

advancing women in business

every  
woman

NETWORK



WORKBOOK

# AN INTRODUCTION TO BUILDING STRONG NETWORKS

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## ABOUT THIS WORKBOOK

**ESTABLISHED IN 1999**, everywoman is an organisation that aims to advance women in business. Through our work with individuals and organisations, we know that networking can be a big challenge for many women in business.

You may know someone who networks with ease, but as with most things in life, preparation and practice has made them successful at it, as it can for you. This workbook will help you plan your networking strategy, so that you become proficient at this key business skill.

The purpose of this workbook is to not only provide you with an introduction to the subject of networking, but also to combine knowledge and learning with tools and exercises, so you can put your learning into practice immediately.

Our quarterly online seminars will support the key learning points in this workbook and provide an opportunity to ask our experts any questions you may have. If you are unable to join us for a live seminar, you can watch them when they are posted as videos to the section 'Building Strong Networks' within [www.everywoman.com/development](http://www.everywoman.com/development).

# INTRODUCTION TO NETWORKING

**N**o matter what you do in your life, you can't do it alone. We all need connections, contacts, family and friends to support us and help us achieve our goals and ambitions.

And yet networking is often seen to be the domain of sales people and senior company executives. However, it is important to understand right from the get-go that networking is an essential activity for anyone looking to enjoy a successful career, or grow their own business.

*www.businessdictionary.com defines networking as: Creating a group of acquaintances and associates and keeping it active through regular communication for mutual benefit. Networking is based on the question 'How can I help?' and not with 'What can I get?'*

And here is the good news, 90% of people are not natural at networking. So if that includes you, welcome to the club. It just means that you will need to put some time into thinking and planning it into your life. You will then, over time, find you become quite natural at doing it.

If you become a good networker, you'll greatly increase your chances of career and business success, and expand your sphere of influence by making yourself and your achievements visible.

In this topic we will be looking at:

- What effective networking can do for you
- How to build a networking strategy
- Building your elevator pitch and keeping it fresh
- Online and offline networking

## SECTION 1. LET'S GET STARTED



## Networking defined

**BUSINESS NETWORKING IS** a "socio-economic activity by which groups of like-minded business people recognise, create, or act upon business opportunities", according to business psychologists Osterle, Fleisch and Alt.

If you're an individual working inside a company, this definition may not work for you. So how about: career networking is a socio-economic activity that enables people to obtain knowledge, create connections and uncover opportunities?

So here is where we get started with this workbook. You need to create your own definition of what networking means to you.

To be effective at networking, you have to be authentic, have a sense of willingness and you need a strategy. This is why it's important that you create your own definition of networking. It needs to state what you personally want to achieve from this investment of your time. Think about the positive outcomes networking can bring you and create a definition that motivates and inspires you to take action for your career and business.

### Write your definition of networking here

e.g. An activity that enables me to showcase my achievements and skills to key decision makers who can influence my future.

So does your definition inspire and motivate you? It must.

Throughout this workbook we will give you a raft of questions to consider. The best way to approach these questions is always with your definition in mind. That way your responses will remain authentic and real for you.

