

# NETWORKING GUIDE

Developing & Cultivating a Network of Contacts  
to Help You Achieve Your Career

**Walker 279**  
**(540) 831-5373**  
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# Networking Basics



“Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you” – The Golden Rule

The theme of this guide is networking morally and ethically for the betterment of society. As a result, you can indirectly help yourself by connecting with others to create mutually beneficial relationships. Networking is not genetic and is not limited to extroverted “Type A” personalities. Anyone can learn to make the most of their human interactions if they genuinely care about other people. This guide will help you employ a proven systematic technique to start that transformation.

The most successful networking organizations are the ones that focus on giving and service. Many organizations have created mottos to act as a vision for their efforts

## Organization

Business Networking International (BNI)

Rotary International

Nokia

## Motto

“Giver’s Gain”

“Service Above Self”

“Connecting People”

# Networking Statistics

- Each person has an average of 200 contacts. Therefore, you could have as many as 40,000 contacts within one degree of separation (Your contacts times your contacts' 200 contacts)
- With each additional contact, you increase your network by as many as 200 people
- By meeting one new person each day, you will add 365 people to your network after one year and 73,000 indirect contacts
- After 20 years of similar activity, you will have 7,500 contacts and 1,500,000 indirect contacts
- To put that figure into perspective, one would know every employee at Timex Corporation and would be indirectly connected with the entire state populations of North Dakota and South Dakota

## Benefits of Being Connected

- Better health, increased wealth, deeper wisdom
- Get a date, find a mate, get a job
- Lowered transaction costs through trust
- Access to unique information
- Access to more opportunities
- Enjoyment of human interaction

# Set Networking Goals

Networking is the best way to get any job done. However, if you do not have a clear vision of what your goal is, then the goal will never be achieved. Therefore, one must set specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely networking goals. As you read each of these sub-headings, a goal is stated at the end of the section to encourage action. Get your task achieved and completed by setting a goal.

GOAL: Write down two benefits that you hope to gain through networking

## Pick a Tool

Many people become successful networkers using notecards and legal pads. However, software programs can help you be more efficient. The key is to find a system that works for you. Try using one of these tools: Palm Address Book, Microsoft Outlook, Goldmine, Act!, Roledex, or Franklin Planner. A great on-line site is [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com).

Myspace and Facebook are often used for networking contacts. If you use these sites, be aware of what you post and what others post, as they are used for networking. Employers may also access these sites to see how their potential candidate markets themselves.

GOAL: Pick one tool, learn to use it, and stick with it!

# Discover Discipline



Some people are natural at networking and human interaction, but anyone can learn these skills through attention, hard work, and discipline  
Ideas to help discipline: get an accountability partner, take a time management class, automate your tasks with a PC, join a networking group, remember that practice makes permanent

GOAL: Find an accountability partner today to encourage a commitment to networking

## Create a Contact List

The most important thing you can do in networking is to record every person you know and obtain the contact information for that person. Some sources for contacts include: family (immediate and extended), friends, your friends families, neighbors, family friends, co-workers, business contacts, member of groups to which you belong, people you meet at events, etc.

GOAL: Record the names and contact information of at least 200 people in your chosen tool. Keep an index card in your pocket and daily record the names of everyone you interact with face to face.

# Join Groups

Groups are the hub of social interaction. Involvement in groups/organizations is key to expanding your network

- Art societies
- Hobby clubs
- Political parties
- Recreation clubs
- Social clubs
- Trade groups
- Alumni associations
- Local government boards
- Professional organizations
- Philanthropic organizations
- Religious organizations

GOAL: Find and visit five groups this month and join three of them

# Groups Strategies

Just being a member of a group does not mean you will expand your network. You must be involved. Obviously, unless you have unlimited time, you cannot participate in every group to the fullest extent. Therefore, you have to be selectively involved. Below are some ideas to make the most of your group involvement.

- Focus on groups in which you are interested
- Attend as many events as possible
- Be a greeter or serve on the membership committee
- Become an officer in the group
- Be a speaker at group events
- Start a new chapter of an established group

GOAL: Take leadership roles in two groups

## Informational Interviews

The purpose of an informational interview is to expand your network by identifying people you want to have in your network. The informational interview is designed to obtain information about a person, his/her company, and industry.

1. Write a handwritten note to the person
2. Tell who you are and why you are writing
3. Request a specific timeframe to ask about their interests, industry, company, career path, etc.
4. Ask for a convenient day and time for the interview
5. Say when you will follow-up and do it!
6. Prepare for the interview by researching the person, firm, and industry
7. Be prepared to conduct the interview at any time
8. Keep notes during the interview and do not go over the specified timeframe
9. Ask for referrals at the end of the conversation
10. Write a handwritten thank you note

GOAL: Conduct one informational interview each month

# Event Strategies



Develop a strategy when attending events.....

