

How a coffee can advance your career

From meetings and project management to [professional networking](#), we all know how easy it is to turn to our digital devices to initiate contact and get things done. This is now creating an even greater call to connect in person, which requires a little more effort. But for your career, scheduling a face-to-face coffee meeting could be hugely beneficial.

Kate Kendall, the founder and CEO of [CloudPeeps](#), a marketplace for freelancers, is a strong advocate for utilising online mediums to your advantage. She says that online communication is ingrained in everything we do: from how we [communicate](#) with our family and loved ones – to applying for rental properties or even submitting a new proposal at work. “You can't escape it. The way we communicate online and offline is becoming one.”

And while this is a hugely positive and natural evolution of modern society, when it comes to your career, it can make [standing out](#) from the crowd a bigger challenge. Kendall references some outstanding examples where people have used creative online tools to help them advance their careers, such as [Nina4Airbnb](#), [tweet applications](#) or by sending sweet treats into a company's office with a pitch.

However not everyone has the time or skill for these sorts of grand gestures. That's why scheduling a simple coffee meeting might just be enough of stepping out of your comfort zone to help develop your career. As we continue to move toward working remotely and embracing video conferences and chat apps, face-to-face catch-ups become even more valuable.

With no real agenda, they can lead to new-gained knowledge in a relaxed setting. Having a casual face-to-face chat with someone in a similar role, at a different company, can provide [insight into how another workplace](#) or industry operates. If you're interested in finding out about another profession, it can give you the opportunity to pick the brain of someone who works in a different area of the business you currently work

for.

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When we meet someone in person, we have the ability to express and perceive each other's unique personality, behaviours and mannerisms, and engage with a nuanced chemistry, making the meeting and people within it, even more memorable. Essentially, it makes real the 'human' in human resources.

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So, what's the most effective way to make it happen? Learn to be direct online and offline, says Kendall. "Much of the introduction or ask can be done in advance online, which leaves the opportunity for the offline meeting to be more in-depth and meaningful."

This not only saves time for both parties, it means both can arrive prepared and knowing what to expect, giving purpose to the meeting.

Ready to schedule in some face time? Here are some etiquette pointers...

- Keep the message brief when you're arranging, so you still have lots to talk about in person.
- Send an online calendar invite to the other person with an end time and stick to it.
- If you've initiated contact, it's always a lovely gesture to shout the other person the coffee to show your appreciation for their time.
- Keep it concise. Make sure you ask the questions and cover the topics you've set out.
- Ask questions, listen and talk about what you know. Good communication skills combine a balance of all three and can help you make a good impression.
- If the other person is relatively new to you, send a short email thanking them for their time.

Yes, so much can be achieved over email, video and message, but to make a lasting impression, there's nothing like being a little courageous and showing your face. And

really, what's work without coffee?