

Authentic Networking

Benjamin Ball




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Authentic Networking

Your guide to building a stress-free and enjoyable
networking habit



Authentic Networking: Your guide to building a stress-free and enjoyable networking habit

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1 Introduction

For many people, networking equals ‘sucking up to important people at receptions’, and ‘faking interest in boring people in the hopes that they’ll introduce me to someone that I want to meet’. You have to talk to strangers, which is uncomfortable, with a hidden agenda and try not to let it show. It’s all kind of fake and forced. Or is it?

It’s our attitude towards networking that makes it tiring or annoying. Often, it’s also our own insecurities about our professional worth and possibilities that make it seem like we have to attack a seven-headed dragon with a glass of sparkling wine in its hand.

Question is, is the only way of networking? Could it be possible that ‘networking’, in its broadest sense, is for everybody? That we’re already doing it, right now? That there are different ways to network, and that at least one of those ways can work wonderfully for you?

You already know what the answer is. Of course! This book will show you a few ways of networking that you may not have thought about. However! Don’t think that there is some magical way of lying on your couch watching TV, and still build a network. It will take some time and effort. But you’ll be able to use what you like and what you’re good at to do it.

It’s the difference between stretching, and changing. In this book I’ll be inviting you to **stretch**. That means I’ll ask you to do things that you are able to do and that are natural to you, but that you’re not used to. That’s a different thing from requiring you to **change**, where you have to become someone else entirely. People are attracted to **authenticity combined with communication skills**, and that’s exactly what you’ll learn in this book.

Curious? Let’s get started!

2 What is networking?

Let's begin with a definition of what networking is.

Networking is the process of establishing mutually beneficial relationships with other people. It's creating a group of acquaintances and associates and keeping it active through regular communication for mutual benefit. Networking can be conducted in a local or international community, or via the Internet.

2.1 What is Authentic Networking?

Authentic Networking is not so much about DOING as it is about BEING. It's networking in such a way that it coincides with your values and goals. It implies that you:

- Focus more on who you really are than on who you think you need to be.
- Have a good idea of where you want to go, without fixing yourself on one specific path.
- Respect the laws of the human network, and focus more on relationships than on results.
- Know how to balance push and pull.
- Keep working on yourself and on your skills to become a better person.

As you can read in this last point, Authentic Networking is about more than building relationships. It's about **building yourself**, to the point where you become the person that you want to be and that others can network with.

In competitive sports, there are two ways to deal with an opponent. You can focus on his weaknesses and try to play into those. Or you can focus on your own strengths and play those out as much as possible. Try to impose 'your game'. Ask any top athlete and they'll tell you the second method is way more consistent, and successful.

The first implicitly puts you below the other: you're adapting to him or her. In the long run, you forget about your own game and qualities. In the second, you're becoming the best player you can be and using that. You decide your own fate.

This is exactly what Authentic Networking is all about, for me. In this way, people also cease to be opponents. **The only opponent is within yourself**, the part of you that's afraid to fail, to be rejected, to actually get what it wants and not know what to do with it.... Imagine what a difference in vibe you'll give off when you're comfortable with yourself and deeply convinced of your own worth.

Those that learn to master their inner demon are (to me) far stronger than those that seek to hide them and manipulate others into doing their will.

3 Kinds of networking

There are all kinds of ways in which you can get to know people that are interesting to your cause. For the purpose of this book and of your future networking habit, I'll define two kinds. Later on in this book, I'll elaborate on this with a few different personality types.

Before I begin, it's important to know that every successful networking strategy is a mix of both types of networking. One isn't better than the other; it's about making the mix that works for you as a person, and that has the most positive impact on your professional pursuits.

1. Direct and indirect networking
2. Offline and online networking

3.1 Direct and Indirect networking

3.1.1 Direct or Proactive networking

This is what most people mean or think about when the word 'networking' pops up. It's where you go around at receptions and daringly talk to that Very Important Person that can help you out. You make a funny remark, the other person laughs.

Then you dive into a more serious subject and your 'target' starts to nod vigorously. You part ways with the exchange of a card and the certainty that you'll be in touch. As you walk away triumphantly, your conversation partners follows you with an approving gaze.

Sounds good, doesn't it? Sadly, that's not what most networking looks like. And it's not something that most people will ever be able to do. It also costs loads of energy, and has the risk of coming across as superficial. Because when you're talking to everyone, who are you really connecting with? Who's special? And as we all know, people need to feel at least somewhat special if they'll do anything for you.

Imagine someone coming up to you and talking idly for five minutes before handing over a business card and wandering off. Would you recommend them to someone? Maybe. But what if you had a really nice conversation, and you both took the time to get to know each other a bit better. Would you recommend that person? More likely.

3.1.2 Indirect or Reactive networking

Yes, even an introverted person can successfully build an active and rewarding network. In fact, it can be just as good, if not better. One thing is for sure though: it'll look quite different.

Reactive networking means that you let things come to you, more than that you search them out yourself. Instead of taking initiative, you invite others to come to you. You don't walk up to people you don't know and introduce yourself.

Then how do you do it?! Well, you're probably already doing it. You already have a network. Reactive networking is making the most of what you already have, and working through that. It's making sure that you get introduced without having to force yourself.