**To keep it front of mind why not post your definition of networking on your desktop?**

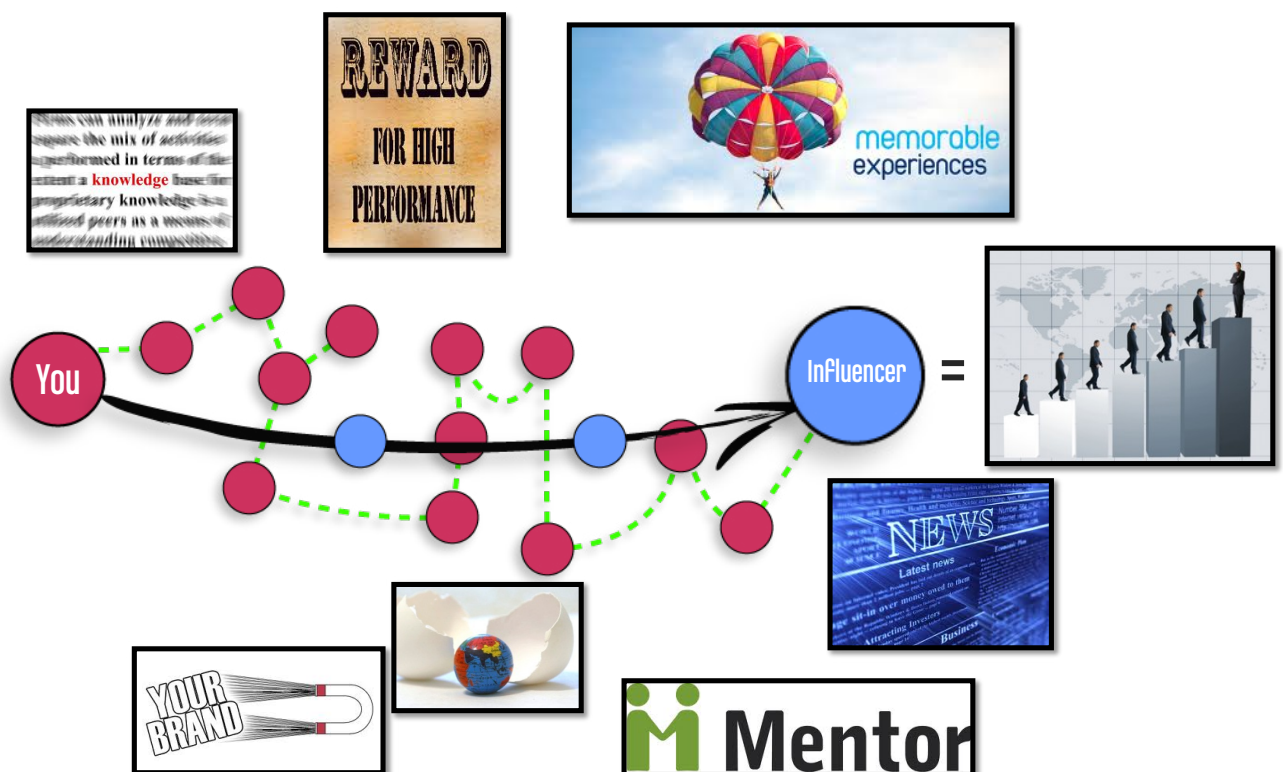
## What should networking do for you?

**YOU KNOW, NETWORKING IS PROBABLY ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING,** thrilling, enjoyable experiences you could ever create. The simple act of sticking out your hand and saying ‘hello’ to someone does and can lead to extraordinary opportunities and conversations.

You will find people invite you to participate in all sorts of events and interesting activities. Plus, your contacts will be able to make introductions to key people who you may not ordinarily get to meet.

As the diagram below demonstrates, meeting people and staying in touch with them will give you a source of connectors who will pass your details to other influencers and decision makers. Your pool of contacts will become your champions, sponsors and mentors. The green dotted line represents your contacts (the pink circles) passing your details to their contacts. The images represent the opportunities that could come to you as a result of this.

The arrow demonstrates that when you have a strong network it gives you the ability to connect with key influencers quickly – your contact refers you to someone they know and they refer you to their contact and so on until you are connected to the influencer. When you have a strong network it’s amazing how small the world is.



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Are your contacts doing this for you? Don't worry if they are not right now, because by reading this workbook and applying its principles, they will do so in the future. Essentially, networking will build a powerful group of connectors and influencers that will help you on your path to success.

# What are the components of networking?

HOPEFULLY YOU ARE STARTING TO FEEL HOW NETWORKING WILL HELP YOU in your career and business. The diagram below sets out the key things it can help you with; such as achieving your KPIs, performing in a leadership role, attracting potential clients, developing existing clients, becoming resourceful and so on. To be highly effective at networking there are six key components to consider, and over time master.

## Networking

### Six key components

- Emotion
- A plan
- Personal brand
- Contact development
- Work a room
- Online

### Key things it can help with

Career Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KPI's</li> <li>Performance</li> <li>Leadership</li> <li>Knowledge</li> <li>Support</li> <li>Experiences</li> <li>Visibility</li> </ul>
Business Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New business</li> <li>Client development</li> <li>New sectors</li> <li>Visibility</li> <li>Knowledge</li> <li>New contacts</li> </ul>

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This workbook will cover four of these components: Emotion; A Plan; Contact Development and On-line. Personal Brand will be covered in a separate workbook as it is such a sizable subject. Work a room will be covered as a separate document.



## When should you network?

**THE TRICK TO EFFECTIVE NETWORKING IS** to start when you don't need anything and to continue on a consistent basis. For some, this may feel a little odd, as we're used to using our time at work to generate specific outcomes. Remember to keep your definition of networking firmly at the front of your mind; it will help you appreciate why you are doing it.

