the hearths and mantles for the many fireplaces on display. "She created so many nice displays that people were looking to buy them so we felt that it was something new we could add to the business that people were looking for. We both love farmhouse décor and old country stores so we started bringing in products not only to decorate and sell but also to give

Comfy, rustic rocking chairs, in bear motif, greet customers when they enter the store along with a large display of seasonal decorations on amish-made, barn board cabinets. Just off to the Gum, Pop Rocks, Sour Gummies and Laffy Taffy. The love of old time country store fare led to some unique products such as Cooke Tavern Soups, Thompson's Candles and the Great San Saba River Pecan Company. Cooke Tavern offers all natural, dry soup mixes with flavors like Yankee Doodle Chicken Noodle, Blacksmiths Black Bean Chili and Barn Raising Country Vegetable. Thompson's Candles are artisan crafted, super scented candles offering fragrances such as banana nut bread, butter rum and grandma's cookies. The Great San Saba River Company, a family owned pecan farm located in San Saba, Texas, uses their fresh pecans to create delicious pecan popcorn and pecan pie in a jar as well as toppings and preserves.

A stroll around the store reveals an old time country store like range

merchandise; braided rugs, trivets and coasters from Capitol Earth Rugs, napkins, placemats and throws from the Country House Collection, a full assortment of seasonal house flags, garden flags and doormats from Briarwood Lane, Crow Canyon spotted enamelware and much more. Unique gift ideas include Dalin Intarsia Wall Art, in which artisans cut, carve and shape exotic woods to make pictorial artwork including the Big Bear in the Forest and Deer In the Woods, and Willie Bear Collectibles, like Willie Bear Hammocking and Wille Bear Carrying Canoe. A popular favorite has been the Goat Milk Soap and Lotion by Fresh and Fancy from the farm, with Coco Mango, Butt Naked and, of course, Monkey Farts being the top sellers. Farmhouse décor is a constant but displays change with each season; as the

Christmas and Winter Season winds down Spring displays take over, and later on Americana and Fall decorations and merchandise fill the store. "Our customers have really taken to it," Carmean reported. "It's very gratifying to see people come in and just wander the store to look at all the great stuff we've brought in. My wife picks out everything herself (with limited interference from me!). It's really created a unique shopping experience and we're glad that it has been so well received." Stoves n Stuff Country Hearth & Home, still the area's best source for alternative heating products, stove and fireplaces, but now a great place to shop for both home and hearth.



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How to break into consulting









Many older adults choose to trade in the regular hours of 9 to 5 when they retire to delve into a much more personally guided passion: consulting.

Generally speaking, consulting is a term loosely given to providing business advice and sharing expertise without working directly for a company. Consultants lend their knowledge and flair for problem-solving to guide companies on topics such as marketing, operational improvement and even staffing, according to My Consulting Offer. Consultants do not often work for the company they are assisting, but may be brought in on a contractual basis for a set period of time. The Balance: Money advises that consultants typically can earn more per hour as consultants than they would if they were actual staff members on payroll.

Consulting may attract seniors considering retirement because of the flexibility it provides. Retirees unsure about how to get started in the field of consulting can consider this rundown of what it takes to pursue this option.

Knowledge of key concepts

Consultants provide guidance in any number of areas, but skills in these disciplines are highly desirable:

- · data analysis
- · project management
- · management
- reporting
- · ethics
- · human resources/
- · finance and economics
- · public relations and marketing

Work your network

Getting started in con-See **CONSULTING** on Page 5 MAY 2023 SUPPLEMENT 5.

CONSULTING

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sulting may just be a matter of picking up where you left off. Reach out to past employers who benefitted from your work to see if they may be in need of consulting services. Even if there aren't any opportunities there, former employers may put you in touch with other businesses who are in need of your services.

Also speak with friends, neighbors and other acquaintances to see if they may be able to help you find the right consulting opportunity.

Get certified

While certification and extensive education, including master's degrees, may not be needed to get into consulting, they certainly can set you apart from others. Explore industry-specific certification, certified management consulting

certification or project management consulting certification to refresh your skills. These certifications also may show employers that you are committed to consulting.

