Welcome to Executive Connections! Now that you have become a member of our networking organization, we have prepared an onboarding document to assist you with becoming acclimated as a member as well as to kick-start your search efforts. We wish you great success on your journey and a happy landing soon.

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**EC BOARD**

Executive Connections was founded in 2006 for the sole purpose of providing a professional networking organization for executives who are in career transition. Our organization reflects the high caliber of our members. We do not try to cater to everyone. Our membership is By Invitation Only and we strive to attract those individuals who are leaders in the local business community and committed to our cause. Each prospective member is vetted prior to receiving an invitation to join the group. Those new members who come into the group are expected to adhere to our five [Guiding Principles](https://executiveconnectionsstl.org/guiding_principles.php) since they ultimately represent the face of Executive Connections.

The EC Board is composed of leaders who have personally experienced transitions and are dedicated to giving back through their leadership service within the organization. The current EC Board Member may be found by going to the EC site, navigating to About Us and clicking on [About Us](https://www.executiveconnectionsstl.org/about_us.php).

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

We are a network of **Business Leaders Who Care**, committed to lifelong support of our members through professional courtesy and a strong vetting process to ensure the right fit. Our value lies in our network's contacts, expertise, and guidance, accessible to active members. We conduct respectful, professional interactions, ensuring privacy and a "No Whiners'' rule, requiring new members to demonstrate readiness and dedication to their job search. Networking is central, with members expected to give back as much as they receive. Our "Networking for Life'' philosophy fosters continuous support, distinguishing us from others. We uphold dignity, respect, and confidentiality, with a strict no mass solicitation rule, encouraging business opportunities within our community.

These guiding principles are central to EC and critical to maintaining a nurturing organization with a focus on networking. The full list of principles may be found by going to the EC site, navigating to About Us and clicking on[Guiding Principles](https://www.executiveconnectionsstl.org/guiding_principles.php).

**CODE OF CONDUCT**

Executive Connections thrives on trust and confidence in its members, who are expected to act with honesty, integrity, and follow through on commitments. The organization fosters a positive environment for members undergoing career transitions, promoting self-confidence and success. Members must conduct themselves ethically, legally, and respectfully in all interactions, avoiding unfair advantages, discrimination, harassment, or misuse of meetings and membership lists for personal marketing. Compliance with local, state, and federal laws is mandatory. Any suspected illegal or unethical behavior must be reported to the President or another board member, with no retaliation for good faith reports. Violations of this policy can result in membership revocation or reporting to authorities.

Each member of EC is required to acknowledge and accept the code of conduct. The full code may be found by going to the EC site, navigating to About Us and clicking on [Code of Conduct & Ethics](https://www.executiveconnectionsstl.org/ec_code_of_conduct_ethics.php).

**GETTING ORGANIZED**

It is imperative that you develop a system to get yourself organized and track your job search efforts. This includes the jobs you are applying for, people you are networking with and follow-up activities. Significant effort will be spent searching for a job and your system will help lead you to success as well as manage the ups and downs that you will encounter along the way. The EC website has resources to help you with these efforts. These can be found by logging into the site, navigating to transition resources and clicking on [Getting Organized & Tracking Your Activity](https://www.executiveconnectionsstl.org/getting_organized_tracking_y.php).

**LEVERAGING THE WEBSITE & DIRECTORY**

**Member Directory**

The member directory may be found on the EC website under the Members Only Section > Member Directory.

The member directory allows you to search for any EC members in transition and alumni. [Here](https://members.executiveconnectionsstl.org/members/directory/search_bootstrap.php?org_id=EXEC) is a link to the directory. You must be logged into the EC website to access the directory. You may complete a search of the directory on the following fields:

* Keyword Search - search a company, title, name, etc. with this field.
* Name Search - allows you to search the first name, last name, or full name of a member.
* City Search - allows you to search a specific city to bring up a list of members with an address in the searched city.
* Zip code - allows you to search by a specific zip code within a specified mile range.
* Member type search - allows you to search for a specific type of member such as Alumni (In Town, In Transition, or Out of Town), New Member - In Transition, Facilitator, Life Member, or Retired.
* Current/Most Recent Title - a specific title search such as Vice President Human Resources
* Current/Most Recent Function - a specific function such as Account Management / Strategic Partnerships from a drop-down list of options.
* Current/Most Recent Industry - a list of industries such as Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting from a drop-down list of options.