One reason why it's important to network regularly and consistently is that the period of time between someone being appointed to a new role, or awarded a new contract in relation to when that role or contract first became available, can be quite long. This is the time you need your network working for you, as often you will be unaware that these opportunities have become available, but others may be. Another reason is that people like to buy and deal with people they know and trust. Building a good network of people who get to know and trust you takes time, so the earlier you start in your career or business development the better.

Networking won't necessarily get you the job or contract, but it will make you visible to the right people, making you a contender, and it will keep you informed about up and coming opportunities.

## SECTION 2. COMPONENTS OF NETWORKING



## Your emotions and mind-set

**YOUR VIEWS AND MIND-SET** about networking will determine if you are going to be effective and able to sustain any long-term activity.

### EXERCISE

Take some time to consider the following. How much importance do you place on networking to help you achieve your career or business success?

**On a scale of 1-10 how confident would you say you are at networking?**

1 being completely unconfident and 10 being absolutely confident

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

**What is your opinion of/about networking?**

e.g. I love meeting new people/I don't like it I find it scary

**Where did your view/opinions/experiences come from?** e.g. colleagues, events I've attended

**In your opinion, what makes a really poor/horrible/bad 'networker'?**

e.g. someone who talks about themselves too much and sells immediately

Whatever you have written down for the last question, it is important to know you will never be like this. Some people just get it wrong and use networking incorrectly. You don't have to do that, so don't let others put you off- remember to focus on your own definition of networking.

**All you have to do is to create the type of communicator/networker you want to be:**

e.g. I want to enjoy finding out what makes people tick and be useful to them so I can demonstrate my value.

## Build your confidence

*"Being quite short and female, my fear was meeting tall grey haired men in suits, who look very intimidating to me. So I would avoid them. Guess what my typical 'buyer' looked like?*

*So every time I went to a networking event, I would find these types of characters and make a point of meeting a couple of them. I would spend five minutes with them and then make my excuse to leave, recover in the ladies and then get back out there. It was painful, but the rewards were worth it. I would not have grown my business and increased my confidence if I had let that stay in my way."*

Heather White - Smarter Networking

### EXERCISE

Networking does take confidence and some risk, and this can easily be achieved by taking small steps.

**1. Write down the things that would make you feel more confident about networking.**

e.g. knowing what to talk about or how to introduce myself

When we lack confidence our body can give us away. The normal signs are blushing, sweaty hands and stammering. When this happens it is enough to put most people off from taking the risk. The trick is to practice as much as possible before it becomes important i.e. later in your career, or when your business needs more growth. If you wait till you 'need' to network, it will make it all the harder.

**2. List the three things you will commit to do over the next three weeks that will help build your confidence in networking.** e.g. work on my pitch, keep up my knowledge by reading more, think of questions to deflect attention away from me

1.

2.

3.

## Create your plan

**HOW DOES A NETWORKING PLAN WORK?** It's quite simple really. Based on what you want networking to do for you, (review your definition again) the plan will help you execute it in a time effective and structured approach. This will not take away spontaneity or flexibility. In fact, as you will discover, as you implement this approach more opportunities and ideas will arise.

Before you can create a plan you need to know: what you want networking to do for you at this stage of your business and career, the value of your existing networks, your value to your networks, how to find new networks, what your contacts want and how to stay in touch.

### What you want networking to do for you at this stage of your business or career

Read through the list below and tick everything that is important to you right now.

#### Career development:

- |                          |  |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Find a sponsor/mentor internally and or externally           | <input type="checkbox"/> | Increase visibility (where and with whom, be specific) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Find information (write down exactly what you want to know)  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Increase confidence                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Need training (write down exactly what sort of training)     | <input type="checkbox"/> | Increase contacts across the divisions/units           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Get promoted (write down what that next job is)              | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hit KPIs and performance targets                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Need specific experiences (write down exactly what you need) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Find another job with a new company                    |
|                          |  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (be specific as you can)                         |

#### Business priorities:

- |                          |  |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Hit budget targets                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | Meet key people within key accounts (who are they?)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Break into a new sector                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Meet influencers who will introduce me to key people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Increase cross selling opportunities within organisation | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (be specific as you can)                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Increase visibility (where and with whom)                |                          |  |

## The value of your existing networks

We all have contacts, but they remain just contacts if they aren't thinking of you when someone says they have a need for someone. This exercise will help you assess the value of your network to you.

### EXERCISE

Refer back to your priorities and using the table on the next page, write down your current career/business priorities in the first column.

