
CULTIVATING RELATIONSHIPS: THE OFFER, ASK, UPDATE MODEL

Office of Career and Professional Development
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Many of you have asked how to keep in touch with a contact-an alum or employer for example. This is a great question! Maybe you met someone through the Alumni Mentor program, maybe through an event on campus, or through a referral. Those contacts with whom you've had the most interaction will be the most invested in you and the best resources in your career and professional development.

The first face-to-face is just the seed you are planting. Like any blossom, you need to cultivate it over time. So how do you go about keeping in touch?

There are three main ways to follow-up: an Offer, an Ask, or an Update:

The Update: this will be one of your main tools for relationship cultivation. Updating a contact can be as simple as a periodic email, perhaps a phone call or voice mail, once or twice a semester. Whenever you have some news, developments, accolades –share them! New Year's notes are a wonderful way to share an update and offer good wishes for the year ahead. An update could look like this:

Dear Elizabeth: You were so helpful when we last met to discuss careers in estate planning. I wanted to keep in touch and share some exciting news! I landed a summer job at a small boutique estate planning firm in Oakland / I received the highest grade in my Tax Class / I just got onto a Moot Court Team/ I just wrapped up my first year / etc. I hope you are doing well and I promise to keep you posted on how things go.

The Ask: Contacts can be ongoing resources and help answer all sorts of questions. Maybe you are in the process of selecting courses for next semester and want advice on what to take, maybe you have an interview coming up with an employer and want to know if your contact knows the employer or has tips on what they might ask, maybe you've just updated your resume or cover letter and want another set of eyes, maybe you've crafted a target list of employers and want them to take a look and see if they have any input or suggestions about employers you've left off or should add.....there are all sorts of questions you could ask via a follow-up email or phone call.

The Offer: We often hear that students don't know what they could offer to an attorney. While you will have more to offer as your career progresses, you may find things come up now. For example, maybe you heard about an interesting event in your contact's field- a judges' dinner, a Continuing Legal Education (CLE) program, maybe you read an interesting article in class or discussed an interesting new case and wanted to share it. All of these are great reasons to reach out. Maybe you read in the local legal press such as the Daily Journal, The Recorder, the California Bar Journal (all great resources!) that your contact has been recognized, singled out for acknowledgement- these are all reasons to re-connect:

Dear Elizabeth: I saw your name mentioned the other day as one of the new California Super Lawyers / Rising Stars, etc. -congratulations!

Warm regards, Sari

Nurturing a contact can involve some very simple and short follow-ups to keep your name on the contact's radar screen. Using the **Offer, Ask, Update** model will serve you well!