If you leave all the fields blank and click on “search,” you will receive the complete member directory in alphabetical order.

**Upload your Photo**

To upload your photo to the Member Directory, go to the Member Directory and click on Members Only. Then click on My Account. From the My Membership Info page, click on Upload/Change Photo (under Member Information Section). This will take you to a page to upload your photo. Choose a file from a directory with your photo. You have an option to select Do Not Publish on a Public Directory or Delete Image in this section as well.

**Upload your Documents**

To upload your collateral such as Resume, One Page Profile, etc., go to the Member Directory and click on Members Only. Then click on My Account. From the My Membership Info page, click on Other Info. This will take you to a page to Upload/Change My Documents. Click on Upload/Change My Documents. At this point, you will select Add New Document. You must provide a name for the Document and choose a file to add. Once you have provided the name and file, select Submit. When you have added documents to your profile, a document icon will appear on the right side of your profile ( ).

**Download the Directory**

To download the member directory, perform a search with no search criteria (all fields blank). After clicking search, you will see a black button in the right-hand corner of the output with an option to “Download the Member Directory.” This will download the directory in CSV format to the downloads folder on your computer.

**Member Billing Report**

To review your membership status and billing information, go to the Member Directory and click on Members Only. Then click on My Account. From the My Membership Info page, you will click on Billing Info. Next, click on Membership Status / Billing Info. This page provides an overview of your membership plan (In transition, Alumni) and the term of your membership. It will also provide invoice details.

**TRANSITION TEAM PREPARATION**

After becoming a member, you are invited into a transition team. Meetings with your scheduled team are every other week. Prior to each meeting, you should fill out the meeting template with your updates. The meeting templates are found on the Members Only portion of the website under Transitions Resources > [Transition Meeting Minutes Template](https://www.executiveconnectionsstl.org/transition_meeting_minutes_tem.php). The template is in a word document which you will edit to enter your information. It is best practice to fill out the template prior to your scheduled in-person transition meeting.

During each meeting, the team performs a roundtable where each member provides their elevator pitch along with status on activities over the last two weeks. That status includes an update on networking meetings (with EC members and with non-EC members), interview(s) and any events you attended. At this time, you will present any networking contact requests for companies you are targeting as well.

As part of the transition team, you are expected to show up in person during the bi-weekly meetings. If you cannot make the meeting, please send a note to the team facilitator in advance via email or text message letting them know you cannot make the meeting. The team is flexible and understands you may not be able to make every meeting. However, it is a best practice to attend as frequently as you can. These meetings provide exceptional learning opportunities, networking, and support for all team members in transition.

Most attendees come to the meeting in business casual attire. Remember you are always networking and should wear attire that makes you feel confident and ready to present your best self!

The meetings are held on the lower level of an office building located at 999 Executive Parkway Dr.,Creve Coeur, Mo, 63141. Upon entering the building, you will go directly downstairs. You will immediately turn left off the staircase and walk straight. You will make a left and the first conference room on the right is the location of the Executive Connections meetings. There is a vending machine and very nicely appointed restrooms outside the conference room. There is not any coffee or drinks so bring your own beverage for the meeting.

It is recommended that you schedule meetings with each member of your transition team to jumpstart your acclimation into EC as well as to gain insights and tips from what these members in transition have already learned. Additionally, this is an excellent way to understand how to conduct a networking meeting and leverage your transition team mates for best practices.

**SEARCH COLLATERAL**

When you begin your search, you need to also begin crafting your collateral. This collateral includes establishing your professional brand, “Tell Me About Yourself” pitch, LinkedIn profile, one-page executive summary, target list and resume.