Think carefully about people you already know, align them (by name) against your priorities in the second column, if you can, list at least 20 people. If you're struggling talk it through with someone you trust who knows you well, as they may think of people that you hadn't considered.

To assess the 'value' of your contacts, assign 'network roles' to each one in the third column from the list below:

1. **Connector** - knows a lot of people and would be happy to connect you
2. **Influencer** - may be able to influence your key contacts
3. **Mentor/Sponsor** - a possible mentor or sponsor
4. **Expert** - very knowledgeable about an important key issue
5. **Strategic** - is influencing strategy
6. **Operations** - can influence an operational issue
7. **Industry** - knows an industry/sector really well
8. **Chair** - sits on a key committee (holds any role)
9. **Ex's** - you have worked with in the past (clients/colleagues)
10. **Friendly** - include family and friends (if appropriate)
11. **Other** (you may need to create your own headings to fit your needs)

CAREER/BUSINESS PRIORITY	NAME OF CONTACT	NETWORK ROLE

A great network is a diverse network and therefore you need a variety of connections in both your personal and professional life.

Reviewing your list of 'network roles' consider your career/business priorities and list the key networks you need to support you.

e.g.

PRIORITIES	NETWORKS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Raise my visibility and position myself as an expert in my field.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Industry specific networks that could give me the opportunity to speak at events.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Forums where I can create and post content relevant to my expertise.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Internal networks where I'll hear from and meet senior decision makers in the company.</li> </ul>

### 3. Review your list of contacts and assess:

- Do you have an imbalance of one group over another? If so, which groups do you need more of?
- Do you have an imbalance of more junior/peer groups of people vs. senior influencers?
- Where are the gaps in your networks?

## Your value to your networks

As mentioned previously, if your contacts are not championing you, there could be a number of reasons for this. For example, they:

- May have forgotten you
- Are not aware of your expertise/knowledge/experiences
- Are not up-to-date on your current projects
- Know you well for one skill or project and don't know what else you can do or are doing
- Have lots of other contacts who fit the bill
- Don't 'feel' a connection with you
- Don't feel they really know you

It is a common mistake to think that people with authority and budgets will automatically notice you as a result of your hard work and the delivery of great services/products. We all have to market ourselves to make ourselves and our skills visible. This is especially important in today's social media world.



One step towards that is to know your value to your network.

This process is far simpler than you think, previously you listed your contacts by their 'network role' now you need to apply the appropriate roles to yourself.

Are you:

- Connector** - know a lot of people and are happy to connect others
- Influencer** - have some influence and are happy to help others
- Mentor/Sponsor** - do/could mentor/sponsor someone
- Expert** - fairly knowledgeable about your subject (or want to be)
- Strategic** - think big picture and like complex/big projects
- Operations** - deliver on key daily issues
- Industry** - have a history in a sector/industry (perhaps well connected)
- Chair** - hold a role on a key committee (could make introductions)

*(tick all that are relevant)*

Don't worry if you are not at the top of your game on any of the roles you have selected, you can work towards it. Once you are clear of your value to your contacts you will find that you will become part of their networks. Everything will come alive again!

## How to find new networks

But what do you do if you don't know enough people?

To find really useful groups or forums you need to be specific about who you want to meet. There are many ways to find them, including:

- Asking your contacts
- Searching the internet
- Reading relevant publications
- Social media

If you're employed and looking for support networks you might find them via:

- Internal staff associations (most large companies have at least five groups)
- Divisional team meetings
- Women's networks
- Annual in-house client events

- Internal 'Facebook' groups
- Performance or target briefings
- Releases of new materials produced by company

If you're looking for new business contacts/potential clients you need to consider whether they need to be specific to things like:

- Location
- Sector or industry
- Level of expertise or status
- Subject matter
- Business type or size

There are event organisers for nearly every subject and person out there. But not all membership clubs and forums are great at search engine optimisation (SEO) so you will have to dig around a bit.

Google has a search function by industry and sector [www.google.com/Top/Business/Associations/By\\_Industry](http://www.google.com/Top/Business/Associations/By_Industry) and if you're looking for trade associations you can find them at [www.taforum.org](http://www.taforum.org)

For various reasons not all groups will be open to you, it's still useful to know about them as they may be available to you at a later date or you may be able to get a referral from one of your contacts.

## What your contacts want

At this point you know how you want to network, what your network role is and the key networks you want to develop. Before we show you the five simple steps you need to take to maintain and build relationships; you need to be very clear about what people want and the value that comes from helping others.