Polish up your résumé

Consultants are billed as experts in their fields or areas of concentration. Make sure your résumé points to concrete examples of positive client outcomes and use it to emphasize your prior

successes.

Expect to be a problem-solver

Consulting requires figuring out what is missing and filling that void. That means staying on top of your industry and determining which solutions will fix specific problems the industry may be facing.

Consulting may be the next path for retirees who are looking for a flexible way to get back into the workforce.







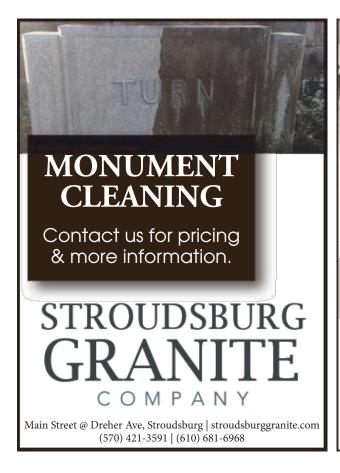
Dress for success on your next interview

his masterpiece "Crime and Punishment." author Fvodor Dostoevsky "We sometimes encounter people, even perfect strangers, who begin to interest us at first sight, somehow suddenly, all at once, before a word has been spoken." The great Russian novelist is referring to the fact that impressions can be made even before conversations begin. This is an important notion to grasp and can do a job seeker a world of good in every interaction during the hiring process, including the interview.

Recruiters may have an understanding of you as an applicant from your résumé and other correspondences, but it is during the interview - whether it's in person or remote - that a hiring manager can really

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DRESS

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get a sense of your energy and professionalism. While no one wants to be judged on appearance alone, what you look like and how you dress affect others' first impression of you. Doing all you can to tip the scales in your favor may lead to favorable job outcomes. The best outfit to wear on an interview varies depending on the company and the job, according to The Balance: Money. But there are some guidelines for dressing to make the best impression.

· Follow the employ- and a button-down shirt have a firm under's dress code. If you for gentlemen and tailored of dress policies.

advance.dress to mirror what others are wearing and then take it up a slight notch. For example, while you wouldn't wear a suit if you're interviewing as a park ranger, you may eschew work boots and faded jeans for a collared polo shirt and khaki pants. For a tech start-up or creative company that favors casual wear, something that is more business casual may be appropriate for the interview.

· Err on the side of caution. If you do not know the company dress code, it is always better to be overdressed than underdressed. A sports jacket and a button-down shirt for gentlemen and tailored

can gauge dress code in pants and blouse for womadvance.dress to mirror en may fit the bill.

> · Less is more. Distractions can derail an interview, and wearing too many accessories can be distracting to the interviewer and even candidates during the interview. Keep jewelry to a minimum and mute all alerts on a smartwatch and smartphone. If you have piercings, you may want to remove them until you learn more about which types of body art are acceptable at the company, which you should be able to discern when visiting the office. Distractions also can include heavy or drastic makeup and hair styles. Tone things down until you have a firm understanding

· Choose neutral colors. Wear neutral or classic colors over more flashy options. You want to be judged on your qualifications, and neon shirts or a busy print dress could cause an interviewer to lose focus. During a remote interview, choose a high-contrast interview outfit so that you don't blend in with your background.

· Wear clean, tidy clothes. No matter how formal or informal the attire, it should be freshly laundered, free from wrinkles or damage, and fit properly.

Interview attire can make or break first impressions, so attention should be placed on what to wear.









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How to navigate a remote interview

Not so long ago, job interviews were conducted almost exclusively in person. Hiring managers were able to assess candidates during these interviews, getting an idea about everything from the applicant's skill set to how he or she affected the energy in the room to body language and the confidence of a handshake.

Today a growing number of interviews are virtual. Many are conducted via popular video conferencing apps like Zoom. In a recent survey of talent leaders and recruiters conducted by the tech firm Talview, 80 percent of respondents said their hiring process is now fully remote. There are many advantages to remote/virtual interviews. They tend to be more convenient for screening applicants for remote positions because the applicant pool may be coming from anywhere around the world. Remote interviews also can be less time-consuming.