By going through one of your contacts, for example, and letting that person take the initiative for you. Or organising something yourself, where you become the host and have a perfect excuse to talk to everyone.

The risk is that you end up standing in a corner with the people you already know. So some initiative will always be necessary to meet new people. Indirect networking is like Content Marketing: it's showing yourself without selling anything. You focus on strong relationships and let the others decide for themselves.

3.2 Offline and online networking

Offline networking requires little explanation. It's the old meet-you-in-person thing where you have a talk and exchange information. It means you need to get out of your house and converse. It's quite active, it can be tiring. At the same time, real-life connections are generally the strongest and most durable.

Online networking is very close to marketing. Because the level of interaction is way lower than IRL (In Real Life), it's more about putting up a visible and attractive front that people can connect to. You build a great profile and post regular updates so everybody knows who you are and what you stand for.

The biggest advantage is that it works wherever, whenever – even when you're not there! Because people are connected to your online presence. And you can connect to people that are on another continent, or extremely busy, or otherwise hard to reach.

This book will focus more on the offline part, but I would like to give you some tips on online networking. I think everyone should do passive online networking (being present and findable), and if you have the time and resources you can either create compelling content (in between passive and active), or become a full-blown active online networker.

3.2.1 Be present, and findable

I believe everyone should have an online presence. It would be a shame not to. People would sooner look something up in Google than ask their colleague who's sitting next to them; so not being in there somewhere would be a waste.

That being said, here are my two pointers. Firstly, **pimp your profiles**. Make sure they're complete and attractive. Create an image, stylise it, make sure all the links are there. Secondly, think about **keywords**. What do your users type in Google to find people like you? Fill your profiles with that.

If you're really into it, read an Search Engine Optimisation – [SEO course like the free one from Google](#) (link straight to the free PDF file in English) and create a completely Search Engine Optimised site!

3.2.2 Create compelling content

If you want to give something concrete to your visitors to show what you do, but don't want to spend all your time online, this is for you. Create content: e-books, webinars, blog articles, FAQs, forums... everything where **you, as an expert, give away information and resources**. The great thing is on the internet, it stays available. And if you read the above about SEO, it also stays findable.

The trick is **not to try to sell anything**. Authentic Online Networking is all about offering value, and letting people decide for themselves. People can smell a sales pitch a mile off. Which is not to say you shouldn't sell anything.

It means that it shouldn't be the main purpose of your content. Don't just throw some bland truisms in a lay-out and then say: "And the REALLY interesting stuff is available for only \$19.99 in this link!" That's not going to make you an internet star.

A more interesting approach is to share your vision, your expertise, your thoughts with the world. Become your own publisher. Begin to exchange with your audience while you're doing it. Then record it, and make it available for anyone who'd like to look at it again. For more thoughts on this, just take a look at the concept of '**Content Marketing**'.

3.2.3 Active online networking – enter with caution!

Some people live online. They check their updates after waking up, in the toilet, during lunch... E.very bleep is a possible reaction – and you can't miss anything! Some amazing things have been done with online networking, viral reactions that have spanned the world. But let's face it, that's just not for everybody.

Not every shop needs to change its front every two weeks. Nor do we always have the time. If you are one of those who love being active on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn... then rock on! If you're not, no use in forcing it. There's not that much to learn about it: if you spend the time, you'll learn soon enough.

If you feel you have to take a course, you're probably not spending enough time on it. In which case, wonder if it's really worth your while? As with everything, time is money and you should consider if you can't do more useful things with your time than collect fans and likes. It's a viable strategy, without a shadow of a doubt, but in my humble opinion: only for those who naturally love the medium.

4 About learning to network

4.1 The In & Out of Networking

When you're networking, you're showing two things. You're showing **the In**, your personality and professional qualities. You're convincing people that you're a worthwhile person to talk to, work with, connect to.

You're doing this using **the Out**, your communication skills. You're using techniques that are as old as humanity to optimise how you come across. Smiling, being interested, active listening....

This book is all about creating **the perfect balance between In & Out: a well-developed and successful professional that is able to communicate well.**

4.2 Practice makes perfect

Becoming successful at anything doesn't happen overnight. And if you're not there yet, you'll have to do something differently or it'll never happen.

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*“If you keep on doing what you’ve always done,
you’ll keep on getting what you’ve always got.”*

– W.L. Bateman

As with anything, if you’re going to change how you network you’ll have to do something about it. You’ll actively tackle and improve certain aspects of your personality and style. Some of those things might feel uncomfortable, or weird when you start doing them.

The question that often arises here is: “But won’t I come across as fake?” or “That just isn’t me.” I would like to make an important distinction here. On the one hand, there’s **practising something you believe in until it becomes natural**. Like learning to drive a car. On the other hand, there’s doing something you don’t really believe in because you think you have to. Like laughing at people’s jokes or trying to be the center of attention.

They may look alike at first sight, but the difference couldn’t be greater. People can *feel* when you don’t really believe in something. Whereas you can be a bit fumbly and insecure about what you’re doing, and by being convinced it’s what you want to do, you will often be forgiven and responded well to.