Let's start with you. Write exactly what you need to help you with your career and business right now - be very specific. For example, rather than writing down 'you need a better understanding of the retail sector', write down what exactly will help you to better understand the retail sector. For example; the size of the retail economy, the main influencers in the sector – latest trends and future predictions.

The chances are that what you need is knowledge and contacts. Here is the secret to staying in touch with your networks; they all need knowledge and contacts too.

No matter what stage they are in their business and career, people will always need knowledge and contacts and sometimes you can help.

Just think of the benefits. Whatever you have written above, if someone could help you how would you benefit? Tick what is relevant:

- |                          |                                      |                          |                                    |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Enable you to pitch                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Show your skills in a better light |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Develop your leadership skills       | <input type="checkbox"/> | Increase your performance          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Be more knowledgeable                | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hit your KPIs                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Access resources quickly             | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hit your targets                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Support you during challenging times | <input type="checkbox"/> | Keep your business afloat          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Gain relevant experiences            | <input type="checkbox"/> | Build confidence                   |

Now you could do that for others couldn't you? Don't worry about their status as whatever level they're at, they still need knowledge and contacts. All you have to do is to find out what their needs and wants are.

The key to this is proper research. Today, the advent of social media means this is so much easier to do. You can use platforms such as:

- LinkedIn
- Intranet
- Twitter
- Search engines
- Other online networks

You can also ask colleagues and members of your other networks

## How to stay in touch

When you know what people want, find out what knowledge your networks can share with you and pass it forward - P.i.F

*“A large number of my contacts are interested in women’s advancement and another contact is very interested in helping top talented female graduates. I share these interests with a couple of third parties. One later sends me a very interesting article about the European Council position about women on boards; quotas by Christmas and another on a sponsored event showcasing talented young females. I spent 10 minutes P.i.F’ing this information. Results: I feel good, added real value, helped my contacts by giving them the credit, stayed front of mind and reinforced my position as the ‘go to person’ with my key contacts.”*

Heather White - Smarter Networking

Ask your networks to send you articles, white papers, reports, web sites etc. about things they are involved with or interested in. Then you can select which items will be useful to your contacts and recycle the information.

By adding this level of value to your contacts, opportunities will come your way – guaranteed. By adding this level of value you won’t be spamming or being a nuisance – in fact the opposite, you will be known as highly credible.

To make these three things work and to keep up the momentum, you need to take a structured and focused approach. It will help you to be far more efficient with your time and resources.

### 1. Create two folders on your PC/laptop:

- In your email system - create a folder to store all the useful emails you receive from your contacts
- In your documents - create a folder for the documents you feel are worth keeping and sharing. You may want to have sub-folders to help you plan your search for future documents.

Every time someone sends you a useful document, always thank them. Don’t forget - they didn’t have to bother!

### 2. Create a personal database of all your contacts - you can do this over time:

- Basic level - just their name & email address
- Intermediate level - all their contact details

- Advanced level - code your contacts by their 'network role', their expertise/industry/points of interest and create groups so you can quickly send them useful 'stuff' without going through all your data
3. Every time you meet someone:
- Communicate your 'network role' e.g. Connector, Expert etc.
  - Find out what they're working on, points of interest etc. so you know the type of information they would be interested in receiving from you
  - Ask them to share their 'stuff' with you - you can recycle and file what they send to you
4. When you meet someone, always connect with them afterwards via:
- LinkedIn
  - Twitter/Facebook if you are active on these platforms
5. Share relevant information with individuals/groups using some or any of the following methods:
- Personalised email
  - Group email
  - Post
  - Social media posts e.g. LinkedIn, Twitter, hyperlinks etc.
  - Phone call
  - Over coffee

By adding this level of value, you will become known as a thought leader.

As much as others have wants and needs and you have made the decision to help your contacts, you too have wants and needs. So when was the last time you asked or shared what you wanted with key people?

Recently       A while ago       Rarely

Because people are so busy, it's up to you to share with people what you're looking for, so let's revisit the question you answered previously. Think back to what you need right now to help you with your career and business and then who in your network could help you.

# Online networking

**ONLINE NETWORKS CAN BE USED TO SUPPORT** and maximise your face-to-face networking efforts. Social media can also help you stay informed, spread the word, stay in touch, be visible and get your message out there. The key challenge here is to work out which social media channels are the best use of your time and efforts and enable you to reach the right contacts.

