

Effective Networking

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Why network?

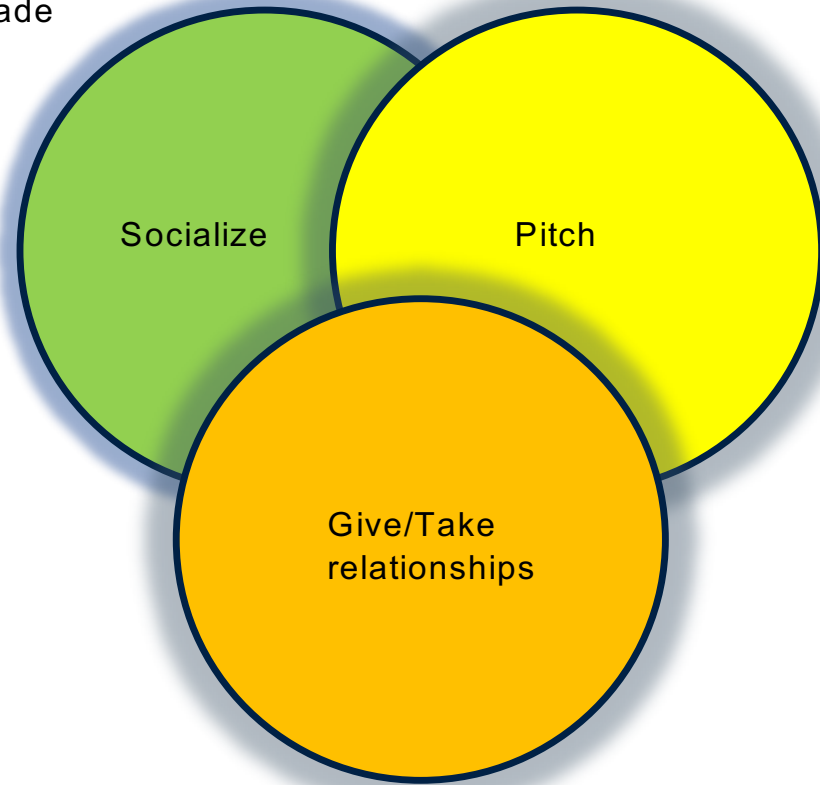
- Humans are inherently social – dynamic networks of trusted individuals
- Inbox/information overflow / who do you pick out of potential candidates to spend time with – known, trusted individuals or their referrals
- Job opportunities
- Sharing of critical information
- More innovation
- Better teams
- Faster advancement

Reframe networking

- Sometimes seen as distasteful, selling something; “not real work” / chore
- Reframe – think of it as meeting interesting people that you like to spend time with
- Low pressure way to connect
- Building trust – not a business activity, but a cornerstone of relationships
- Building networks requires often a lot of giving initially / helping others out – reciprocity; often no immediate ROI
- Longterm relationship building

What is networking

People won't remember what you said
but how you made
them feel



be associated with something specific – what you're
expert in, what you need / want, your "image"

Most effective if you network with a goal in mind

Help each other achieve goals

- What do you bring to the table / "your currency"
- Ability to ask for help/ get an introduction, referral, advice

Your network is bigger than you think

- Family
- Friends
- Fellow students / classmates
- Colleagues
- People you're connected to online
- People you meet on conferences / at events
- People you meet during social activities outside of work

Remember Quantity ≠ Quality

Online offers huge possibilities but more impersonal – also can spend a lot of time alone in front of computer

How to network best

- Choose 3 people to focus on
 - 2 in your current or desired line or work
 - 1 bridging connection in an unrelated field that's interesting to you
- How to deepen the relationship
 - Periodic emails
 - Inviting them to an interesting event
 - Meet up at conference or locally
- Find common ground
 - helps to research the other person a bit in advance
 - Self-disclosure is reciprocal
 - Small talk
 - Get them to talk about things they like / are passionate about
 - Genuine interest in the other person
- Stay in touch
 - Mostly casually – stay in touch without being a burden
 - Try to find ways to be helpful to the other person

Connecting at Events

Not everything works for everyone

- Large vs. small conferences
- Personality type – understand what you like – pick those events
- No obligation to go to everything all the time
 - Is this the kind of event I enjoy?
 - Will there be people I like / enjoy meeting?
 - Timing good for me?
- Sometimes best to organize your own event and control the guest list –i.e. meetup.com, setting up monthly lunch with a selected group of people

