

NSPS YSN Guide

Organizing a Social Event

Putting the “Network” in YSN

As you move through your surveying or geomatics career, one thing becomes obvious pretty quickly: This profession is smaller than you think.

You will cross paths with the same people again and again. Sometimes as coworkers. Sometimes as clients. Sometimes as consultants. And sometimes... on opposite sides of a project arguing over boundaries, schedules, budgets, or deliverables.

And trust me...

Those conversations tend to go a whole lot smoother when the only time you talk isn't when something has gone wrong.

That's where the Young Surveyors Network comes in.

One of YSN's core purposes is exactly what the name implies:

Building networks.

Not LinkedIn connections. Not business cards you throw in a drawer. Real relationships.

The kind where you know someone's name before you need something from them. The kind where you've shared a campfire, a golf cart, a bar stool, a hike, a volunteer event, or a long car ride to a conference.

Because networking doesn't just happen automatically.

It takes:

- Intentional spaces
- Shared experiences
- Consistency
- And people willing to show up

So... How does it happen? Where do you meet? What do you do?

Simple. You connect.

And even if you can't attend every event your local YSN hosts, don't disappear. Show up when you can.

Familiarity builds over time.

Networking Doesn't Have to Be Awkward

When people hear “networking event,” many immediately picture awkward small talk in a hotel ballroom, cheap appetizers, name tags, and people pretending not to look at their phones.

That's one version.

But honestly?

Some of the strongest professional relationships are built when people are relaxed, doing something together, and not thinking about “networking” at all.

Some examples:

- Camping trips
- Tubing trips
- Cribbage tournaments
- Golf outings
- Hiking trips
- Brewery meetups
- Volunteer projects
- Local happy hours
- Sporting events
- Monthly State YSN leadership calls or informal virtual hangouts

The activity matters far less than the opportunity to spend time together.

You're not planning an event. You're creating a reason for people to spend time in the same space.

That's where community starts.

Why Networking Matters Early

Today's young professionals have opportunities previous generations simply didn't.

Before YSN existed, many surveyors had to:

- Work their way through years of state society leadership
- Wait to be appointed to committees
- Wait even longer to attend national meetings
- Sometimes not meet peers from other states until their 40s or 50s

That's not criticism. That was simply the structure.

YSN changed that.

Now surveyors in their early 20s are building relationships at both the state and national level.

They're meeting peers while still in school. While studying for licensure. While figuring out who they want to become. And those relationships grow alongside their careers.

The people you meet at 23...

May be:

- Chapter presidents at 30
- State society officers at 35
- Business owners at 40
- National leaders at 45

And if you've grown together? That changes everything.

How to Get an Event Started

Here's the good news: You do not need permission to have an idea. And you do not need a massive plan to get started.

If you think: "Would people come if we did this?"

That's usually your sign to ask.

Start small. Reach out to your local or state YSN leadership. If you're not already involved, this is one of the easiest ways to start. Simple ideas often work best.

- A coffee meetup.
- A brewery.
- A walk in a park.
- A lunch during conference week.
- A quick post-meeting happy hour.
- A trivia night.

Momentum rarely starts with a committee.

It usually starts with one person willing to send one message.

How to Fund Your Event

Here's another piece of good news: YSN events do **not** need big budgets. In fact, many of the best ones don't have budgets at all.

Keep it inexpensive. Keep it accessible. Keep barriers low.

That might mean:

- Using public parks
- Reserving free community spaces
- Picking affordable venues
- Asking attendees to pay their own food or drinks
- Organizing potluck-style gatherings
- Coordinating around existing conferences or meetings

And don't be afraid to ask your employer for support. Sometimes support doesn't mean money.

Sometimes it means:

- Printing flyers
- Loaning a pop-up tent
- Donating water or snacks
- Covering a small reservation fee
- Helping promote the event

Support comes in many forms. The goal is connection. Not perfection.

Setting Expectations

This part matters.

Your first event may not draw 30 people. It may draw three. Five. Maybe eight?

That is not failure. That is how communities start.

Every strong YSN chapter, committee, or social network started with a handful of people willing to show up before anyone else did.

So:

- Plan ahead
- Send a Save the Date
- Promote consistently
- Remind people more than once
- Be optimistic
- Be realistic
- Keep showing up

Because consistency matters more than attendance numbers.

Always.

Make It Visible

One of the easiest ways to grow attendance is to show people what they're missing. If nobody sees your events, for many people, they may as well not have happened.

People are busy. They have work. Family. School. Deadlines. Field season. Exam prep. Life.

And when someone is deciding whether an event is worth showing up for, they're usually asking themselves one simple question: **"Will I feel like I belong there?"**

Visuals help answer that question before anyone ever walks through the door. So document your events. Take photos. Share recap graphics. Post group shots. People laughing. People talking. People learning. People competing. People exploring. People existing together.

Not every photo needs perfect lighting. Not every post needs polished branding. Not every caption needs to sound corporate.

Authenticity often performs better than perfection because people connect with what feels real. That's community. And community is contagious. When people can see others having fun, building friendships, and finding professional belonging... They start imagining themselves there.

And that mental picture is often what gets them to show up next time.

It also creates something equally important:

Momentum.

Every photo, every recap, every tagged member, every shared story becomes proof that your YSN is active, welcoming, and worth investing time in. It tells students, young professionals, and even seasoned members:

"Something is happening here."

And people want to be part of things that feel alive.

Of course, visibility doesn't happen by accident.

If you really want to grow your reach, improve attendance, and build consistency around your events, marketing has to become part of your planning process, not an afterthought once everyone has already gone home.

So if you haven't already... Be sure to review the **YSN 101 Marketing** chapter, where we dive deeper into:

- Building anticipation before an event
- Creating simple but effective promotional graphics
- Choosing the right platforms for your audience
- Using recap content to create momentum
- Turning one event into content that fuels the next

Because hosting a great event matters... But making sure people *know* your community exists? Super duper important.

Final Thought

The Young Surveyors Network isn't built in boardrooms or formal meetings. It's built around campfires, in conference hallways, over cheap drinks, on hiking trails, in group chats, during volunteer projects, and in all the little moments where young professionals stop being strangers and start becoming a community. Long before someone becomes a chapter officer, committee chair, business owner, or national leader, they usually become a friend, a familiar face, a trusted colleague. That's what networking really is. Not collecting contacts, but building relationships that grow alongside your career. And it happens the same way every time... one conversation, one shared experience, and one event at a time.

Lake Delton Dam Presentation Floating Trip (Wisconsin)



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Lake Delton Dam Presentation Floating Trip (Wisconsin)

Chicago River Trip (NSPS)



Giordano's Stop in Chicago for YSN Function (NSPS)