You can perform all kinds of techniques, practice an array of tricks. What you do without actually *being* it, quickly comes across as fake. People can sense, in your body language, in your tonality, in your words, what’s going on beneath the surface. So don’t try to fake what’s going on.

What you internalise without yet being able to bring it out perfectly, quickly becomes who you are and – most importantly – how you are perceived.

My invitation to you in this book, is to **try out the techniques I mention** that you can believe in. Don’t be too quick to dismiss what I propose! These are things thousands of people across the globe are doing, with success. We often confuse our fears and doubts with not wanting or needing something, while in fact we crave them. Don’t let your judgment be clouded!

4.3 One thing at a time

Another tip is to **practice only one thing at a time**. Like with sports, you need to work on different aspects of your technique separately, before bringing them all together. Don’t go out more and not pay attention to any of the techniques. Just winging it won’t bring you new insight or growth.

Then again, don’t try to do everything at the same time as that will make you stilted and slow. **Take one thing every day, every time you go out, and work on it until you can feel the progress.**

5 The laws of networking

5.1 We're all in the Web

As humans, we share the Earth with each other. We also share it with animals, plants and other living beings. We undergo the effect of climates, seasons, day and night, planetary movement. We consist of energy that interacts, mingles, takes shape and dissolves, creates and destroys.

The Human Race is a vast network of beings all connected. Even though we may dislike others and feel completely disconnected from others, we're very much alike. Whether we like it or not, we're part of the fabric of mankind. We're part of human history, of the nameless masses that form the movement that sweeps us forward. We're the traffic jams, the wars, the consumerism, the solidarity, technological advances....

By existing, we contribute to the evolution of the Human Race in a myriad of ways. We pay taxes to maintain a government. We pollute the planet to poison ourselves. We work in factories and offices to create and spread beautiful inventions, as well as terrible atrocities. We influence each other in thinking, in doing and in feeling.

You could call this interconnectedness a Web. When anything in this web moves, it influences the rest, possibly causing something seemingly unconnected elsewhere. This is also referred to as the Butterfly Effect.

The Web, like every living system, has Laws. Not the kind with judges and juries, but the immutable ones that have all kinds of names: Cause and Effect, Gravity, Connectedness, Karma.... Even a cell has its laws. Put one thing out of place and the whole thing collapses or transforms. There is a balance.

Networking, in its broadest sense, means making the Web work in your favour. It means knowing the ways of the world, and flowing with the unwritten rules. It means aligning yourself with the Laws of Nature.

This is all quite spiritual and abstract. But in this course, I'll translate some of those Laws into Networking Attitudes that have an effect on the amount of recognition and reward you receive for your efforts.

5.2 Law 1 – No man is an island

When you act as if you're alone in the world, don't expect the world to comply to you. In this sense, networking is a very spiritual activity. You're connecting with your fellow men, and joining forces in common goals. We're helping each other forward, by exchanging information and experiences, providing each other with added value.

The Web of Humans is full of riches and misery. The latter is why we often disconnect, or try to. But this also disconnects us from the opulence and opportunity that lie in wait. So networking is also opening up, healing wounds and projecting oneself outwards.

5.3 Law 2 – 6 Degrees of Separation

We're all connected. Whoever you want to reach is closer than you think. It only takes a few well-chosen steps to get where you would like to be. The Web consists of smaller spheres, groups of people that are connected by places, professions or beliefs that are accessible to you.

To move 'up' in the world often means moving into those spheres that attract you and present an evolution as opposed to your previous situation.

If we learn to use our network effectively, we can reach people a lot quicker and easier than we often imagine.

5.4 Law 3 – The Matrix of Purpose

Everybody has things they want to achieve. Especially those with professional success. Everybody also already has a close network, again especially those that are already successful. That means that a new connection has to have an added value.

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When we learn to see the Matrix of what everyone wants and needs, a path becomes clear on how we can get to where we want and need to be. It runs through those people that we can add value to, who then connect us to others and so on.

5.5 Law 4 – The Law of Give and Take

Every system is in balance. Those who only Take, stop receiving. Those who Give will receive, if they can accept it. Give and Take has a way of balancing itself out in the long run.

Like someone who's underpaid or undervalued for a job well done will eventually leave, or burn out. The person is 'done giving'. Or someone who cheats people into trusting them ends up alone, mainly because not being trustworthy oneself means it becomes impossible to trust others.

A relationship where one person gives more than the other, will break or correct itself. This is why people that Give in a smart and deliberate way, are bound to Receive plenty on the other side. The Law of the Web implies that the receiving can come from a different corner than where the giving is done.

5.6 Law 5 – The Law of Reciprocity

It may seem that many people can easily take without giving anything back. And yet, we're more prone to give to someone who has given something to us first. This was proven in a famous experiment, that went like this:

People were subjected to a random test. The real test was in the people present: a professor and an assistant. At some point in the test the professor would leave, and the assistant was left alone with the test subject. The assistant would then proceed to try and sell some lottery tickets in support of a local organisation.

In both groups, the assistant would first get a drink from the nearby vending machine. In one group, he wouldn't bring or offer anything to the test subject. In the second, he would. What was the result?

The result was that people who were offered a drink bought 6 times more raffle tickets than the ones who weren't! A remarkable result that you can observe in your daily life if you try it. Do something for someone, and they'll feel bound to do something back.