As useful as they can be, remote interviews are not foolproof. Technical snarls or uncooperative conditions at home can affect remote interviews. Virtual interviews also may



not give candidates an accurate idea of the culture at a given firm. But remote interviews are likely here to stay, so here's how candidates can put their best (virtual) foot forward.

Test the technology

Open the conferencing app and test links to make sure that you can

get on the service and understand how it functions. Log in early, even if it means sitting in a virtual waiting room until the meeting organizer arrives. At least you'll be ensured of being on time.

See **REMOTE** on Page 9



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REMOTE

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Have a cheat sheet at the ready

A remote interview gives candidates a distinct advantage, as they can utilize notes without it being obvious. Place them just above the device camera or off to the side slightly so you can refer to them like one may read a teleprompter or cue cards on television.

Use your space wisely

If you'll be on video, set up your space and your appearance so that it is professional but engaging. Use your home office environment to make a strong impression. Keep background clutter to a minimum. If necessary, use a virtual office backdrop, which was preferred by 97 percent of the 513 recruiters that Harvard Business Review observed and interviewed

over an eight-month period in 2020.

Engage with the interviewer and avoid distractions

Distractions can knock you off of your game and make you come across as less engaging to recruiters. Ask housemates to make themselves scarce during the interview and lock pets out of the room. Silence your phone (if it isn't the device being used for the interview) and look into the camera while speaking. Maintaining eye contact is a sign of respect and confidence. If the interviewer is speaking at length, utilize the mute button on your phone or conferencing app to silence ambient

Remote interviews are a large part of modern working environments. Mastering an ability to interview remotely can help candidates ace their next interview.



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Kleckner's: The Latest in Quality Products; the Same Personalized Service

Kleckner and Sons, one of the oldest family-owned appliance stores in the Lehigh Valley, is still going strong, with two convenient locations, at 575 Chestnut Street in Emmaus and 2177 MacArthur Road in Whitehall.



After 78 years, Kleckner and Sons continues to succeed because of the family's dedication to quality and service.

Allen Kleckner, his son Roy and his son-in-law, Joseph George, opened their first store in 1945 at 421 Main St. in Egypt. In the early 1970s, Joseph George's sons, Donald and Dale George, took over ownership of the business, which is still considered "The Leader" in appliance sales and service today.

The main store is the oldest business on MacArthur Road and is now owned by Doreen Cantalini and Todd George, great-granddaughter and great-grandson of Allen Kleckner. The Emmaus store has been serving the community since 1980 and is open 6 days a week.

Kleckner's always has a large selection of the latest in name brand appliances available and will service everything they sell. Their knowledge and commitment to personalized service helps them stand out compared to other appliance stores.

Once you have chosen the right appliance, Kleckner's Delivery team will not only **Deliver** the NEW appliance and **Haul** away the old on, they will also professionally *Install* the new appliance. (some restrictions apply)

They also offer in-home service six days a week on every appliance they sell, and have a parts department at the Whitehall store, which is open seven days a week

So if you're in the market for a new appliance, visit Kleckner's at either location and let their professional staff help you select the one that's right for you.

Kleckner's carries a full line of name brand appliances including Monogram Luxury Appliances.

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10. SUPPLEMENT 2023

Components of traditional business plans

Owning a business is valuable tool for entre-ness plans as formal as they people across the globe. Entrepreneurs envision being their own boss, but few successful businesses can get off the ground without a little financial help. That help is often not available without a business plan.

What is a business plan?

A business plan is a

a dream for millions of preneurs looking to start business. Self-funded a entrepreneurs who won't be seeking seed money or assistance from external sources, such as banks or investors, can still benefit from writing a business plan, which is a detailed guide that can serve as a road map for prospective business owners.