**Professional Brand**

Your personal brand defines who you are, what you value, what you are known for and helps to shape how others perceive you. Your professional brand will carry through all your collateral. There are many methods to develop your professional brand. You may leverage resources on the EC website to craft your brand. These can be found by logging into the site, navigating to transition resources and clicking on [Your Personal Brand & Visuals](https://www.executiveconnectionsstl.org/your_personal_brand_visuals.php). You can also hire a career coach to assist with this process.

**Tell Me About Yourself**

It is advisable to begin crafting your “Tell Me About Yourself” for your transition team meeting. Don’t worry if it is not perfect right out of the gate. This is the purpose of your transition team, and they will provide feedback on how to make it better. The pitch should be short, no longer than 2 minutes, and should provide details about you and the role you are looking for. You may leverage resources on the EC website to craft your “Tell Me About Yourself” message. These can be found by logging into the site, navigating to transition resources and clicking on [The Tell Me About Yourself Message](https://www.executiveconnectionsstl.org/the_tell_me_about_yourself_mes.php).

**LinkedIn Profile**

LinkedIn is the world’s largest business network. It is one of the most effective systems for landing jobs. It is a resource for prospective employers to view your profile and gain proof of your abilities. It is also valuable to you with a free or premium account. It is essential to have a complete profile and to be active on LinkedIn during your job search. There are multiple ways to enhance your profile as you begin your search and EC has several resources available to you:

1. Connect on LinkedIn with everyone you meet during your transition process and make sure you are connected with all of your former colleagues, vendors, customers, and friends.
2. Check out the profiles of EC members in transition and alumni.
3. Visit the [LinkedIn resources](https://www.executiveconnectionsstl.org/linkedin.php) on the EC website. These can be found by logging into the site, navigating to transition resources and clicking on LinkedIn.
4. Join the EC LinkedIn Group - click on the link on the LinkedIn resources page of the EC website or search LinkedIn for Executive Connections - St. Louis.
5. Attend a LinkedIn training or contact someone to assist you with building out your LinkedIn profile. You also have access to a [PDF overview](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/lbgqq0tqwz1a1tin4ttup/Score_High_on_LinkedIn_for_Job_Search_9-2021_KathyBernard-1.pdf?rlkey=5go5hlaqwsrlq93dv9cai2oua&e=1&dl=0) detailing how to improve your profile on the EC website.
6. Purchase a book to improve your profile such as [conquering LinkedIn](https://www.amazon.com/Linked-Conquer-LinkedIn-Dream-Future/dp/1523514167/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=1689278894&sr=8-2).

**One Page Executive Summary**

The “One Pager” or One Page Executive Summary is a critical piece of collateral that demonstrates your key accomplishments and provides a concise overview of the value you bring to your future employer. Unlike a resume, this is a professional document that is helpful in highlighting your background, experience and target roles that market your professional brand. It is useful to begin networking with a one pager to assist those you are networking with in understanding how they may help you. You may get ideas and inspiration for your one pager through the EC member directory or through the One Page Executive Summaries page on the EC Website. This resource can be found by logging into the site, navigating to transition resources and clicking on [One Page Executive Summaries](https://www.executiveconnectionsstl.org/one_page_executive_summaries.php).

**Target List**

A targeted networking list is a critical piece of collateral that communicates the companies in which you are interested. This is leveraged in networking meetings and helps you to strategically identify contacts to network with. This resource can be found by logging into the site, navigating to transition resources and clicking on [Targeted Networking List](https://www.executiveconnectionsstl.org/targeted_networking_lists.php). There are many ways to craft your target list. One method is to leverage databases at the library to find your perfect companies. A [video recording](https://wustl.zoom.us/rec/play/4R4zAul6C1yj6YHGZJxI8oG8hN_C0Xx3A3lC9wmCaG59AU0bUk2xsgCHlwVJyiriquZ8BNYiijK0RtZ4.BNiI7E4l1OEEoKNH?canPlayFromShare=true&from=share_recording_detail&continueMode=true&componentName=rec-play&originRequestUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fwustl.zoom.us%2Frec%2Fshare%2FqPT-TDFrggSJ32iNPMIbKR7fJIMkyj408rjwsEVFNEgC8czWA5RDUaxtUVHDNuGk.aYxIguiSfw6Bi8wU) with a walk-through on navigating the library databases is available on the EC website under [Transition Resources - Other Job Search & Research Tools](https://www.executiveconnectionsstl.org/other_job_search_research_to.php).