A sidenote here is that you should only give what you can miss. If you're giving away things that you actually need, something is wrong. There is a hidden dynamic, and often people will feel uncomfortable taking it or forced to do something back because the giving is hurting you.

5.7 Law 6 – The Law of Atmospheres

Similar people search each other out instinctively. When someone feels the other shares their values, socio-economic status, sense of humor, hobbies...they tend to cluster. That's how you get groups. Every group has its 'atmosphere', the common denominator of what is deemed valuable and acceptable.

When networking, it's very important to be aware of this atmosphere and to adapt to it. As an individual, you'll seldomly win against a whole group's atmosphere. The group makes the rules. If you want to join, you have to go through its rites. This goes for friends, families but also for teams, departments and companies.

Think well before you try to join a group; is it really something for you? You might like a certain job on paper, but is this the kind of atmosphere you want to dwell in? You'll have to adapt to it, live in it. Your best career move might make you very unhappy because you don't feel welcome or comfortable with your colleagues.

In networking, the same applies. Who will you talk to? And is it worth spending a whole evening with someone you don't really like to get a job, or another contact? It may well be; don't forget however, that if one person in a group is a certain way, the others in their group will also be like that.

Reflect on the kind of atmosphere you prefer, and take it into account when making decisions.

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6 Networking strategy

An overview of the steps in creating a sound and long-term networking strategy:

Why?

Why would you network? Networking only makes sense when you have Goals, short-term and in the long run.

What?

What do you do? Define your Product.

What can people help you with right now? Define your Pitch.

Who?

Who can help you? Who can't?

Who are you, and what is your networking style?

How can you deal with different kinds of people?

Where & When?

Finding the right place & time to network.

How?

Practical Networking Techniques. Become a Giver and a Go-To Person. Develop a Professional and Public Self. How to enter a group, build a networking habit and follow up on contacts.

6.1 Step 1 – Why?

Why would you network at all? Why would you leave the comfort of your home, the warmth of your friends and family, the joys of your usual surroundings for the jungle of unknown people who aren't interested or that are only out to use you for their own benefit?

That last sentence might be slightly exaggerated, but the essence remains: if you don't have a goal when networking and/or you don't achieve it, you may as well just stay at home or hang out at your local bar.

Watch this [video of Simon Sinek explaining how great leaders are different from others](#). In one sentence: they begin with the question: ‘Why?’ and only then think about the ‘How?’ to end up with ‘What?’. That’s exactly the order I’ll be following in this book.

For more reading on this subject, a great reference is **Stephen R. Covey’s ‘The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People’**. A must-read!

The first step to any networking success is having a goal. You can be a great networker, and know everyone ‘on the scene’. But if there’s no conversion at the end of it, there’s no point.

Goal setting isn’t only the essence of networking; it’s also the basis for a fulfilled and active life. Goals give you hope and motivation for a brighter future. They propel you forwards and make you bridge difficult times. They remove the doubt and idleness and turn your life into a productive, happy one. That is, if you make a healthy habit of setting goals – the right kind of goals – and achieving them.

6.1.1 SMART goal setting

SMART goal setting brings structure and trackability into your goals and objectives. In stead of vague resolutions, SMART goal setting creates verifiable trajectories towards a certain objective, with clear milestones and an estimation of the goal’s attainability. Every goal or objective, from intermediary step to overarching objective, can be made more or less S.M.A.R.T. and as such, brought closer to reality.

In corporate life, SMART goal setting is one of the most effective and widely used tools for achieving goals. Once you’ve charted to outlines of your project, it’s time to set specific intermediary goals. With the SMART checklist, you can evaluate your objectives. SMART goal setting also creates transparency throughout the company. It clarifies the way goals came into existence, and the criteria their realisation will conform to.

Why not think of a goal you want to set right now, personal or professional. To make your goal S.M.A.R.T., it needs to conform to the following criteria: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely.

Specific

What exactly do you want to achieve? The more specific your description, the bigger the chance you'll get exactly that. S.M.A.R.T. goal setting clarifies the difference between 'I want to be a millionaire' and 'I want to make €50.000 a month for the next ten years by creating a new software product'.

Questions you may ask yourself when setting your goals and objectives are:

What exactly do I want to achieve?

Where?

How?

When?

With whom?

What are the conditions and limitations?

Why exactly do I want to reach this goal? What are possible alternative ways of achieving the same?

Who is your target group? And how can we reach them?

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Measurable

Measurable goals means that you identify exactly what it is you will see, hear and feel when you reach your goal. It means breaking your goal down into measurable elements. You'll need concrete evidence. Being happier is not evidence; not smoking anymore because you adhere to a healthy lifestyle where you eat vegetables twice a day and fat only once a week, is.

Measurable goals can go a long way in refining what exactly it is that you want, too. Defining the physical manifestations of your goal or objective makes it clearer, and easier to reach.

Acceptable

Is your goal acceptable? That means investigating whether the goal is supported by your surroundings. You weigh the effort, time and other costs your goal will take against the profits and the other obligations and priorities you have with others.

Sometimes we set goals that counteract other people's goals. We then receive resistance. That can be unavoidable, like competing for a position. Or we want a job that doesn't fit with our family situation. Then the question arises: what is most important to you?