- Will you focus your efforts on meeting new people or nurturing existing relationships?
- Will you try and connect people who are in attendance?
- Will you try and talk to a few people in great detail or many in a short period of time?
- Never eat or drink at the same time at these events because you will tie up your hands, which are needed to shake hands or record information
- Act like you are the host. Have plenty of your own business cards available to give to others

GOAL: Determine your strategy prior to the event and always remember names and collect business cards of all new acquaintances

# Personal Public Relations

Being a prominent figure in any field is a sure way to attract others into contacting you. Two ways to increase your visibility and prominence are to speak and write on topics of interest within your field

## Public Speaking

- At your group meetings, introduce your guests
- Join Toastmasters
- Write a short speech
- Practice, practice, practice
- Find a venue
- Do it!

## Publishing

- Compile a list of publications that would be interested in your topics (Bacon's Media Directory)
- Phone publications to find out topics of interest
- Write a one page "query letter" to pitch an idea and send it to each editor
- If you get a positive response, write the full article or work with a freelance writer to complete the article
- Get more mileage from an article by rewriting it with a different focus and different examples & quotes for other publications
- Write letters to the editor to get ideas published

# Personal Purpose



The key to building “social capital” through networking is not only to enlarge your network, but also to build goodwill by investing your time, energy, and resources into the social network that you develop. Social networks work best on the principle of general reciprocity. Most humans are psychologically compelled to repay any kindness that they are shown, so long as there are no strings attached.

Specific Reciprocity – “You scratch my back, I will scratch yours.” – does not work s well as you might think

General Reciprocity – “Cast your bread upon the waters.” – the magic behind networking

GOAL: Go commit a random act of kindness

# Six Ways to Make People Like You

In his book, “How to Win Friends and Influence People,” Dale Carnegie identified six methods for winning friends. The key is sincerity.

1. Be interested in other people
2. Smile
3. Remember names
4. Be a good listener
5. Talk in terms of other’s interests
6. Make the other person feel important

GOAL: Apply these six principles to one new person you meet each month

# Communication Methods



There are four primary communication methods: e-mail, telephone, handwritten note/letter, and face to face interaction. E-mail is the easiest, most time efficient, and least expensive form of communication. E-mail is also impersonal and the most ineffective. Face to face interaction is the most effective and personal, however, it is also the most difficult and timely communication to conduct. A networker may identify a preferred method of communication with each of his/her contacts and record this preference for future use. An effective networker must monitor the type of communication when making contact.

GOAL: Have an equal distribution of communication methods on a monthly basis with your network and identify preferred communication types of each individual  
ing Institute (CPSI) , State University at Buffalo, NY 1985. ©1999-2002 Deborah L. Knox & Sandra S. Butzel, Butterworth-Heinemann.

## Keep in touch

Keeping in touch is the most difficult and challenging step in the networking process. As you meet new people, the best time to establish a long-term relationship is to follow-up immediately after the introduction. Keeping in touch requires you to be unique and creative in nurturing the relationship. The best way to keep in touch is to follow-up through a handwritten note on personalized stationery. Make certain your keep in touch technique is genuine and appreciated by the recipient.

### **Techniques to Keeping in Touch:**

- Handwritten thank you note
- Congratulations note on a promotion/job acceptance
- Birthday card
- Call when their alma mater wins a big game
- Send relevant press clipping
- Plan travel schedule
- Play matchmaker by connecting people
- Invite new contact to attend your group

GOAL: Follow-up with new contacts within one week of introduction

# Networking Schedule

The schedule organizes your networking efforts during a frequency of time, identifies & measures your preferred communication method for network updates, records your total number of planned network updates, records whom and what groups of a network you contacted, and it quantifies planned networking activity.

It is ideal to use a routine day and time to conduct weekly networking activities. Sunday afternoon and evening typically work well. Ideally, it is best to leave one week open per month for travel, sickness, reward, etc.

This planned networking session is just an addition to normal daily activity and should be used to maintain contact with those individuals that you do not communicate with on a regular basis.

Face to face meetings cannot occur during the weekly networking session, but can be planned during this time and occur during the succeeding week.

GOAL: Make 100 contact updates each month (above normal daily activity)

## **OTHER READING**

Harvey McKay – Dig Your Well Before You Are Thirsty

Wayne Baker – Achieving Success Through Social Capital and Networking Smart

Dale Carnegie – How to Win Friends and Influence People

Keith Ferrazzi – Never Eat Alone

For further information, please contact: Experiential Learning and Career Services,  
PO Box 6901, 279 Walker Hall, Radford, VA 24142, (540) 831 – 5373, (540) 831 – 5374 (fax),  
Director - Dr. Kathryn Jordan

