

FLEX FLEX Your Ideas

FYI

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The Power of Leadership for Young Professionals

As young professionals starting out in our careers, we often focus on developing technical skills, meeting deadlines, and climbing the corporate ladder. While these are essential aspects of professional growth, there's another critical element that can set you apart and accelerate your success: leadership.

Leadership isn't just about holding a management position or having authority over others. It's about influence, vision and the ability to inspire and guide those around you, regardless of any job title. Whether you're leading a project, mentoring a colleague or simply taking initiative in your role, demonstrating leadership skills can significantly impact your career trajectory.

One of the key benefits of cultivating leadership skills early in your career is the development of a strategic mindset. Leaders think beyond the immediate tasks and consider the bigger picture. This ability to think strategically not only makes you more valuable to your organization, but also prepares you for future leadership roles as well.

Another important aspect of leadership is emotional intelligence. Understanding and managing your own emotions, while being attuned to the emotions of others, helps you build strong relations, navigate challenges and create a positive work environment. Emotional intelligence is a cornerstone of effective leadership, enabling you to connect with others and foster collaboration.

Leadership also involves continuous learning and growth. The best leaders are those who are always looking for ways to improve themselves and their teams. By seeking out opportunities for professional development, embracing feedback, and staying curious, you demonstrate a commitment to excellence that will set you apart from your peers.

Leadership is a powerful tool that can unlock your professional potential and accelerate your career growth. By developing a strategic mindset, honing your emotional intelligence and committing to continuous learning, you can position yourself as a leader in your field, regardless of your current role. Leadership isn't about waiting for a title, it's about taking action and making an impact wherever you are.

The Leadership Venango program is a great opportunity for those looking to enhance their leadership skills. The nine-month program is designed specifically to identify, educate, involve and motivate individuals who desire to become more effective leaders. To learn more about Leadership Venango, visit leadershipvenango.org.

Additionally, FLEX is seeking the next round of leadership for 2025. If you're interested in getting involved as a committee lead to gain valuable experience and enhance your resume, email flex@venangochamber.org or reach out to one of our 2024 FLEX Leadership team below.



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"The Future of Venango Area Business!"

Five Ways to Support Local Nonprofits

Nonprofit organizations are making a difference every day in Venango County. Here are five simple ways you can get involved in their efforts:

1. Donate: Whether you donate cash or items, giving is one of the most important things you can do to support a cause. Most nonprofits have an online giving option on their website. If you plan to donate items, be sure to check with them first to make sure they can be accepted. If you're unable to donate personally, consider hosting a fundraiser or drive for the organization.

2. Volunteer Your Skills: Many nonprofits, especially those with limited staff, need assistance with various tasks such as marketing, research, and record keeping. You can offer your time and skills to help meet their needs. The United Way of Venango County has a volunteer website called Get Connected Venango where you can browse volunteer opportunities and find one that fits your abilities and interests.



3. Promote Their Social Media: Like, follow, and comment on an organization's social media pages to drive online engagement. It costs nothing to share a post! Even if you can't attend an event or make a donation, maybe one of your friends can.

4. Serve on a Board: Nonprofits are often looking for new and diverse voices to serve on their Boards of Directors. Ask them about upcoming opportunities to join their Board. In addition to helping shape the future of the organization, it's a great way for young professionals to get leadership experience.

5. Advocate: If you're passionate about an organization's mission or cause, tell people! Make a social media post or write an article for a newspaper or newsletter. Don't underestimate your power to influence others. Your advocacy can start a movement.

Even small actions can make a big difference for local nonprofits in Venango County. Whether you're donating, volunteering, or spreading the word, every contribution helps sustain their vital work. By getting involved, you become part of a larger effort to uplift and strengthen our community. Your participation is key to creating positive change and building a more connected community.

Together, we can ensure that these organizations continue to serve those who need it most.

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Member Profile: Justin Rodgers



Justin Rodgers is the Environmental Emergency Response Coordinator for the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. He earned an associate's degree in Industrial Technologies from Clarion University, followed by a bachelor's degree with a dual major in Geology and Environmental Geoscience, and a minor in GIS.

Originally from St. Petersburg, Florida, Justin has lived in Franklin, since he was 12 years old, making it his home for the past 26 years. A distinguished honor graduate from military schools, Justin is proud to have completed Advanced Individual Training (AIT) and the Advanced Leadership Course (ALC).

As a retired member of the Army National Guard, Justin plans to continue to support and serve his community. His hobbies include real estate, hiking, hunting, fishing, and exploring local craft breweries and restaurants. He also enjoys participating in the many events organized by the local Chamber of Commerce, valuing the camaraderie and small-town feel of the area.

Justin is committed to the progress and well-being of his community and looks forward to continuing his involvement in making it a better place for everyone.

Welcome to FLEX, Justin!

Volunteer Opportunity: Cranberry Festival

FLEX is volunteering at Cranberry Festival this year! We invite you to join us on Saturday, September 21, at the Cranberry Mall. We'll be helping with children's activities, selling tickets for raffles, and more!

Volunteer shifts are 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. and 1:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Sign up by emailing flex@venangochamber.org or by calling Ashley at the Chamber at (814) 676-8521.



First Friday Lunch: Log Cabin



Join us for a lunch of networking and meeting other local young professionals at the Log Cabin in Cranberry on Friday, September 6 from 12 - 1 p.m.

Discover more about our group and connect with fellow young professionals while enjoying a great lunch! Food and drinks are Dutch treat. Bring your coworkers and friends and feel free to order ahead of time if you need to get back to work early.

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Event Photos: FLEX Coffee Chat at Iron Furnace in Franklin



September Events & Meetings:

First Friday Lunch: Friday, September 6 • 12-1 p.m. • Log Cabin, Cranberry

Young Professionals Joint Mixer with Erie and Crawford County:
Wednesday, September 11 • 5:30-7:30 p.m. • Voodoo Brewery, Meadville

Marketing Committee: Thursday, September 12 • Noon • Zoom

Events & Fundraising Committee: Monday, September 16 • 5:30 p.m. • Zoom

Cranberry Festival: Saturday, September 21 • Cranberry Mall
Volunteer shifts are 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. OR 1:30-4:30 p.m.
Sign up by emailing flex@venangochamber.org or by calling (814) 676-8521

FLEX Monthly Meeting: Monday, September 23 • 12 p.m. • Zoom

Marketing Strategy Meeting: Tuesday, September 24 • 5-7 p.m. • Chamber

Check out our Facebook page or contact us for meeting zoom links at flex@venangochamber.org

New Members:

Isaiah Dunham

Interested in joining?

Email the FLEX Membership
Committee Chair

Juliet Hilburn

Juliet.hilburn@gmail.com

or join online:

VenangoFLEX.org.

FLEX 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.

CONNECT WITH US: VenangoFLEX.org • flex@venangochamber.org