Some goals are be dangerous to yourself and others, like inventing a weapon of Doom, selling a terrible product at an exorbitant price or lying to make someone look bad and better yourself.

Realistic

Is reaching your goal realistic to you? Do you actually want to run a multinational, be famous, have three children and a busy job? You decide for yourself whether you have the personality for it, or your team has the bandwidth.

If you don't have the time, money or talent to reach a certain goal you'll certainly fail and be miserable. There's nothing wrong with shooting for the stars; if you aim to make your department twice as efficient this year as it was last year with no extra labour involved, how bad is it when you only reach 1,8 times? Not too bad...

Timebound

Time is money! Make a tentative plan of everything you do. Everybody knows that deadlines are what makes most people switch to action. So install deadlines and go after them.

Keep the timeline realistic and flexible, that way you can keep morale high. Being too stringent on the timely aspect of your goal setting can have the perverse effect of making the learning path of achieving your goals and objectives into a hellish race against time – which is most likely not how you want to achieve anything.

<i>My SMART Goal</i>
Specific
Measurable
Acceptable
Realistic
Timebound

6.1.2 Goals in time

Not only do you need to think about your Goals. You need to do it in different timeframes. If you set a goal for within four years, your chances of making it are way too small. You need short-term goals to keep you going, to give you focus.

And longer-term goals to keep you going in the general right direction. Both aspects are essential: working hard but in the wrong direction will get you nowhere. Nor will having wonderful long-term dreams but not working towards them right now.

Set one SMART goal for the same aspect of your life in each of these timeframes:

This week

3 months

1 year



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6.2 Step 2 – What?

Once you know what your goals are, it's time to take a look at what you're selling. What do you have on offer? How can you make sure people remember you and what you do after they've met you?

You need a **Product, and a Pitch.**

6.2.1 Defining your Product

When people ask you “What do you do?”, what's your answer? In the worst case you can't really say, or it's complicated, or you need 5 minutes to explain. Let alone that people feel that they can help you in any concrete way, except offer up their unsolicited opinions. Without a clear-cut and easily explained Product, you can't expect any kind of success.

- Describe what you do in 10-15 words.
- What is it called outside of your industry (no jargon)
- What is the value you offer?
- Who do you do it for?

My product (1):

A clear and useful format is to use a **Title + Subtitle**. So you give the name of your job, possibly in as human words as possible. Don't say what it says on your business card, like “Senior Vice President of Front Office Project Management Workflow”. Say what the job itself is: “Workflow Improvement”, or “Project manager”.

Then add an extra line, the Subtitle, to clarify and/or expand. Make sure it's relevant and revealing! You may want to explain what the position or product entails, or define your specific niche.

Make it simple and clear. Sugarcoating it only makes it unclear, and difficult for other to remember and help you. No-one is interested in an ‘Academic Research Executive’, you're a student.

Making it sound bigger than it is doesn't improve your chances as much as you may think it does. In fact, studies reveal that people who routinely use difficult words are perceived as less intelligent than those who explain the same thing in clear and simple terms.

In this phase, you don't need to define what makes it special yet. Just make sure it's clear and that people can remember it easily, even when they've forgotten all the rest. As in: "The wooden floors guy"; "That woman who researches cells/medieval skulls/otters in rivers..." It needs to be so simple a child could remember it.

Examples:

I'm in floors. I provide people with quality wooden floorpanels for their terraces.

I'm a job coach. I guide people towards better work.

I'm a researcher. I study cells/medieval skulls/otters in the Ortega River in Spain...

I'm a student looking for a job. My specialty is Italian literature.

We make smart phone and tablet apps. We create virtual tours for restaurants that they can embed on their websites.

My product (2):

6.2.2 Making a Pitch

Sometimes, it's enough to mention your Product to get people talking and letting you know what they think about it, and who they know might be interested. Other times, you may have to add a Pitch so people know who you're looking for and why you're the person their contacts need.

Your Pitch is connected to your Goals. It lets people know what you're looking for right now. Feel free to tell people all about your passion and the details of your projects and work, as long as you also make the Pitch. Let people know what you're looking for, otherwise your conversation will just end up being classified as 'Interesting'. What you want it to be classified as is: 'Actionable'!

The human psyche hates loose ends. We want to instinctively tie up the knot, straighten the picture frame, know how the story ends. People will unconsciously store that you're looking for something, and when a match pops up at least think of you. If you made a good impression, you have a good reputation or you did something for them, your chances that they'll act on it will increase exponentially.

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Examples:

A: "I'm in floors. I provide people with quality wooden floorpanels for their terraces."

B: "Hm, interesting."

A: "Thank you. We're actually the exclusive distributors of a new kind of hardwood that never rots or moulds. It's the new rage for anyone who has or wants a wooden terrace. Do you have one?"

C: "I'm a researcher. I study cells."

D: "Hm, interesting."

C: "It is actually. I'm currently looking for funds/a facility to research how a certain protéine we just discovered could help cure cancer, or stall ageing."

E: "I'm a student looking for a job. My specialty is Italian literature."

F: "Hm, interesting. How's the job search going?"