Many people have yet to get going on the social media front and of course there are millions who have jumped right in and are taking the world by storm.

A word of warning!! If you are searching others, others could be searching you? So:

- When was the last time you Googled yourself? What's in the public domain?
- Do you have a Facebook account - have you reviewed your private settings?
- Is your LinkedIn page up-to-date?

## 1. Which social media to use?

If you are time poor then only select 1-3 social media applications e.g. Twitter, Blog & LinkedIn. Before you do ask yourself the following questions:

- Based on the communities you want to build relationships with, which ones do they use? How to find out?
  - Search for your contacts on LinkedIn - who is there?
  - When on LinkedIn, look to see how many have loaded their Twitter account
  - Google a number of your contacts and see where they appear
- Based on your character and skills, work with the social media that shows you to your best advantage. So if you find writing a chore and you're not very good at it, rather than becoming a blogger, use Twitter or YouTube instead!

## 2. Share your expertise and experiences with the world and think ahead. List the projects/issues you are planning to be working on in the next six months:

3: Review your list of contacts and think about who you want to share your expertise and experiences with. Then use the 1:3 communication model; for every one thing you do e.g. project, choose three modes of communication to get the news out there.

PROJECT	COMMUNITIES	SOCIAL MEDIA

# Creating your elevator pitch

"A BRAND IS WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT YOU WHEN YOU ARE NOT IN THE ROOM." JEFF BEZOS, CEO AMAZON.

So, if you want people to remember you and recommend you to others, it's important that they have something good to say about you.

To engage people in a networking environment and make it easy for them to explain what you do to others, you need to make sure you have an authentic and engaging pitch. People rarely articulate what they do in a clear, engaging or motivating way. By learning to do so, you will stand out from the crowd.

Your reply to 'so, what do you do?' will vary according to a number of factors such as:

- Your environment
- Who else is with you
- Your character
- Their character
- How much time you/they have
- Are they being polite or do they really want to know

We have created two different pitch frameworks one for a pitch to a potential new client at a networking event, and the other for a pitch to an internal influencer.

## Your client pitch

Imagine the scene; you're at a networking event with about 60 business people. During the evening you've met some very interesting people but no potential clients. You join a new group and after a quick introduction you discover that one of the group is the type of person you were hoping to meet. 'Lady Luck' is smiling on you because the other people move away leaving you alone with your potential client who asks the inevitable question 'So, what do you do?'

It's important to remember that people build an impression of you in 30 – 60 seconds; so you need to get your message across quickly and clearly, and creating an elevator pitch ahead of time should help you do this.

### EXERCISE: BUILD YOUR PITCH

It is likely you'll have a different pitch depending on the type of networking event, what your objective is and who you'll be networking with. With a specific scenario in mind, start by answering these questions

1. Who is your target customer?
2. What is the customer need?
3. What is the product name?
4. What is the market category?
5. What is the key benefit?
6. Who or what is the competition?
7. What is your key differentiator?



Now that you have those answers slot them into the following statement:

I advise/consult with (target customer), who has (customer need), (product name) is a (market category) that (one key benefit). Unlike (competition), the product (unique differentiator).

Example: I advise women who are looking to advance in business. The everywomanNetwork, is an online portal with hundreds of personal development tools. Unlike many other women's networks we cross all sectors, entrepreneurs, and women in the workplace, creating an eclectic experience that our members find really useful.

Now that you have your elevator pitch, make sure you practise it often, this will ensure that you remember it and that it feels comfortable.

**Eight keys to a client pitch:**

1. Make sure you sound enthusiastic
2. Focus on benefits, case studies, broader issues rather than transactional things
3. Respect everyone and be interested, connectors and clients come in many guises
4. Create an engaging conversation that everyone can contribute to
5. Avoid using your job title - it doesn't matter to them and says nothing about you
6. Be mindful of their time, they may have other people they want to meet too
7. Try to arrange a follow-up appointment rather than focussing on securing a sale
8. Don't forget the call to action - this is the reason you showed up. Always have a 'non-sales' added value follow-up, e.g.
  - I have a very useful contact you may find interesting
  - I have a very useful report you may find interesting
  - I recently read a book; I will send you the details etc

**For example:** "I appreciate that you want to meet other people, so could I suggest we exchange details and perhaps arrange to have a coffee, and I can share in more detail information about the company I was telling you about."

