
Industry and community engagement is an often overlooked component of managing your insurance career.

We often think that doing good work and building a network within our organization is enough – but, adding in just a few elements from the broader insurance industry can help you keep on top of emerging trends, deepen your network, foster innovation in your work/organization, and give you an opportunity to grow knowledge and skills in a different context or in ways you might not be able to in your current role.

Be sure to consult the mycareer website and the career maps to understand the degree of industry and community engagement that might be helpful both in your role and at your phase of your career.

Here are a few tips on ways you can foster your industry and community engagement:

1 Seek Out Industry Publications

There is a wide array of industry publications that can help you get a handle on trends, emerging issues, and what is happening across the industry.

Your company may subscribe or offer its employees individual subscriptions to relevant publications. Consider how you might leverage these publications to help you develop in various stages of your career.

For example, at the early phases of your career, industry publications may help to inform your understanding of how the industry works, various products, etc. In other phases of your career path, they may prove helpful in building a case for new product development or be a teaching tool to share within your department... In any of these cases, you can see how these publications might come in handy.

Some industry publications such as the Insurance Institute's trends papers and research reports and Thompson's serve a broad audience, whereas others like CI Top Broker, Canadian Underwriter, or Claims Canada are more niche in targeting specific operational niches within the industry.

Be sure to seek out the publications that are relevant to your current role and future goals. Your manager, HR team, and mentors will likely be good resources for getting you started.

2 Engage Professional Associations & Attend Industry Events

Like industry publications, there is also a wide array of industry associations at the national, provincial, and local level that you can connect with to expand your insurance network, gain industry insights, and foster your professional development.

The Insurance Institute of Canada, and its network of local institutes and chapters, offer seminars, networking opportunities, and events that attract a broad range of professionals. These not only offer an opportunity to learn, but can be a great place to connect with potential mentors or subject matter experts that you can call on.

Each segment of the industry also has professional associations that you can be a part of. Conferences and events presented by these associations are often great vehicles for niche learning, staying on top of emerging trends, and building your professional network.

They can also be good ways to build business relationships – for example, many tertiary service providers (e.g. restoration companies, forensic accounting firms, environmental consultants, etc.) attend events being put on by the claims associations across the country. Likewise, underwriters will likely be invited to attend some of the events being hosted by broker's associations. A good starting list of professional associations can be found on the Insurance Institute's website.

You are encouraged to consult with your colleagues, manager, and HR team to find other niche opportunities that are relevant to your role and development goals.

3 Consider Ways to Give Back to the Industry & Community

The insurance industry is highly regarded for its spirit of altruism and giving back both within the industry itself and to the broader community.

Professional associations, industry bodies, and publications present many opportunities for you to give of your time, talents, and energy. The degree to which you participate is likely influenced by the phase of your career – consult the mycareer site and career maps for more details – but, regardless of where you are at in your career, it is never too early to think about giving back. Here are some examples:

Foundation – Attend fundraising events hosted by the insurance sector (e.g. Women in Insurance Cancer Crusade (WICC)), contribute content to an industry LinkedIn Group, and participate in volunteer work through your company/industry associations

Building – Volunteer at industry functions (e.g. Insurance Institute convocations, industry golf tournaments), consider becoming involved in the Insurance Institute's Career Connections Program as an Ambassador

Enhancing – Join a committee, council, or working group with your professional association/local Insurance Institute, lend expertise to a host committee for industry fundraisers (e.g. John E. Lowes Scholarship Fund Breakfast)

Mastery – Participate as a member of a national council or task force at the Insurance Institute of Canada, consider leadership positions within your professional association, become an instructor of insurance courses at the Insurance Institute or a college or university offering insurance programs