E: "Pretty good. I'm still looking for a company that needs an Italian interpreter or, if that exists, a company that excavates and translates ancient Italian scrolls."

My Pitch:

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6.3 Step 3 – Who?

In some situations it's crystal clear who can help you out; a certain Professor may be able to grant you a position and you need to meet and impress him or her. Or you're looking for a job in a different organisation and are looking for local contacts. In that case, you can clearly define who you want to meet.

You can be very concise about this: once you meet who you need and convince them, you can stop. Of course, most of the time it doesn't work like that. We all know how sensitive certain positions are to 'knowing someone on the inside'.

Most of the time, there are many different roads available and you don't know which one will work out for you. In fact, you may not even know what avenues are available until you hear about them. You want to build up a reputation so you can optimise your chances at whatever opening might be coming up at an institution within your field.

In that case, you're not looking for someone in particular but building a reputation. You want people all over to know you, so they think of you when your particular function is needed anywhere. You never really know who's going to be able to help you. The tea lady's son could be the colleague of the person who can make your dreams come true. You never know. That's why it's important to develop a Professional and Public Self (see Step 5 – How).

People that could help me if I met them:

6.4 What type of networker are you?

The way you network is connected to who you are as a person. Certain ways of interacting and connecting to others, are just closer to your nature than others. You prefer certain ways of working, of talking.... That's why you can instantly 'click' with some, and never seem to get along with other people.

The **Social Styles Model**, explained below, can give you an insight into different types of people. It shows you why certain people are easier for you to get along with, and how you can deal with others that are further away from your instinctive preference.

The model also lists **your qualities as well as the challenges those qualities entail** when you exaggerate. Because every quality is in balance with its opposite: structure versus creativity, speed versus depth, people versus results.... When discovering yourself, you also discover where you are on each of these spectrums, and how you can enlarge your scope.

The great thing is, working on this also means **working on yourself as a person**. The more developed and flexible you become within yourself, the easier it becomes to relate to others. It doesn't mean you have to become someone else, on the contrary. It means you become more of yourself, and appreciate others for being themselves, however different.

6.5 The Social Styles Model

The Social Styles Model is built around two axes, that create four quadrants.

The horizontal axis is the spectrum Proactive – Reactive.

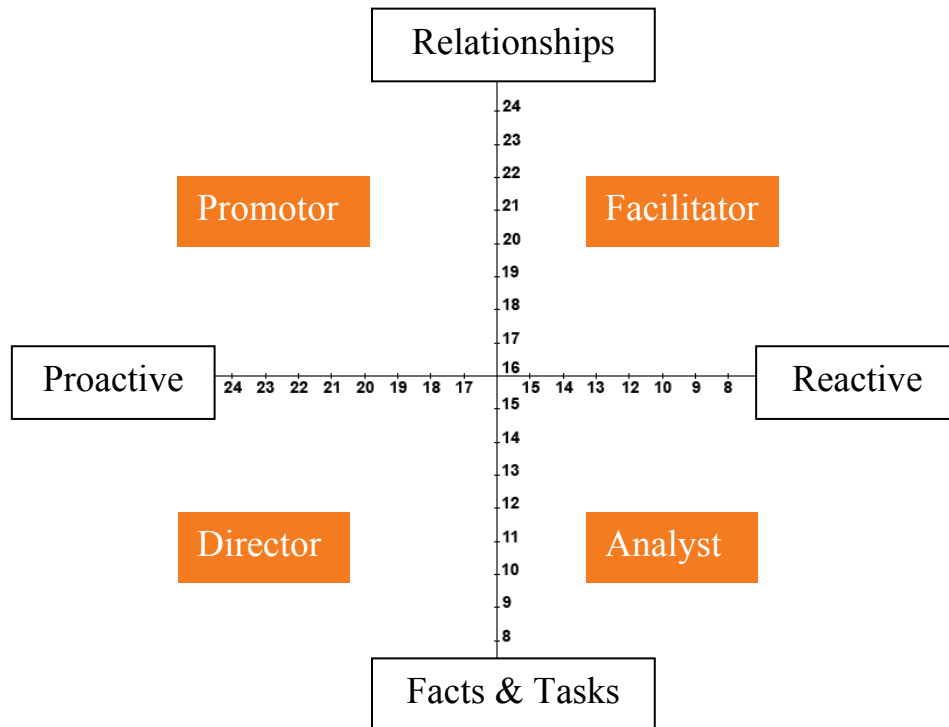
Being **proactive** implies taking initiative. People that are proactive generally like speed and results. They don't need all the details to move ahead. Sometimes, they even move too quickly and run into walls.

Being **reactive** implies a more compliant and waiting attitude. Reactive profiles focus on depth and quality, more than on speed. That means they'll take more time for things, and let things come to them rather than go looking for them. Sometimes, that makes them on the slow or passive side.

The vertical axis is the spectrum Relationships – Facts&Tasks.

Relationship people value relationships above facts. They prefer to deal with the human side of things. They're good at making friends, forging bonds, networking. On the downside, they may neglect objective facts and lose results because of their emotional ties to people and situations.

Facts&tasks people want objective truth and facts. They analyse well and make their decisions based on rational conclusions. Work comes before play. These profiles tend to be more serious, and can come across as distant and sometimes even cold.