## Your career pitch

There are a number of ways you can meet key people within your organisation:

- Attend an industry/sector networking event which they are likely to be at
- Attend a webinar that they are hosting
- Attend an external networking event where they are speaking
- Get invited to an informal event by a colleague
- Send them a personalised LinkedIn invite - start a conversation
- Follow them on Twitter - start a conversation

You need to communicate what you want them to remember about you tomorrow, think about three clear hooks, for example:

- What's to like about you?
- What do you fix?
- How could you fit in their organisation or department?

You also need to win them over - people support and champion people they like and trust.

Your aim is to:

- Start the 'relationship'
- Leave three memorable hooks
- Show that you are someone who could fit into their organisation, team or department.

It's important to prepare and practise in advance. Try this structure.

### 1. Your university/department/unit/division/project

- This should create a strong memorable hook
- This shows your area of passion/interest

### 2. Your focus

- Give a tiny story about your journey so far in your area of expertise and/or
- One sentence to sum up your objectives and passion about your subject

### 3. Area of research/interest/specialism

- Link your objectives to a project you are/will be covering
- Current areas of specialism

### 4. Looking for in the future

- Working towards
- Aims for the future
- If your aim is to ask them to be a mentor to you, you can introduce this topic of conversation at this point

### 5. Create a conversation

- Now you need to ask them a question
- If you are in company with others, involve them in this, avoid making this just between you and them

### 6. Your call to action

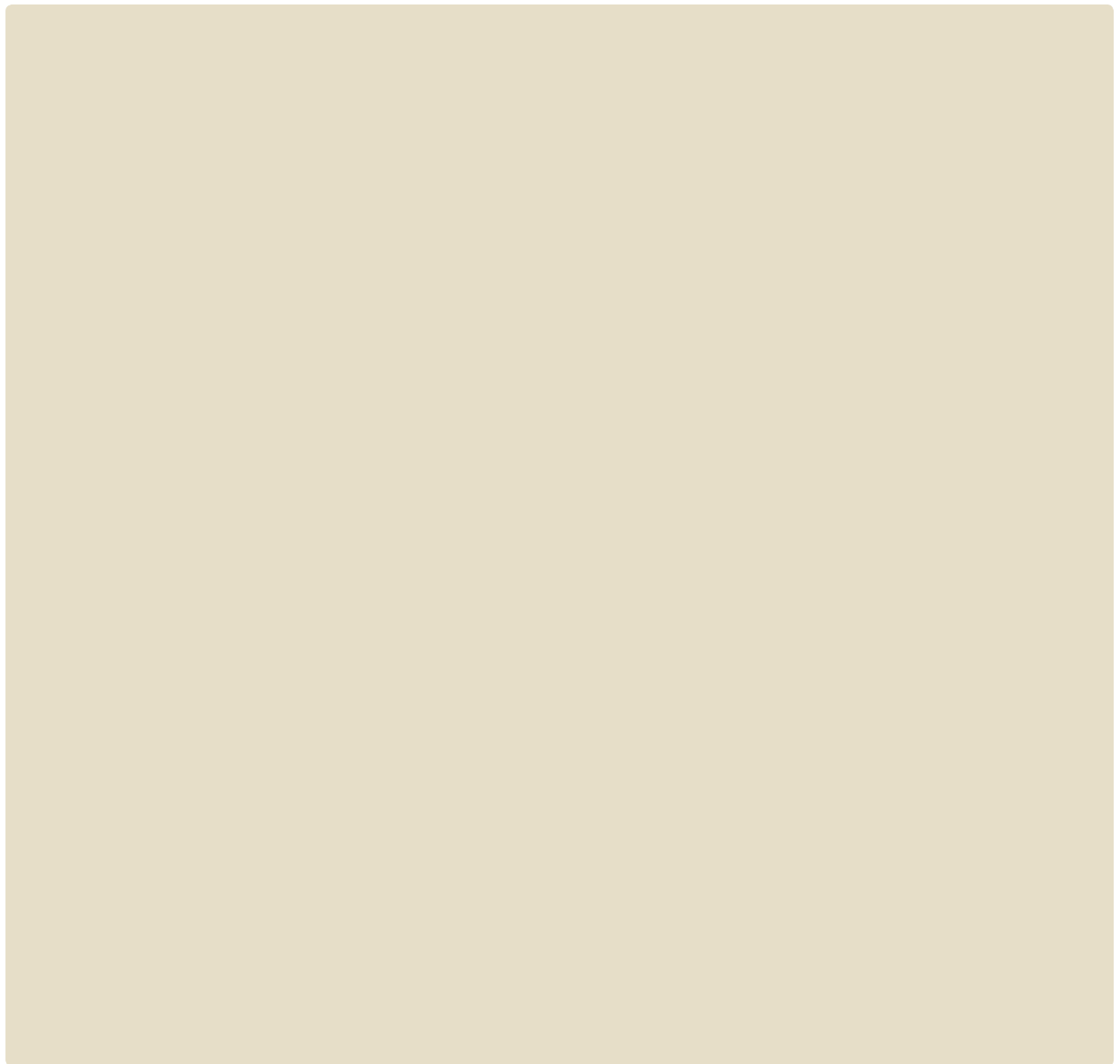
- Based on the conversation, situation and environment - ask for permission to stay in touch with them
- If you can, suggest you may have something useful for them which you would like to send on such as:
  - a contact, a useful report, a book
- Never assume they have seen it already, if they have they will know you are reading the same material as them and that you are thinking outside the box.

