



Get Involved With Your Local CPCU Chapter: Support Your Chapter, Support Your Industry

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You passed a series of rigorous examinations, built up your professional experience and agreed to a strict code of business ethics. The forms are filed, you've paid your membership dues, and now hold the Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter designation.

What's next? Along with the prestige of a title, professional memberships, in their essence, exist to enhance your career. Industry specific societies offer a wealth of information and resources to aid in your professional development and success. As you may be one of thousands of members on a national level, making an impact often begins locally. By joining a local branch of your organization, not only will you be supporting the chapter where you live or conduct most of your business, you will also be promoting your industry and career.

Here are a few tips to get involved, support your local chapter and get the most out of your membership.

Take action.

Don't let joining the local branch of your organization continue to be pushed down to the bottom of an ever growing to-do list. First thing's first—find a chapter near you and enlist. Most society websites list all of their local branches and the best way to make contact.

Continue Your Professional Development.

Professional organizations strive to support each individual member's advancement. Upon membership, the door opens to opportunities for recognition and additional certifications that can nourish your professional growth. As a CPCU, set yourself apart with the Continuing Professional Development program (CPD). Earn points for your CPD by authoring articles, attending national or local meetings, participating in an industry specific research project, etc.

Network

Involvement on a local level allows you to form a strong network within your industry. Utilize and maintain your network—you never know who will be able to help you get your foot in the door when your next dream job becomes available. Likewise, you will be able to help out others in your industry and become positioned for mentorship opportunities.

Take advantage of seminars and workshops.

One of your greatest resources for staying up to date with developments and trends in your industry is to attend seminars and workshops. Periodically check your organization's calendar of events. Use the events to network and remain sharp in your field.

Become an officer.

Volunteer your time to a leadership position within your local chapter. Often, you must first serve as an officer in your area chapter to be qualified to run for a national leadership position. Use the opportunity to share your talents, round out your resume and make a difference in your industry.

Join a committee.

If you don't have the time to dedicate to holding an office within your organization, join a committee. You will still play a key role in your local chapter's growth and success. Let your opinions

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and ideas be heard. Strengthen your chapter by spearheading a new committee, such as support for diversity in the workplace or industry research. Additionally, check into chapter community service programs.

Utilize the industry job banks.

Access to an industry-specific job bank is a common advantage to society membership. Take advantage of this resource and make any future job search more targeted and efficient.

Subscribe to and *read* the industry newsletters.

Most organizations provide members with industry newsletters and database access. Don't let these publications sit untouched in your inbox. Your professional success often depends on staying on top of the latest industry news and events.

Join a special interest section.

Want to hone in on your specific area of expertise? Most large organizations offer special interest sections with their own workshops and newsletters. Focus your network and continued education on your specialty area.

The journey is only beginning when you receive your letter of acceptance. Support the local chapter of your professional organizations and advance your own growth and value within the industry.