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...I finally learned to speak it in just six lessons"

Jane, Chinese architect

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Relationships + Proactivity: The promotor sells him/herself to others

Promotors are spontaneous, full of ideas, energetic, stimulating, creative, enthusiastic and future-oriented. You know them! They're the president of the sports club or personnel union and like to walk up front.

Promotors are **dominant and relationship-oriented**. They're real trend setters. They're interested in innovation, their image and reputation. They're original and like things to go fast. They also like comfort and luxury.

They have a **holistic working and learning style**. That means they look for the big picture and are quick to lay connections. They learn by doing.

Important to people with a promoting style is **recognition**. It's one of their **basic needs**. He or she wants to be seen. When they get this recognition, they'll behave perfectly and pull the group they're part of.

They can have **difficulties with** priorities, planning and maintenance. They also tend to stray on the superficial side, ignoring difficulties and tough situations. They like it if others are open, join in on their fantasies and illusions, and are optimistic towards the future.

How to recognise them

Speaks easily and lively.

Moves a lot, like nodding and gesticulating while talking.

Makes eye contact.

May touch others easily.

Completes others' sentences and interrupts.

Often can't stay in one place too long.

Laughs and smile a lot.

Gives off a fun and light vibe.

What they need

Exclusivity

New things

Luxury, prestige

Attention

Social contacts, being 'connected' and popular

Feel unique

Networking style

Open and direct.

Meets people and converses easily.

Hard to pin down.

Often moves around the room fluently.

How to approach and deal with them

Smile, invite indirectly

Ask questions, give compliments

Don't wait too long with your pitch

Share their creative ideas and enthusiasm

Offer them the best and newest

Express your admiration, give compliments – place them on a pedestal (a little)

Give personalised service

Guide with short and specific questions

Vary business with personal

Vary in-depth facts with 'feelings': great, lovely, well done...

Don't talk too long or too much in detail

What you can work on if you're this type

Be patient with slower types.

Don't try to overrule, let others finish speaking.

Learn to stay in one place, physically but also in a conversation.

Create structure in your life on all fronts.

Generate depth by staying and delving into the details.

Don't try to breeze over problems too much, acknowledge the negative.

Learn to appreciate the 'normal'.

Qualities	Challenges
Enthusiastic and dynamic Jovial and charming Informal and loose Full of ideas and initiative Creative Communicative Sees needs of others Motivates others Has good social contacts Likes New and Exclusive Global thinker, holistic learner	Tends to be egocentric Can be superficial Impatient Can't always keep promises Average listener Not or badly organised, often too many appointments Rarely on time Plans little or overestimates him/herself Doesn't like routine Has a hard time finalising projects

Relationships + Reactivity: The facilitator likes to blend in and get along with others

Facilitators are **reactive and relationship-centered**. Examples of this style are employees that 'behave' and that like helping everyone with odds and ends even if it means leaving their work. It's the neighbour that always has time to help you out.

This type is more **accommodating** than the others, sometimes even docile. They don't like being in the center of attention, but they do like helping others. They prefer others to take the decisions. Where a promotor likes to be the president of a club, facilitators like to be **useful in the background**. They might be the Treasurer or do the administration and facilities.

Facilitators are friendly, helpful, cooperative, relationship-centered and avoid conflict. They tend to **adapt**. They want to have good relationships with their environment. A promotor likes to learn holisitcally, the faciliator doesn't have a specific **learning or working style**. They'll **adapt to the teacher/boss**.

Because they're not task-oriented, but predominantly people-based we can already guess how they regulate themselves. Most of the time, they'll rely on **external guidance**. Facilitators aren't the once pulling the cart, and often they need a little push.

Facilitators like harmony, integration, service, communication, team work, the human factor. They're **the glue in the organisation**, an essential but often overlooked function.

Their **basic need is acceptance**. It's important for every worker, which is why it's often called the short term dimension of motivation. Acceptance from your environment means safety. Acceptance from your manager means you can work without too much stress, that you have trust. Accepance from colleagues also means trust. You don't need to be afraid you'll be bullied or thrown out.

Improvement points are **taking initiative and saying 'No'**. They can become **passive-aggressive** when a situation isn't to their liking but they don't dare say it.

How to recognise

Is an active and attentive listener

Nods a lot

Can come across as insecure or shy

Interested eye contact

Seems to smile a lot, more than is necessary sometimes

Open attitude

The person that gets cornered at a reception by a 'talker', but doesn't dare to stop the conversation.

The group of friends that stick together all night having a good time, but not meeting anyone new.

What they need

Solidarity
 Friendship, sympathy
 Harmony
 Structure
 Safety through the support and confirmation of others

Networking style

Prefer people they know
 Tend to stick in the same place & group
 Welcoming and nice once you know them

How to approach and deal with them

Have a friendly attitude, smile
 Ask about their well-being and that of their close ones.
 Listen to personal and small talk
 Help them make decisions, but not too much
 Regularly ask: "What would you/do you like?"
 Don't be pushy or bossy.
 Give them guarantees and trust. 'Everything will be fine!'

