

FLEX FLEX Your Ideas

FYI

brought to you by the future leaders & entrepreneurs exchange

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Growing Your Skillset with FLEX

Young professionals are in many different places in their careers—you may have just graduated college and started your first job, recently switched jobs and feel like you're starting new, or maybe you are the head of your company or own your own business. No matter where you are in your career path—there is always something to learn.

If you're looking for ways to build connections and gain experience, FLEX involvement is an excellent way to do that. We asked some young professionals to share how they have grown their skillset by participating in FLEX:

"Joining FLEX early in my career was a game changer for me," said Rachel Stiller, past FLEX president. "I was able to build my resume with skills, which helped me move forward with my career goals. It gave me a safe place to practice public speaking and access to mentors who taught me

leadership skills. Personally, it gave me a central place to meet other enthusiastic professionals and make new friends."

"I've learned how to maintain a greater balance between my professional and personal lives by effectively delegating tasks to committee members," said Lyndsey King, Events & Fundraising Committee Chair. "In doing so, I've also learned how crucial clear communication and achievable expectations can be for the overall success of a team."

"I'm naturally introverted, so FLEX helped me get better at networking, meeting new people, and getting out of my shell," said Aaron Ritsig.

"It has also given us opportunities to volunteer, get out into the community, and interact with nice people that we might otherwise not have met," Andrew Ritsig added.

"I have been given the opportunity to attend socials, speak at FLEX Presents, and meet others, like me, who are new to the area," said Hailee Amos. "Surrounding myself with others who are building their dreams, aspirations, and skill sets has impacted my career drastically. I'm a



better communicator, speaker, writer, educator and overall, a better professional."

Jarred Heuer, who was also newer to the area upon joining FLEX, added: "Breaking into a new place can seem intimidating. Regardless of profession or trade, the ability to connect with people is one of the most important skillsets one can have. FLEX makes it fun to sharpen that skillset and does so in a meaningful, community-minded way."

So, what's stopping you? If you're looking to build connections, learn a new skill, and/or get out of your comfort zone, we invite you to get involved. It doesn't matter where you work, what your job title is, or how much experience you have.

Reach out to us or attend an upcoming committee or monthly meeting. Also, see inside for information about FLEX committee opportunities.



"The Future of Venango Area Business!"

Professional Development Tip: Being a Valuable Asset at Your Workplace

By Amariliz Sanchez (Clerk Typist, Clarion University - Venango)

Being a valuable asset to any workplace involves many factors that affect us in the workplace as well as in our personal lives. Below are three tips to keep in mind that have personally helped me:

Have a Positive Attitude

Having a positive attitude attracts good energy and benefits ourselves, as well as the people around us. The truth is simple—no one wants to be around someone that complains all day. If we focus on the negative, chances are the problem may be with ourselves or the way we see the world. If this is the case, we should take a step back and analyze where we can start making small changes to have a positive attitude throughout the day.

For example, if you catch yourself about to complain, stop and ask yourself: “For what purpose am I stating the negative? Do I really want to make a difference or am I just complaining because I have nothing else to say?” We can also reflect on two positive aspects for each negative, so that we can put things into perspective. Having a negative attitude is a repellent to others and can lead to lost opportunities in life. Having a positive attitude will also decrease stress levels and lead to improving our overall health.



Appearances Matter

Even if we have the best attitude, the way we present ourselves is also important. Nonverbal communication goes beyond hand gestures and facial expressions—it entails the visual message we send by the clothes we wear. Think about the message we give when we wear comfortable loungewear compared to the clothes we choose for an interview. Without words, each outfit sends a different message.

Similar to our attitudes, first impressions leave a lasting effect on how others perceive us and, including how we dress in the workplace. The message we send to others by our appearance can also lead to new or lost opportunities in life. This doesn't mean you must wear formal attire or expensive name brands. When we present ourselves in clean, wrinkle-free clothing that fits properly, we are sending the message we care about how we look, but also how we represent our workplace.

