



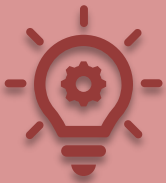
## TIPS FOR BUILDING YOUR NETWORK

Prepare for the situation by practising your elevator speech  
Know what you want to ask ahead of time  
Treat networking contacts with respect and as knowledgeable resources  
Thank everyone for their time and effort



### **Have a goal in mind.**

Consider what you hope to gain from networking. Do you want to advance your career, meet new clients and collaborators, broaden your horizons, or do you want to do all of the above? When you have a specific goal in mind, networking becomes much more productive and enjoyable.



### **Take the initiative.**

Even if you are currently receiving requests to meet or connect with others, simply waiting for people to contact you will provide you with only a fraction of the benefits that reaching out to new or existing contacts can provide. Setting a challenging but achievable goal for yourself can be a good way to stay proactive. Relevant targets could include things like 'I will attend two networking events next month' or 'I will schedule catch-up meetings with five of my existing contacts this quarter.'



### **Present important questions.**

Once you've introduced yourself, it's important to ask some thoughtful questions to establish rapport. The goal isn't to question the other person, but to learn more about them and spark a more in-depth conversation. Depending on your reasons for networking and the purpose of the event, you may want to ask the other person about their role and responsibilities, professional background, and why they were drawn to the event in the first place.



### **Keep in touch with the people you meet.**

When you meet someone new at a networking or industry event, exchange contact information so you can stay in touch. Sending the other person a brief email the next day or inviting them to connect with you on a site like LinkedIn is a good practice. If you have a specific topic you want to discuss with a new contact after meeting them at an event (e.g., a potential collaboration or new venture), you may want to schedule a phone call or set up a coffee or lunch meeting with them.

Maintaining your current network is just as important, if not more important, than expanding it. If you haven't contacted some of your contacts in a while, why not send them a quick email or arrange a meeting to catch up? Nurturing these relationships will help to ensure that they are effective and beneficial in the long run.

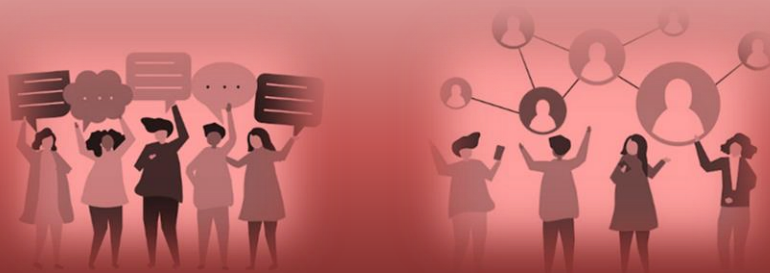
When it comes to staying in touch with your network, however, it is critical to strike the right balance and allow adequate time between each interaction with your contacts. Remember that people are busy and may not always be able to get back to you right away.



### **Assist others**

It is critical to both add value to and derive value from your network. If someone asks you for assistance, advice, or direction, try to help them if you can, or put them in touch with someone who can. You may also be able to contribute your knowledge and expertise by participating in relevant discussions on professional networking sites like LinkedIn. You may also be able to introduce people to one another or share relevant articles or research with them, depending on your contacts and their needs.

# HELPFUL TIPS



## Appreciate

If a member of your network has assisted you in any way, it is critical that you acknowledge and thank them. Sending an email, note, or card is often an effective way to accomplish this. However, if you want to strengthen your relationship with the person who helped you, you could take them out for coffee or invite them to a relevant networking event with you instead.



## Be reliable.

In any relationship, trust is essential. Never share confidential information obtained through networking unless you have permission to do so; if you are unsure whether a piece of information is confidential, keep it to yourself until you learn more. If you need to refer to one of your contacts by name (for example, when pursuing a referral), it is best to obtain their permission first. Finally, it should go without saying that you should always keep the promises you make to others in your network; set realistic expectations and make every effort to meet them.



## It's about quality, not quantity

When you are connected to more people than you can stay in touch with, the quality of your network and its potential to help you achieve your objectives is likely to suffer. To keep things under control, make sure you only engage in relevant networking activities, and ensure your online network is populated with people you know and trust.



## Make a contribution to your network.

It is critical to both contribute to and benefit from the network. Depending on your contacts and their needs, you may be able to introduce them, share relevant articles or research with them, or invite one of your contacts to a networking event with you.



## Seek advice and assistance.

If networking makes you nervous, or you feel you're not getting enough out of your current approach, it's a good idea to seek advice from a colleague or friend. They may even be able to accompany you to an event to provide assistance. If you do bring a friend to an event, you should agree ahead of time that you will spend the evening talking to other people, not just each other!



## Distribute your knowledge

If you are already a strong networker, you will have a wealth of skills and expertise that some of your less experienced colleagues may be able to utilise. If you know someone who is having difficulty with networking, why not offer some advice or even informal coaching? If you want to share your knowledge on a larger scale, offer to lead a networking training session for the rest of your team or organisation.



## Learn from your mistakes.

As you become more active in your networking, it is a good idea to reflect on the lessons you've learned along the way: what works well for you, and where you might need to improve. These insights will assist you in refining your networking strategy and ensuring its continued success and effectiveness.

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