

# Get Out There and Network

March 2010



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A service of the Corporation for National and Community Service - Special Projects and Sustainability Initiative

## Dear “Networking” Colleague,

You are the face of your cause. People need to see and hear from you. Both introverts and extroverts will benefit from this issue’s ideas on increasing personal involvement—and thereby your cause—in the community Click on the title on the right to learn more about:

**Networking Face-to-Face**

**Finding the Right Social Networking Site**

**Getting Started with Online Social Networking**

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## Networking Face-to-Face

While you may make some good connections through online social networking, nothing beats meeting people face-to-face. For some people, walking into a room full of strangers can be an intimidating experience. Here are some ideas to be better prepared for networking success:

**Choose the type of event that will make you comfortable.**

It helps to stick with events that focus on topics that truly interest you. Popular networking opportunities you may want to explore include:

- Meetings for professional organizations
- Community service events

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### POST A COMMENT:

*click below to post a comment, ask a question, or reply to the community*

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## TIPS FOR THE TIMES

Set a networking schedule and goals for yourself. Attend a networking event at least once a month. Post to an online social network at least weekly.

## Visit the VISTA Campus for more information

- [VISTA Viewfinder](#)

- Conferences and workshops
- Local business networking groups
- Tweetups (gatherings announced on Twitter networks)

### Set goals for the event

Learn more about the event and the people be better prepared and reduce your anxiety. Meeting to a greater number of people will help you take full advantage of networking opportunities that will benefit the people your cause serves.

### Carry extra cards with you

Put business cards in a pocket with a pen for note-taking to make a “card swap” as smooth as possible. Ask for cards from the people you meet and study the card to gain more information for a thoughtful follow-up question.

### Approach people and introduce yourself

Be prepared with your ten second hook to attract interest, then get ready to answer common questions about what you do. Use conversation techniques and ask open-ended questions. Linger on what the other person is saying before moving to your own experiences.

### Strategically mingle for the biggest impact

Try to meet as many people as possible while having a memorable conversation with all. Like the sun in our solar system, strategically place yourself at locations where people tend to gather, i.e. food and beverage stations, registration table. You'll find people to talk with more easily as they rotate around the room. Avoid corners.

### Follow up and follow through after the event

Review the cards you have collected and post them in your contact system. Write notes, call or follow up with an e-mail, “friend” them on your workplace social networking site, etc.

POST A COMMENT: Tell us about any tricks or techniques you use to make walking into a room full of strangers a little easier. [Click here](#) to make a comment and read what others have to say.

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## Finding the Right Social Networking Site

Social networking sites have large followings and people

See the latest issue

- **Featured eGIZMO** (Giving Information for Zooming Mission Objectives) Building Your Case for Support. This GIZMO is designed to help you produce your case for support by connecting the right pieces - of the proverbial puzzle - with the right reasons why people would want to support your program. [Click here](#) to view it
- **Social Media Monday Webshop:** YouTube: Broadcasting your VISTA story. [Click here](#) to view it
- **Become a fan of AmeriCorps VISTA on Face book:** [Click here](#) to register
- **VISTAworks--**a comprehensive interactive learning tool that helps VISTAs figure out their next steps after service. [Click here](#) to view it

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spend a lot of time interacting with them. According to The Nielsen Company, global consumers spent 82% more time on social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter in December 2009, compared the same time last year. So, if you're not on a social networking site, you need to be. Here are some of the most popular social networks, and a few that, while having fewer members, may be of interest to you:

**Facebook:** The largest social media network claims to have 350 million active users with 65 million accessing via mobile devices. Millions of people use Facebook everyday to keep up with friends, upload photos, share links and videos, and learn more about the people they meet. Organizations use Facebook to promote their cause, raise money, and manage special events. You can join groups or become a fan of a celebrity or an organization, post invitations to events, and join a discussion. Facebook was initially intended for college students and now allows everyone membership. <http://www.facebook.com/>

**LinkedIn:** This is a business-oriented contact management system as well as a social network. Members invite people to be "connections" instead of "friends." You can post your resume, ask for recommendations from colleagues, search for job openings, join professional organizations and take part in group discussions. LinkedIn has more than 50 million registered users. <http://www.linkedin.com/>

**Classmates:** One of the oldest social networking sites around, Classmates is a great way for members to connect with old friends and acquaintances. It is used often for reunion planning. Classmates has over 50 million members. <http://www.classmates.com/profile/user>

**Twitter:** Twitter has 18 million users and is growing daily. Twitter is a social networking and micro-blogging service. It works via mobile texting, instant message, or the web. Messages are limited to 140 characters. "Tweetups" are a combination of face-to-face and social networking. Twitter grew the most of any social networking site after surging more than 2800% in 2009. <http://twitter.com/>

**Flickr:** You can upload, edit, and organize your photos using Flickr and never worry about losing valuable pictures. Flickr allows you to comment on photos. A blog provides a look at some of the most interesting photos and provides advice for picture takers. Groups are formed around areas of interest and include discussion boards. Flickr has 32 million active users. <http://www.flickr.com/>

**Ning:** The unique feature of Ning is that anyone can create his or her own social network for a particular topic or need, catering to specific membership bases. Ning has both free and paid options. <http://www.ning.com/>

The above social networks are some of the most popular. Other networks exist to appeal to special interests and for

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*"You can't stay in your corner of the Forest waiting for others to come to you. You have to go to them sometimes"*

– A. A. Milne, Winnie the Pooh

special purposes. [Click here](#) to learn about some other unique social networks.