Maintain a Healthy Work and Personal Life Balance

Constantly working off hours? Checking emails at the dinner table? Signing up for one committee after another, without enough time for everything? This may seem familiar to many, including myself. In the past, I dedicated so much time to my work and didn't realize I was missing out on quality family time. I found myself always thinking about my “work to-do list” and finding a reason to send “just one last email.”

This changed when I learned how to say “no.” When I made a clear separation in my schedule between work and personal life, I noticed things began to fall into place and I was able to find time for things that I truly enjoy.

When we take on too much because we are afraid of letting someone down, we end up overwhelming ourselves with too many projects and not enough time. Many mistakes are made because of this, and we miss out on important time with our loved ones. It's important to find a healthy balance. We should take inventory of how our hours are spent and analyze where we should set clear distinction between work and personal life. Stick to this schedule one day at a time and before you know it you will see your productivity increase while still being able to enjoy your personal life.



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Member Profile: Laura O'Neil



Laura O'Neil is one of our newest FLEX members! She works at The Derrick as a Reporter and Newsroom Clerk. She grew up in the region, in Cranberry, and received her bachelor's degree from Geneva College.

While at college, Laura had the opportunity to serve as the editor of the school's literary magazine for two years.

"It was one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences during college and helped prepare me for my current position at the newspaper," she told us.

In the future, she plans to expand her ability in the areas of writing and photography. For hobbies, Laura enjoys playing piano, crocheting, and spending time with family and friends.

She is also a fan of having meaningful conversations, spending time at local coffee shops, and walking on the bike trail, especially during her lunch break.

"I am thankful to get to be a part of this community and I hope to make more connections in the area," she said.

Welcome to FLEX, Laura! We're excited to have you involved.

Get Involved With a FLEX Committee!

As we near the end of the year, we're excited to bring on some new committee chairs (to be announced at our Annual Meeting on November 12th). These chairs play a huge role in helping FLEX run smoothly, but couldn't do what they do without the help of committee members.

Any young professional can join a FLEX committee and, while it's a great way to add a line to your resume, it is so much more than that. As we talked about in the newsletter cover story, committee work can help you gain skills and experience, which can be applied in many ways in your career and personal life.

Our committees include:


- **Events & Fundraising:** Plans & executes events and socials.
- **Membership:** Focuses on attracting & retaining young professionals. Also plans the FLEX Speaker Series.
- **Marketing & Community Partnerships:** Promotes the organization & coordinates volunteer activities.

Skills gained through these committees include (but are not limited to): teamwork, communication, event planning, public speaking, time management, leadership, networking, writing, decision making, and professionalism.

Reach out to us at flex@venangochamber.org or attend an upcoming meeting to get involved! *See meeting schedule on back page of this newsletter.*





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FLEX had our Escape Room Social in October! Young professionals went to Unlock the Adventure in Titusville, followed by some fun at Titusville Ironworks (pictured left).



Another fun happening last month—FLEX President Kat Thompson was interviewed for WQLN’s “Our Town: More Stories from Oil City” and shared about our group. She also participated in the streaming and was featured on live TV (pictured right).



OUR MISSION

FLEX represents the needs and interests of Young Professionals by positioning ourselves as leaders, entrepreneurs and advocates for the sustainability of the Venango Area through civic engagement, leadership development, and networking.

November Events & Meetings:

Events & Fundraising Committee: Monday, November 1 • 12-1 p.m.

FLEX Monthly Meeting: Tuesday, November 9 • 12-1 p.m.

FLEX Annual Meeting: Friday, November 12 • 5:30 p.m. • Limited to 25 people; Register at venangochamber.org/events

Marketing Committee: Tuesday, November 23 • 12-1 p.m.

Contact us for meeting zoom links at flex@venangochamber.org, or find links in our Weekly Update email.

FLEX MEMBERSHIP

Interested in joining?
Email the FLEX Membership Committee Chair Laura Ordaz at laura.ordaz@mining.komatsu or join online: VenangoFLEX.org.

CONNECT WITH US:   