Three critical databases for developing your target list include:

* **Reference Solutions** - excellent for creating target company lists. It provides US companies exclusively and will have small to large companies. You provide criteria related to the type of companies you are interested in, and this database will produce a list.
* **D&B Hoovers** - This is excellent for understanding large companies. This database contains very detailed information on the company, operating model, revenues and list of people inside the company. This is very helpful in finding those company contacts you want to network with. You can search for specific departments and identify employees in the company. Additionally, there are times when D&B Hoovers will provide a SWOT analysis for the company you are interested in. All company profiles may be downloaded in report format to a PDF.
* **First Research** - this is one of the best industry databases available. It is also a very good tool to leverage when prepping for an interview. The database allows you to select an industry and see a full profile. The profile includes an overview of the industry, forecast, business challenges, business trends, industry opportunities and financial information.

The above databases may be accessed via the [St. Louis Public Library website](https://www.slpl.org/). You must have a library card with a barcode and pin to log into the databases from the website. If you do not have a library card, you can easily apply for one via the library website or within a branch. If you are an Illinois resident in the metro area, you can pay $50 to get an annual library card and leverage these databases.

An additional mechanism to develop your target list and learn more about St. Louis companies is through a subscription to the [St. Louis Business Journal](https://store.bizjournals.com/checkout?session=drbardatfj7v2172ccs8tiun6h). You may purchase a print and or digital subscription to stay up to date on St. Louis business news. The SLBJ publishes a book of lists (included in your subscription) which provides a deep look at the largest and most influential players in the industry sectors that define our St. Louis economy. The rankings of businesses are derived from original and exclusive data that may only be found in the SLBJ.

Finally, many university career offices have business databases that can be referenced by alums. You might want to check with the Career Services office at your alma mater.

**Resume**

Resumes continue to be the premier professional document leveraged when applying for jobs. Resumes must be optimized to ensure they pass through Applicant Tracking Systems and have the appropriate key words for the job you are applying to. There are many ways to get ideas to enhance your resume. Here are some starting points:

1. Review resumes of EC members and leverage a format that you prefer. Resumes of EC members may be found through the membership directory.
2. Leverage resume resources on the EC website. These can be found by logging into the site, navigating to transition resources and clicking on Resumes.
3. Hire a professional resume writer. There are several companies that provide professional documents including your resume, cover letter and thank you note. Inquire of your transition team of companies or individuals they have leveraged to assist with drafting their resume.

**ENGAGING WITH EC MEMBERS**

**EC Events**

There are many opportunities to engage with EC members through regularly scheduled events. In many cases, you must register for the event in advance through a registration link on the event notification email or through the EC website. You will find the events by logging into the site, navigating to the Members Only section to [Calendar & Events](https://members.executiveconnectionsstl.org/members/calendar6.php?org_id=EXEC). Below are a series of regular events including what to expect at each event:

* **EC Twice Monthly Friday Lunches** - hosted at The Reserve Restaurant & Lounge (11411 Olive Blvd, St. Louis, MO 63141), by Curt Kinney. These are informal, unscripted gatherings of members. Approximately 20 people attend this casual event.
* **Unofficial Happy Hours** - every two weeks, there is an unsponsored happy hour where EC members can toast accomplishments and connect in an informal, casual manner. These happy hours rotate between Lester’s Sports Bar (9906 Clayton Rd, St. Louis, Mo 63124) and Robust Wine Bar (227 W Lockwood Ave, Webster Groves, MO 63119).
* **Bi-Monthly Landing Party** - Every other month EC members gather to toast those who have “landed” and have officially retired their in-transition status. These events are hosted at The Shack (731 S. Lindbergh, Frontenac, MO 63131). The EC organization rents out this location after normal business hours as it has a large area where the members can congregate and celebrate. Light snacks and beverages are provided at this event. It provides an opportunity to network with other members in an informal setting.