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## Getting Started with Online Social Networking

Once you've selected the right site for you, you are just about ready to meet people and keep in touch with friends, colleagues and community contacts. When used well, they can advance your organization's mission and help create social change. Here are some basic steps to take when entering a new social network site.

### Create a profile

- To make a good impression, customize your profile. Include the kind of information that would help others find you. Some sites allow you to style your profile with graphics and pictures.

### Make connections

- Search for people you would like to include in your network. If, for example, your purpose of joining a network is to connect with people in your community, search to find their names and ask to become a "friend." Once you are "friended," you also are connected to that person's contacts. This broadens your network.
- Search through some groups, read some discussions, check out some profiles, and then invite interesting people to be your friends.
- Friend and befriend supporters to get your name out in the community.

### Share information

- Start a discussion.
- Post photos and videos of your activities or of subjects that are important to you.
- Ask questions and make comments about what is posted.
- Make announcements or promote events that will draw new contacts to you.

### Caution

Be aware that anything you post on a social networking site may be seen by anyone and will live on forever. If you post pictures of yourself, be sure that they are appropriate for public viewing. If you make a comment, be polite and

professional. If you choose to use a pseudonym, as some sites allow, be certain that is not one that could cause you embarrassment in the future.

## Stay Safe online

There are dangers associated with social networking including data theft and viruses, which are on the rise. The most prevalent danger though often involves online predators or individuals who claim to be someone that they are not. To protect yourself and your organization while online:

- Keep your passwords in a secure place
- Do not share your password with anyone
- Be selective in choosing your username and email address that will not attract negative attention
- Don't give out information simply because it is requested
- Watch what you "say" online
- Never use a work account for personal use

For more information, go to Staying Safe On Line  
<http://www.staysafeonline.info/>

POST A COMMENT: Does your organization use social media to create social change? Tell us about your experiences. [Click here](#) to make a comment and read what others have to say.

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## Finding the Right Social Networking Site (cont)

**43Things:** A social networking site that targets goal-setting. Members are interlinked by the goals they are going after and the goals they have completed.  
<http://www.43things.com/>

**Care2:** Care2 is a social networking website that was founded to help connect activists from around the world.  
<http://www.care2.com/>

**ExchangesConnect:** This is an international social network administered by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State that promotes mutual understanding among members by highlighting cultures, commonalities, and exchange program experiences through user-generated content like forums, blogs, photos, and videos. <http://connect.state.gov/>

**Meetup:** Meetup is an online social networking portal that

facilitates offline group meetings in various localities around the world. <http://www.meetup.com/>

The following sites are popular for rating and sharing internet sites:

**StumbleUpon.com:** <http://www.stumbleupon.com/>

**del.icio.us:** (pronounced as "delicious")  
<http://delicious.com/>

**digg.com:** <http://digg.com/>

POST A COMMENT: What other online social networks do you belong to and what are their benefits? [Click here](#) to make a comment and read what others have to say.

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**NEXT MONTH:** Our April issue of On-The-Go eTA will focus on revenue generating activities you can employ in your social profit organization.

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## Resources

### eOrganizer

eOrganizer is an interactive clearinghouse for the latest and greatest web instruments of change. This GIZMO shows you how to maximize free and inexpensive online tools and resources to mobilize people around issues and within organizations. Structured around eight categories important to community organizing, it offers descriptions and provides access to many of the most current web arenas and strategies for bringing groups together to create community change.

<http://www.campaignconsultation.com/GIZMOs/eorganizer/index.html>

*The National ASK (Awareness, Skills, Knowledge) to Sustain Institute*, sponsored by Corporation for National and Community Service, provided by Campaign Consultation, Inc. 1998, 2002.

*The CNCS Resources Now! National Institute*, sponsored by Corporation for National and Community Service, provided by Campaign Consultation, Inc. 2005-07.

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## Learning Products and Services

**Sustainability:**

OntheGo@CampaignConsultation.com is designed to give information fast on building capacity. Use this online support for advice from a fundraising professional. Contact [OntheGo@CampaignConsultation.com](mailto:OntheGo@CampaignConsultation.com)

### ***VISTA Campus:***

VISTA Campus is an online learning environment for the VISTA community. The aim is to support you in your development throughout and beyond your VISTA service. The Campus includes self-paced tutorials and courses, reference materials, discussions boards, a campus bookstore and more to help improve your skills and connect with other VISTAs. To access the site, go to <http://vistacampus.org> and select the "VISTAs" option. You can enter the site as a guest or create an account to access the content and discussion boards.

### ***GIZMOs:***

(Giving Information for Zooming Mission Objectives) GIZMOS are interactive. They are online capacity building products featuring a myriad of topics such as e-Organizer, Producing Proposals That Work, Building Your Case for Support, Business World Travel Kit, etc. View and use GIZMOs at [www.CampaignConsultation.com/gizmosplash](http://www.CampaignConsultation.com/gizmosplash)

### ***The Chronicle of Philanthropy:***

You are encourage to subscribe to The Chronicle for the latest news in the social profit industry. [Click here](#) for more information.

### ***Workshops/Clinics:***

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), through its T/TA service provider Campaign Consultation, Inc., offers a three-hour workshops and clinics for those interested.

### ***WebWizard:***

CNCS sponsors interactive website self-assessment service to assist programs and projects in maximizing their websites for sustainability needs. Simply [click here](#) now.

### ***Online Courses/Webinars:***

Web course delivery of topics pertinent to resource development such as — **Build Fundraising Volunteer Champions** and **Cause Related Marketing and Corporate Partnerships**. Available through the Resource Center at <http://www.nationalserviceresources.org>

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