Connecting at Events

- **Make initial connection**
 - Engage in discussion, raise points
 - Introduce yourself, try to meet people during breaks, get some idea what they are about
 - Try to figure out if you could be helpful to them / add value
 - Avoid just talking to people you know already – decide for example to only talk to people wearing a particular color
- **Deepen connection**
 - Follow up with action item that's helpful to them
 - Stay in touch

The art of small talk / mingling

- Know how to introduce yourself into a group
- Something in common
- show genuine interest – Asking some personal questions/volunteering information
- Talk about the weather
- Current events
- Sports
- Know how to leave a group / conversation
- Leave your contact / card

ARE Method (Dr. Carol Fleming)

- **Anchor:** Say something about your shared reality

"Pretty good turnout tonight!"

"[NAME] is a tremendous talent, isn't she?"

"This weather is just perfect."

Reveal: Go from shared experience to something about yourself

"I remember being a little disappointed in the size of the crowd last year."

"I'm always impressed by someone who is able to _____."

"I'm hoping these temperatures hold steady through the weekend; I'd like to get out to the beach."

Engage: Make a connection to the other person, question related to what you revealed

"You been to this event before?"

"Have you heard _____ speak/perform before?"

"You going to get to enjoy the weather this weekend?"

Expand: Open door to a deeper conversation

"Tell me a little more about _____; that sounds really interesting."

"How did you feel about _____?"

"How did you make the decision to _____?"

Small Talk Practice!

- Index card – everyone is writing down 10 things, add 3 empty cards – hold up and start up a conversation around that – quickness counts

The art of the elevator pitch

- Short, pre-prepared speech that explains what you/your organization does
- Clear, succinct
- Persuasive, interesting, memorable
- Explains what makes you / your idea unique

- Example 1:

“My company writes mobile device applications for other businesses driven by their needs. I travel a lot on business. We try to make sure all our customers are happy with the product. “

- Example 2:

“My company develops mobile applications for businesses to train new staff. This means that senior managers like you can spend time on other important tasks. Unlike other companies, we visit each organization to find out exactly what people need. Roughly 95 percent of our clients are happy with the first version of their app. So, how does your organization handle the training of new people?”

The art of the elevator pitch

- Identify your goal – what do you want them to remember most about you? (tailor to audience)
- Explain what you do and why it's important (ideally to THEM)
- Communicate your USP (unique selling proposition)
- Engage with an open-ended question; leave contact info / card

Practice!

Write an elevator pitch using the formula above

Deliver to your partner

The art of the cold call

- How to approach people you don't know
- Get introduced if possible
- Email preferred – be courteous, rather too formal than not formal enough – use their full title / last name only first name if the other person starts it first
- Flatter them (within reason)
- Be concise
- Make it clear what you were hoping to get from the person
- Ask in a friendly way
- Give them a choice / a way out
- Make it as easy as possible on them – ask for a phone call, not a meeting
- Thank them for their time

Connecting online

- **LinkedIn**

- Great tool to stay in touch / be able to message even if you lose someone's card or they change jobs
- You can see your connections' connections and get introduced to a vast group of people -> huge reservoir if you're looking for someone at a specific employer or with a specific skill
- Profile can be discovered by head hunters
- Useful to make initial contact but hard to stand out from the noise -> what do you have to offer to that person
- Great for researching people before meeting in person

- **Meetup.com**

- great way to find likeminded individuals and attend relevant events; often smaller, local events; easy to start your own

- **Social media**

- treasure trove but caution advised; decide deliberately on a professional account you share – postings /tweets public; retweeting/"liking", following people can deepen relationships
- Having people access hobbies / other interests can be great for finding common ground

- **Content creation:**

- blog posts, interviews, podcasts – great way to connect with people you admire – they benefit from exposure – you give access to your community

Keeping in touch

- **Prioritize!**
 - People you genuinely like and enjoy spending time with
 - People you can learn from
 - People who you can have a mutually beneficial relationship with
 - Annual checkup – who should you reach out to more often, who less often
 - Network is dynamic – allow for changes