Self-funded entrepreneurs can make their busiprefer, but aspiring business owners who are seeking funding will need to make their business plans formal, as lenders and prospective investors are more likely to read and respond to formal documents than informal requests. The U.S. Small Business Adminstration notes that many lenders and investors will want a traditional business plan before they offer any financing or decide to invest. Traditional business plans are formal documents that lay out the goals for the business, how owners plan to achieve those goals and how much time they anticipate they will need to achieve them.

What are the key components of a traditional business plan?

Traditional business plans include a number of components, all of which do not necessarily need to be included in a plan. The SBA recommends that entrepreneurs as many of the following components as necessary. In regard to how many of these to include, individuals must make that determination on their own or with the help of an advisor.

• Executive summary: The executive summary is what your business is and why it will be successful. This summary should include a mission statement, the product or service being provided and basic information about the business, such as its employees and location. The SBA also recommends that entrepreneurs seeking funding include financial information.

Company descrip-

See **PLANS** on Page A11







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PLANS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A10

tion: This should be detailed information about the company, including the problems it solves. List the consumers or businesses the company will serve.

· Market analysis: Market research is vital, and this information should indicate that entrepreneurs have a strong grasp of their industry and target market.

Organization and

management: This tells readers how the company will be structured, including who will run it. This section also should include the legal structure of the business (i.e., LLC, C corp, S corp, etc.).

· Service or product line: This section indicates the products the business will sell or the services it will provide. Any plans for intellectual property, such as patent filings, should be included here.

· Marketing and sales: and This section should aim to

describe how the business will attract and retain customers.

· Funding request: This section outlines the funding requirements, including how much money is needed, and how funds will be used over the next several years.

· Financial projections: The SBA recommends supplementing funding requests with financial projections, including a five-year financial outlook as well as more immediate terms, such as quarterly projections.

· Appendix: The appendix should include supporting documents, such as credit histories, résumés, letters of reference, permits, licenses, and other items.

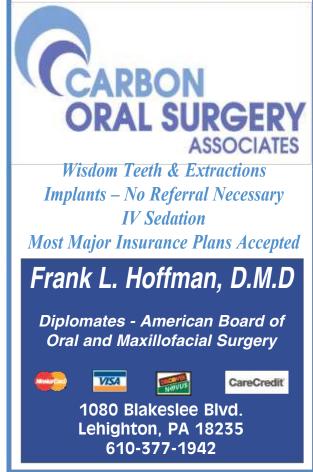
Business plans are vital to many entrepreneurs. Learn more about drafting a plan at www.sba.gov.













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PenTeleData began in 1994 with the idea of providing high-speed data and Internet connectivity in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. In 1995, that vision came true. Their strategic partnership of local communications companies includes Blue Ridge Communications, Ironton Telephone, Service Electric Cable TV & Communications and Service Electric Cablevision.

Since that time, the PenTeleData partnership has invested more than \$300 million in fiber optic infrastructure, with nearly 10,000 miles of fiber optic cabling and 60 nodes for diversity and redundancy. They have private peering agreements with major national content providers and cache servers to reduce network congestion and interconnect agreements that allow them to expand their footprint to serve multiple locations. Their network is supported by their 24/7 Network Control Center. One of PenTeleData's greatest assets is being locally owned - it allows them to make decisions faster and support their customers better. They do not outsource support and since they own Pennsylvania's largest privately-owned fiber optic network, it gives them a lot of leverage to deploy reliable, scalable fiber-based solutions, including dark fiber. They also offer Cloud-Based Business Voice services, which are powered by their privatelyowned network and offer feature-rich customization to meet the requirements of any company. Their hosted solutions can provide almost all a company's basic technology needs, simply put, it is a turn-key solution at an affordable and competitive price. Since PenTeleData I.T. Services can support installation and maintenance for all these solutions and more, they can be your business' technology team too! As a bonus, PenTeleData's Community Wi-Fi offers Internet access points throughout their footprint, especially in larger venues and outdoor areas.

Some of the area's most reputable businesses have recognized the benefits of choosing

PenTeleData. To see how they are using the network and what their experience has been,

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