



# NETWORKING – HOW TO MAKE IT WORK

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We have all heard of networking. All of us do it in our own way. Some of us do it very well. Some dread it and do a somewhat sloppy job. And there are still those who get the concept wrong and end up making dozens of social contacts with no professional benefits or value?

Like it or dread it, networking is here to stay. As long as you need people to buy your product, service, ideas or skills, you need to connect with people. It has been part of our life much before it became a buzz phrase. Throughout history and across cultures, networking has been practiced for centuries, though it may have been presented as a structured activity to us only recently.

For me personally, networking has been the backbone or my success. Whatever little I have achieved has been made possible by the quality and calibre of people I associated with. Some followed me, many became my leaders and there were so many more who inspired me do more and try harder.

Good things must be shared, right? So let's start.

# WHAT IS NETWORKING?

LET US START BY DEFINING IT.



Networking refers to the ability of exchanging ideas and information with groups as well as individuals that have shared interests, such that long-term relationships are developed for mutual benefit.

Phew, that would take a bit of understanding. But let us try and make it simpler.

In simple words, networking skills are the ability to make contacts through a process that is two-way.

You give what the other person may require, and receive what may help you in your business. It has always been a two-way process. You have to be able and willing to give before you start expecting to receive anything from the other party.

Simply filling out your address book with details of influential people is not enough. Even knowing them is not enough.

Simply socialising for a few laughs and merriment is not enough.

**Building contacts and making connections is not the same. Networking is all about making connections.**



A top-down view of a diverse group of people's hands stacked in a circle, symbolizing teamwork and networking. The hands are of various skin tones and are wearing different colored sleeves and watches. The background is a light, neutral color.

# WHY IS NETWORKING

# IMPORTANT

An overwhelming majority of successful people, when asked, say they owe their success to their networking skills. Through networking they met people who were on a similar journey to theirs, with some skills to offer and some areas that needed help. Years of networking enables people to have a huge database of resources and expertise. People bring opportunities to improve ourselves, opportunities to offer our skills, opportunities to create rewarding relationships.

People bring opportunities.

Networking is all about people.

Whether we do it regularly and in a structured way, or using social engagements to meet people – networking is happening all around us. There's no denying the power a strong professional network can have over your career success. When it's done well, networking will not only help you land a job faster, but it will give you a competitive edge throughout every stage of your career.

It may sound surprising to some - people buy from people, not machines or gadgets, though it may seem that way to the untrained eye. **The truth is, before people buy what you sell, they buy into you.**





# BENEFITS OF **NETWORKING**

There are many benefits of networking. Here are some of the most commonly shared advantages by successful networkers.

## Helps you form relationships

We are living in a fast and digital world where few things have much lasting value. You may have 1000 contacts yet no friends. Networking helps you form personal relationships due to which you are able to connect individually and form meaningful relationships.

## Adds to your knowledge

Your networking abilities provide you with a great opportunity to share ideas and information. This leads to a lot of learning which helps **you develop new perspectives and take better decisions in your chosen field.**

## Creates opportunities

There is no end to where good networking can lead you. From your next job to the next order to the next member of your staff – with networking you have access to resources which can be hard to find on their own.





**NETWORKING**

# HOW TO IMPROVE **NETWORKING SKILLS**

Contrary to what most people think, networking is not a skill, at least not just a skill. Networking is more of a habit that needs to be developed because whether it's your search for employment, or wish to successfully grow in your career; networking will help you only if it comes naturally to you.

Don't worry, you can learn it as skill and nurture it to make it a habit. You don't have to attend the traditional cocktail party in order to be a successful networker. In fact, if you take your eyes off your smartphone when you're out in public, you'll see that networking opportunities are all around you every day. Look for opportunities to network strategically in every facet of your life.

How to learn or improve your networking skills? Let us start with these simple steps.



**REFERRALS**





## INTERACT **FACE-TO-FACE**

Social media may have made it easy to make contact, but solid connections need face to face interaction. So, get off that computer of yours and make real time, face-to-face interactions with people. The more people you meet, the better you get at it.

## WORK ON YOUR **MINDSET**

Do not approach networking with a selfish, whats-in-it-for-me mindset. Remember, it is a two way process. You will receive as good as you give. So, don't be obsessed about what you wish to achieve and enjoy interacting with people while making a great impression.

## **MAKE IT** ABOUT THEM

Observe and find out what resonates with the other person and make it all about them. People love being discussed and understood. Showing interest in others helps you put them at ease and they share their views more openly with you.



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## **Be an active listener**

It sounds simplistic but you will be surprised to know how many people are not good listeners. Result? They miss out on vital cues and information which could help them have a great conversation. By listening, we can provide ideas, tips and advice that could potentially help their business based on our knowledge of expertise, thus giving us the opportunity to create a deeper connection and possibly gain business opportunities for ourselves.

## **Provide Value**

We are all looking for value all the time, consciously or otherwise. While we cannot force others to provide value to us during an interaction, we can certainly make it a point to provide it to them. It could be a pointer, some advice, a new connection or some vital information. Once people see you as a credible source of value, they will do just the same for you too.

## **Follow Up**

People like to be seen as valuable and sought after. If you have had a good evening of networking, make sure to follow up with those you found to be potentially beneficial to you. We all meet people and forget about them the next day. But if you are focused, you'd follow up and create a better connection. Update your contacts about your progress. Stay in touch, especially as you move forward. Be sure to draw connections between their efforts and your progress whenever possible.



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You'll agree that the most connected people are often the most successful, or is it the other way around? Whether in your workplace or sports club, good connections can always pay you back in dividends throughout the course of your career. Networking will help you develop and improve your skill set, stay on top of the latest trends in your industry, keep a pulse on the job market, meet prospective mentors, partners, and clients, and gain access to the necessary resources that will foster your career development.

I can daresay that networking has played a huge role in shaping my career and professional success. Like we said earlier in this book, good things must be shared. So I am thrilled to share my secrets with you and empower you to create your own success story. I will train you to think outside the box and devise ways to network and make networking an integral part of your business practice.

To make it easy for you, I have created a special webinar which gives you the big picture as well as the finer details. I will explain the concept, take your questions and make sure you know everything you need to make a start.

With my guidance and your hard work, your networking skills (and habit) will improve, helping you create a great resource for your personal and professional success .

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