

Keith Weber's List of Networking Groups for Startups

- 1. Young Professionals of Chicago:** Event worth nothing- The first Thursday of each month, networking breakfast. <http://www.ypchicago.org>
- 2. Design and Manufacturing Midwest Trade Show:** Very cool networking there were lots of companies who do prototyping and design work for product development. <http://www.canontradeshows.com/expo/dmmidwest12/>
- 3. Automate 2013:** The robotic and machine vision trade show, LEDs, manufacturing, high quality cameras and lens for cheap. Consultant companies for product development present too. *Special Note* The Expert huddles were very informative and great networking with small/medium sized manufacturing and design firms. <http://www.automate2013.com/>
- 4. ProMat 2013:** Supply Chain management, crates, boxes, warehouses, logistic software, prefabricated buildings, fork lifts to lift buildings.... *Special Note* Expert panels talked about lean and rapid prototyping in US manufacturing. <http://www.promatshow.com/>
- 5. Print:** This expo is nearly gave me an asthma attack due to the smell of all the toner and inks in the air. The quality posters that were being produced and given away were amazing. There were several booths pushing you to buy the show models. There were printers any size you can imagine. <http://www.print2013.com/>
- 6. The International Food Service Marketplace:** Need equipment for your restaurant or cafe? What about trends in food preparation? Food Suppliers? <http://www.restaurant.org/show/>
- 7. Coffee Fest Chicago 2013:** What Can I say; it's a must for anyone wanting to start a Cafe. <http://www.coffeefest.com/Event/Attendee/Default.aspx>
- 8. The Chicago Fine Chocolate & Dessert Show:** Open to the public and is a great way to sample tasty chocolates and get new dessert ideas. <http://www.chicagochocolatefestival.com/>
- 9. The National Chocolate & Dessert Show:** This is the trade show for restaurants and suppliers, there is also some interesting equipment. <http://www.chicagochocolatefestival.com/>
- 10. Chicago Green Festival:** Great place to meet people who want to help the environment, there is a networking event or two but the real place to be is on the Volunteer side. The Volunteers get access to the speaker and organizers of the conference, who happen to be the leading green entrepreneurs/business in the country/world. Also a great place to source fair trade raw materials like cloth, tea, coffee, cocoa beans and more. <http://www.greenfestivals.org/>
- 11. Natural Awakenings:** Great way to stay on top of green happenings in Chicago from speakers, Startups, product demonstration and more.... Just need to sort out all the mythical healers and stuff. <http://www.nachicagonorth.com/>
- 12. Chicago Green Exchange:** Started by one of the organizers of Green Fest. Green incubator and networking area. <http://www.greenexchange.com/>
- 13. Supply Chain Young Professionals:** This group host one of the expert panels at ProMat to help young professionals release the potential of Lean Manufacturing and meet with established companies to learn from their experiences. <http://www.mhi.org/ypn>
- 14. Entrepreneur Commons:** For established Startups looking for Peer Support or Peer review. (Only made it once... On accident need to explore this option more) <http://www.entrepreneurcommons.org/>
- 15. Reddit Meetups:** A social news media site that brings communities together, There has been some Startup meet ups created through here for students to meet with some successful people. <http://www.reddit.com/r/Entrepreneur/>
- 16. TechWeek Chicago:** Great place to network and find incubators, lots of technology savvy people all with their own experience. So much networking happening and special events there are lots of business cards getting passed around. (Volunteer to get access to organizers and presenters) <http://techweek.com/chicago/>
- 17. Chicago Innovation Awards:** Good Networking and amazing book covering all of innovation not just Apps. <http://www.chicagoinnovationawards.com/>
- 18. 3D print Conference:** Very small conference but a good show and tell area. <http://www.mediabistro.com/inside3dprinting/2013/07/>
- 19. Stimulus Social Club:** Networking the first Wednesday of every month, there is an unofficial entrepreneurial-club that meets here. (They find you) <http://stimulussocialclub.wordpress.com/>

