

Produced by Jennifer Conrad

schmooze smart

Whether you're trolling for a new job or want to expand your business, one of the best ways to get what you need is through networking. Once you start making connections, you never know who might help you. Try these tips to get started:

CREATE A LIST Think of everyone—including friends, business acquaintances and old coworkers—who might be able to assist you or introduce you to new people. Try to arrange informational interviews with potential employers.

FOCUS POCUS Victoria Colligan, founder of Ladies Who Launch, which provides resources for entrepreneurial women, says having a focused message is a must. Whenever you meet someone, explain what you do and why you're unique. If you have a specific goal, be ready to articulate what you want. Try to be succinct: If you're all over the place, it will be hard for someone to help you.

MAKE IT A TWO-WAY STREET If you have something to offer the person you meet—can you pass along her résumé or add her link to your site?—you're more likely to start a relationship. "Give as much as you can," Victoria says. "It always comes back to you."

TRY THE "YOU, YOU, YOU" RULE When you contact someone, make the first three sentences about the other person, says Anthony Zolezzi, author of *The Detachment Paradox*, a book about balancing life and work. For example, say, "I heard you were just in L.A. Was it your first time there? You must've had a great time." The person is probably worried you're going to ask for something, so this technique is disarming.



JOIN THE CLUB

"Whatever your goals, people will be more likely to respond to you if you're part of a community set up for networking," says Victoria Colligan of Ladies Who Launch. Take a look at these sites for online or in-person groups and see what fits your needs:

- LadiesWhoLaunch.com
- ProInTheCity.com
- FiveOclockClub.com
- DinnerGrrls.org
- LinkedIn.com
- ItsNotWhatYouKnow.com
- Monster.com

REALITY CHECK

Ever wonder what it's like to work for the CIA? Is being a spy as glamorous as Jennifer Garner makes it seem on *Alias*? Melissa Boyle Mahle, former CIA covert operative and author of *Denial and Deception: An Insider's View of the CIA from Iran-Contra to 9/11*, separates the fantasy from the reality.

WHAT'S REAL:

The suspense. Officers have to make fast decisions on their own.
The secrets. You don't always know who to trust.
The costumes and role playing. You have to look the part in different situations.
The romantic interludes. Officers often end up marrying other officers.
The excitement. "There's nothing like the thrill of stealing a really good secret," Melissa says.

WHAT'S NOT:

The guns. While officers are trained to use weapons, they don't usually carry them.
The action. CIA work is more like an intellectual "chess game"—always trying to guess the other person's next move.
The lack of office work. There's a huge amount of paperwork involved.
The globe-trotting. Most officers speak multiple languages, but specialize in one region or topic.

DIGITALVISION LTD./SUPERSTOCK (top); LEN LAGRUA (bottom left); ABC/COURTESY EVERETT COLLECTION (Alias)

PSST! TWENTY-THREE PERCENT OF WOMEN IN A YAHOO! HOTJOBS SURVEY PICKED SYD'S SPY WORK ON *ALIAS* AS THE TV CHARACTER'S JOB THEY'D MOST LIKE TO HAVE.

try this! e-mail meditation

"While you are reading your e-mail, remember to breathe slowly and focus your attention on your breath. Make the out-breath two times longer than the in-breath. This will immediately calm you."

Source: *The Office Stress Emergency Kit* (Chronicle Books, \$9.95), which comes with a "stress-eliminating" squeeze ball and a deck of 30 cards with stretches, yoga moves and other tips for relaxation