Keeping in touch

- **How do you want to stay in touch – schedule**
 - calendar reminders
 - software – i.e. contractually / project mgt software
 - Frequency should match priority – think about mass mailing (newsletters, online posts, social media postings) for larger part of network - more personalized for high-value contacts
 - Never forget to thank people; handwritten thank you notes are great
 - Proven success of old-school methods - birthday cards, new year's greetings
 - Use travel as an opportunity to meet with contacts in the area – email them to see who wants to come for dinner at a predetermined time

What to avoid

- Misleading people
- Pressuring people
- Just being nice because you want something
- Lack of basic etiquette/ good manners/ thankful attitude / appreciation
- Lack of reciprocity
- Asking people for a favor and then never talking to them again
- Only showing up if you need something
- Making the relationship a one-way street – even if someone very senior is helping you and you feel you couldn't do anything for them you can sing his/her praises
- Making a big ask and never be heard from again
- Making a big ask on a really tight deadline

- MANNERS MATTER

Repairing damaged relationships

- Prevention! Good manners still matter
- Recognize if relationship is strained
- Seek a conversation, apologize
- Respond quickly
- Make sure people around you feel appreciated: give honest compliments; ask for their advice
- Ask for honest feedback
- Develop self-awareness and how your personality might affect the interaction
- Different personality types are complementing each other's skills and can make a dream team but often they just hate each other
- Try to connect and be open even if the conflict doesn't go away

Networking for Introverts

- At big events, schedule time to recuperate – lots of sleep, some unscheduled time
- Pick ways to network you enjoy most
- Create a connection goal – i.e. meet 3 new people
- Skip big parties, try to meet people 1:1 or at smaller gatherings (have coffee, walk, organize an off-site dinner for a smaller group)
- Content creation as an opportunity to connect on your terms
- Focus on the quality of existing network
- get introduced to the right people vs being a social butterfly at a huge gathering

Women / underrepresented groups - issues

- Women's networks are generally smaller and deeper – tend to connect with people with same values; ask favors more rarely; Men's networks broader, less hesitation to ask for favors – McKinsey/LeanIn-study shows negative effect on advancement
- Men spend >20% of their time networking, Women far less
- Partly due to less time available
- Access: existing privilege / strong networks just by birthright / exclusive clubs, events etc – often not freely accessible
- The more “exclusive” the easier to access just because 2 people belong to the same club for example but otherwise don't know each other
- In-group / out-group psychology – networking can help combat that
- Well documented tendency to help people more who are like you

Women / underrepresented groups - solutions

- Find common ground -> shift from external commonalities (race, gender, social class, club membership) to internal commonalities (values, interests, convictions)
- Be aware that your reluctance to approach others might be due to cultural stereotypes – i.e. the expectation to be humble, not impose on anyone, always help others but never ask for help yourself etc. -> Awareness can help overcome this barrier
 - Sometimes helps to think what would you do if you would advocate for your best friend instead of for yourself
- For men:
 - Ask women about their work!
 - Identify no. of women in your network – try to bring up to >20%
 - Encourage women on your team to network; make sure they got the time
- For women:
 - Build self-confidence as a professional
 - Talk about your work!
 - If needed, think of networking as helping others – make introductions, be a connector
 - Network with women and men
 - Try to elevate other women / give credit where it's due
 - Don't get discouraged

Becoming a connector

The more “of service” you are, the more currency you have, the more people want to spend time with you

Make introductions, particularly mutually beneficial ones

Ask questions like “What other ideas do you have for me?” / “Who else should I talk with?”

Host events i.e. seminars, dinners

Restaurant networking dinner: Random conversation, after ordering everyone talks about what they’re working on and who they are, and their current challenge – group discusses challenge for a couple of minutes before moving to the next person; Also: ask for one personal and one professional thing going on in each person’s life at the moment – let discussion evolve from there

Strategic Considerations

- Bigger network in companies that have some turnover – your network grows automatically
- Best network through working together on task teams – environment where you work with people a lot / solve challenges together is great for building a network
- Best to not just talk about your skills but people trust you most when they've seen with their own eyes what you can do
- Visibility is key to give other people the opportunity to approach you

Acknowledgements

My mentors, colleagues and team members

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Thank you for your attention!



Further Reading

Dorie Clark – Stand out Networking

Keith Ferrazzi - Never eat alone

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Susan RoAne – How to work a room

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Derek Coburn: Networking is not working: Stop collecting business cards and start making meaningful connections