Leverage events as a source of networking. Conferences, training sessions and social activities can all be sources of connecting with new people and companies.

**Networking Meetings**

Networking can be hard and may be uncomfortable, especially as you begin your search. Don’t worry, you will get better at it and networking will become more comfortable over time. Your network is your most valuable resource in your search. This is a muscle you do not want to atrophy, and you must invest in working it out! There are many resources on the EC website related to networking. They can be found by logging into the site, navigating to transition resources and clicking on [Networking](https://www.executiveconnectionsstl.org/networking.php). Below are some tips and tricks collected from EC members on conducting networking meetings.

**Initial Outreach:**

* Plan all the contacts you want to network with and leverage email, text, and LinkedIn to communicate with them.
* When connecting with EC members, leverage their preferred mode of communication, found in the Member Directory.

**Meeting Scheduling:**

* Meet in person if possible but provide a mechanism for a virtual meeting as well. In person meetings foster great connections and will boost your spirits as you move through your search process.
* Provide your times and locations to your networking contact to make it efficient for them to block time with you. You may leverage Calendly or other tools to make meeting booking easy and efficient.
* Put phone numbers in the meeting invite to make it easy in the event your contact needs to connect with you.
* Provide an agenda for the meeting so your networking contact understands how they can help you.
* Commit to a specific number of meetings a week and reward yourself when you meet your commitment. It is recommended to schedule ten networking meetings / events per week.
* Schedule networking meetings 1-2 weeks in advance.

**Meeting Preparation:**

* Connect with your networking contacts on LinkedIn in advance of a meeting.
* Communicate in advance of your scheduled meeting with your contact to make sure your booked time will continue to work with their schedule.
* Provide your professional profile (one pager) to the contact in advance of the meeting. Make it easy for them to get to know you!
* Before the meeting, ask your contact for three connections to help grow your network.

**Meeting Follow-Up:**

* Always follow up within 24 hours and thank your contact for the meeting as well as reiterate any next steps or deliverables.
* Send a note to the individual who provided the network contact and let them know how successful your meeting was with their contact. This is a wonderful way to keep your network engaged and thank each party for the connection.

**INTERVIEWING**

As you navigate your search, you will begin to land interviews with companies. This is an exciting step in your journey but requires preparation in today’s market. It is best to approach the interview with a plan and a vision that you have already landed the role. This will help to give you confidence during the process, which may be in person or online. The EC website has great content to help you with this step. This resource can be found by logging into the site, navigating to transition resources and clicking on [Interviewing](https://www.executiveconnectionsstl.org/interviewing.php). You may also gain interview coaching through your transition team members so leverage them when you get to this important step.

**OFFER NEGOTIATION**

At a point near the end of your search journey, you will receive an offer, maybe multiple offers from your desired company(ies). This is an exciting time for you. However, it can be very stressful, and you may need guidance on the best approach to negotiate your offer. Again, this is a great time to leverage your network and transition team. They are here to support you in this important step. Additionally, the EC website has several resources available to assist you with the negotiation. It is important to understand these resources are available when you need them. They can be found by logging into the site, navigating to transition resources and clicking on [Offer Negotiation](https://www.executiveconnectionsstl.org/offer_negotiation.php).

**EC SPONSORS**

During and after your transition, there is a high probability you may come across individuals who would benefit from EC. To sponsor a new member:

1. The EC referring member (Sponsor) should know the candidate well enough to attribute their name to candidacy.
2. The Sponsor is committing that they believe the candidate meets the criteria, will be a good cultural fit, is committed to lifelong networking, and is willing to help other members.
3. The Sponsor will ask the candidate to review the EC Membership Guidelines and Code of Ethics to ensure they are aligned with EC’s values and expectations.
4. The Sponsor will ask the candidate to complete the Member Application.
5. The Sponsor will be a point of contact for the candidate (if needed).

An overview of sponsor expectations may be found on the EC site, navigating to Joining EC and clicking on [Sponsor Expectations](https://www.executiveconnectionsstl.org/joining_ec.php#Sponsor%20Expectations).