- 20. UIC Innovation Center:** They have been hosting a couple of event here and there like store openings, guest speakers and networking events. <http://innovationcenter.uic.edu/wordpress/>
- 21. Pumping Station ONE:** It's a hacker space for nerds to tinker in a safe community, they have networking nights and have had 2 entrepreneurship speakers come and share their experience. <http://pumpingstationone.org/>
- 22. The Intelligent Ground Vehicle Competition:** Great place to see some of the best programmers the world has to offer. The best part is that they are university students and looking for work/research. Robots that have sight like we do and navigate terrain. If you need a product development Leader find a robot captain. Careful the US Military/Defense Sector is out recruiting too. There are Conferences and many competitions under the umbrella AUVSI, involving Air, Water (Surface/Under) and Ground. If you need a machine that moves this is where you find a team to build it. <http://www.auvsi.org/Home/> & <http://www.igvc.org>
- 23. Chicago Ideas Week:** Lots of speaker's lots of networking and even more ideas being shared and developed. Volunteer for access to speakers and organizers. <http://www.chicagoideas.com>
- 24. Anime Central:** Yes, a cartoon/video game convention, but a very interesting eco system exists here. Huge untapped network of entrepreneurs come here, freelance photographers, web-comic producers, Professional Youtube commenter, Etsy Store owners, Artist, Designers and Merchants. There are tons of young people here doing entrepreneurship, creating art co-ops and sharing booths, selling consignment items. But more importantly they are looking to start business and create thing and are looking for help. <http://www.acen.org>
- 25. DePaul's Showcase of Crain's 40 under 40:** Great amount of information delivered in lecture format. The network is good but not the friendliest crowd. The attendees tend to clump together because it seems that groups come this event in force so meeting new people is a bit tough.
- 26. DePaul's Fall Real Estate Reception:** Great way to meet with DePaul Sponsor, who have deep ties with the Chicago real estate scene.
- 27. DePaul's Study Abroad Bridging Events:** This is a great way to meet international students and get some great feedback on your ideas. The international students bring many different perspectives, "Hydroponics? Do you just mean farming?" There is also a lot of international connections DePaul has created abroad especially in the NGO and hospitality community.
- 28. Boot Strappers Breakfast:** This is a good support group for startups that want to boot strap their own companies. <http://www.meetup.com/Bootstrappers-Breakfast-Chicago/>
- 29. FABTECH:** Large amount of metal forming, fabrication and welding services. <http://www.fabtechexpo.com/>
- 30. Speed Networking:** It's an interesting group of local business people, friendly and full of energy. Small banks and local newspapers and other small local businesses show up. Really great for grass roots expansion, some new faces every time I go. <http://www.meetup.com/speednetworkingchicago/>
- 31. Illinois Restaurant Association:** Local state association that host some great mixers. The mixers are filled with very helpful people that want to help each other out. <http://www.illinoisrestaurants.org/>
- 32. International Housewares Association:** Great place for anything housewares. <http://www.housewares.org/show/>
- 33. Tech Cocktail's Chicago:** This is an alright networking event lot of food and some drinks. There were so many more hungry startups then business owners. <http://tech.co/>
- 34. Technori Pitch Chicago:** A great way to get connected with the local startups and entrepreneurial scene in Chicago. <http://technori.com>
- 35. Entrepreneur Success Network:** Lots of services for startups and lots of startups. Good networking events. <http://www.meetup.com/EntrepreneurSuccessNetwork/>
- 36. Chicago Hardware Meetup:** Small group that is really into product development and hacking systems. There are lots of talented people in this group. <http://www.meetup.com/Chicago-Hardware-Startup-Meetup/>
- 37. Chicago Lean Startup Circle:** Tons of events and great talks. There are always interesting people at these events. <http://www.meetup.com/ChicagoLeanStartup/>
- 38. Whole Foods Scaling your Food Business:** If you are in the agriculture business this is where you need to be. Great local contacts and tons of great advice not to mention a friendly atmosphere. <https://goodfoodcrainssmallbusiness.eventbrite.com>

- 39. Chicago Moon Lighters:** A good little support group of startups and freelancers that help bring the right people together to boot strap ideas.
<http://www.meetup.com/Chicago-Moonlighters-Startup-Business-Community/>
- 40. Chicago Round Table:** Brand new group, and looks to have some potential.
<http://www.meetup.com/ROUND-TABLE-Young-Professional-Social-Network/>
- 41. Meet Advisors:** The best for last, this is how startup networking should be. There are tons of advisors that are into mentoring and advising because they genuinely want to give back. They have collected some of the best people to ever have in a room with you to network with. They just are awesome people with tons of experience and their website is very transparent. At meet advisors the people vote on who is good and what is what. There is a great amount of transparency which is [Sadly] a unique feature to have. Everything is great, their events are a must see. <http://www.meetadvisors.com/>