### Five keys when 'pitching' to a senior executive

1. Don't keep them too long - they have people they want to meet too
2. Engage colleagues in the conversation if they are trying to engage with them too, you will be judged on your overall soft skills
3. Don't make your conversation sound like your CV - they want a real conversation
4. Respect everyone in the conversation, introducers come in many guises
5. Don't forget the call to action - this is the reason why you showed up

### EXERCISE: CREATE YOUR PITCH

It is likely you will have a slightly different pitch depending on the type of networking event, what your objective is and who you will be networking with. So with a particular scenario in mind create a pitch.



## Action plan

NOW YOU'VE EXPLORED WHAT YOU WANT TO GET OUT OF NETWORKING, what type of networker you want to be, what you need, what you offer, who you need to network with, what others want from you and what your pitch is, you can build an action plan to kick start your networking.

- Your definition of networking
- The type of networker you want to be
- What you need
- What you offer
- The type of networks you need to network with
- Your elevator pitch

### Milestones - Example

MILESTONE	BY WHEN
CREATE A DATABASE OF CONTACTS	
BUILD NETWORK SIZE TO 50 CORE, 200 PERIPHERY	
CREATE ENGAGING AND AUTHENTIC NETWORKING PITCH	

### Activity Targets - How you will reach your milestones- Example

TYPE	FREQUENCY - DAILY/WEEKLY/MONTHLY ETC
IDENTIFY AND CONTACT X NEW NETWORKS	PER WEEK
SEND X ARTICLES	PER WEEK
MAKE X CALLS	PER WEEK
ATTEND X EXTERNAL EVENTS	PER MONTH
ATTEND X INTERNAL EVENTS	PER MONTH

## Further Reading

How to REALLY use Linked In by Jan Vermeiren  
[www.how-to-really-use-LinkedIn.com/](http://www.how-to-really-use-LinkedIn.com/)

Strengths of Weak Ties by Mark Granovetter, American Journal of Sociology  
[https://sociology.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publications/the\\_strength\\_of\\_weak\\_ties\\_and\\_exch\\_w-gans.pdf](https://sociology.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publications/the_strength_of_weak_ties_and_exch_w-gans.pdf)

Networking for Business Success by Heather White  
[www.smarter-networking.com/main/how-not-to-network.php](http://www.smarter-networking.com/main/how-not-to-network.php)

How Leaders Create and Use Networks by Herminia Ibarra and Mark Hunter  
<http://hbr.org/2007/01/how-leaders-create-and-use-networks/ar/1>

Networking Style Questionnaire (NSQ™)  
[www.smarter-networking.com/survey/networking-styles-questionnaire.php](http://www.smarter-networking.com/survey/networking-styles-questionnaire.php)

These links were correct at the time of publication. Over time they can get broken, if you notice any that are please let us know via: [contact@everywoman.com](mailto:contact@everywoman.com)

every  
woman

This workbook has been produced and edited by everywoman, with content commissioned from associate expert Heather White. And is part of the everywoman portfolio of resources that have been specially created to support and develop women as they advance their careers and businesses.

## everywoman Expert



**Heather White** started Smarter Networking in 2001 to help corporations and their teams unlock the hidden gems within their organisations for both talent and sales. The Smarter Networking Framework is fast becoming known as the leading model of effective and long-term networking for careers and business development in the UK. Heather has helped a huge range of clients such as Ernest & Young, Telstra International, London Chamber of Commerce, KPMG, RBS and the Metropolitan Police develop long-term trusted relationships and realise significant results for both themselves and their connections throughout the course of careers.

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