What you can work on if you're this type

Taking initiative
 Saying 'no'
 Taking active part in a conversation, not just listening
 Making your own decisions and plans

Qualities	Challenges
Shows his/her emotions Prefers to work in team – social and engaged Follows the rules – loyal Is flexible Keeps promises Consults others for decisions Takes other peoples' feelings into account Listens well – empathic Says 'yes' to make you feel good Glues the group together	Lets others take the initiative Tends to be doubtful Doesn't like too much responsibility Avoids conflicts Will put relationships above tasks & facts Agrees with everybody to not hurt anyone Puts others ahead of him/herself

Tasks & Facts + Proactivity: The director gives orders and follows those of others

The director is dominant and task-oriented. He or she is generally focused on the task at hand, and seeks **control and results**. Where the promotor is the figurehead of the sports club, the director will be secretary to make sure they can influence the decisions and make it happen.

Examples are the school director with a focus on procedures, output and control. The co-worker that controls or demands that certain rules be obeyed. De promotor likes to represent and play boss, while the director focuses on actual power.

Directors are result-oriented, impatient, demanding, precise. Promoters focus on the future, the director is **busy with the now**.

They **don't adapt easily** to others. When they do, it'll be based on hard facts and measurable results. Don't try to pressure them, instead give them the feeling they can make their own choices.

Their **working and learning style is serialsitic**, meaning they learn step by step. They're generally self-regulating.

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Directors focus on agreed upon results, returns, achievements and control. The **basic needs are result and control**. The promoting person likes to dominate conversation and is socially strong, while the director seeks dominance in controlling the business and operational aspects.

If they can't do it at work, often they'll fulfill their need for dominance and power in another organisation.

They can improve in listening skills, and **being open to other people's opinion**. They can also let go of solutions sometimes, especially where it concerns other people's problems. You can connect with them by stressing facts, procedures and the needs of the now.

How to recognise them

Uses hands, fingers to make their point (tapping the table, pointing, slapping their own hands...)

Angular, short, powerful gestures

Direct and piercing gaze

Erect and self-assured demeanour

Often a loud and sharp voice

What they need

Advantage

Control

Progress

Return, gains in time and money

Efficiency

Clarity

Networking style

Goal-oriented

No-nonsense

Hierarchical

How to approach and deal with them

Don't lose time – take action

Speak and act efficiently

Come prepared

Don't sell what you can't deliver

Come with solutions, not problems

Use professional language

Be self-assured

Give them something to act on

Be concrete and concise

What you can work on if you're this type

Personal exchanges, ask about personal life.

Don't try to solve everything.

Don't forget to smile.

Give others more time than you would give yourself.

Qualities	Challenges
Direct and decisive Defines clear objectives Well organised Convincing Self-assured Realistic No-nonsense – doesn't beat around the bush Results and Action Global	Tends to be inflexible Can be dominant and controlling Bad listener Impatient The ends justify the means Doesn't like vagueness Stubborn Can be uncomfortable around emotions



Tasks & Facts + Reactive: The analyst observes, reflects and concludes

People with an analytical style are **reactive and task-oriented**. People with a promoting or facilitating style are more expressive and expansive, while analysts and directors are more closed and reticent.

This is the somewhat **isolated** co-worker that busies himself with **minute details**, poring over endless charts and complicated equations. The expert. Or the quiet colleague that likes to prepare everything perfectly and is always ready to research things.

Analysts mostly have a **serialistic learning style**. Serialist learners are step-by-step, linear learners. They learn, remember and recapitulate a body of information in terms of string-like cognitive structures.

Analysts are punctual, like to work step by step, are **methodical and detail oriented**. They work systematically, avoid risk and aren't satisfied with vague, global reactions. They're mostly **self-regulating** in their working style.

Because they're not dominant and task oriented, they're **prepared to follow the directions** of managers punctually. Maybe even too punctually, as they may remind others of the procedure and demand the same punctuality from them. They're often appreciated but not popular.

Facilitators are aimed at **security and reliability**. They find this in exact information, well-defined procedures, facts and functionality. Analysts want to avoid risk and reduce stress by tackling problems. As opposed to others that avoid stress (temporarily) by procrastinating or delegating.

Analysts are fundamentally insecure and that's why they're often over-eager. They need **support and confirmation** from their managers.

Analysts have a hard time making decisions, as well as taking risks. You can connect to them by making sure they don't look unprofessional or inept. Come with proof and think in terms of procedure.

How to recognise them

Little gestures, stiff demeanour

Tends to avoid eye contact, stare at the ground or into space

Speaks slowly & silently, with little intonation

Protects personal space

Can give an impersonal impression

What they need

Safety
Order
Calculated advantage
Quality
Peace and a quiet environment

Networking style

Slow to make contacts
Distant, quiet
Prefers to talk about own expertise
Standing in a corner watching

How to approach and deal with them

Be patient
'Intellectualise' your approach.
Answer specifically and in details.
Prove, if you can, on paper. Illustrate with examples and/or documentation.
Calculate, compare, show.



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Respect their personal space, don't come too close.

Don't touch them unless necessary (like shaking hands), no hands on shoulder or friendly pats.

Be polite and respectful.

Take an indirect approach, don't be too direct.

What you can work on if you're this type

Take initiative.

Speak shorter and more globally.

Think in terms of solution, not just problems.

Look people in the eye.

Smile.

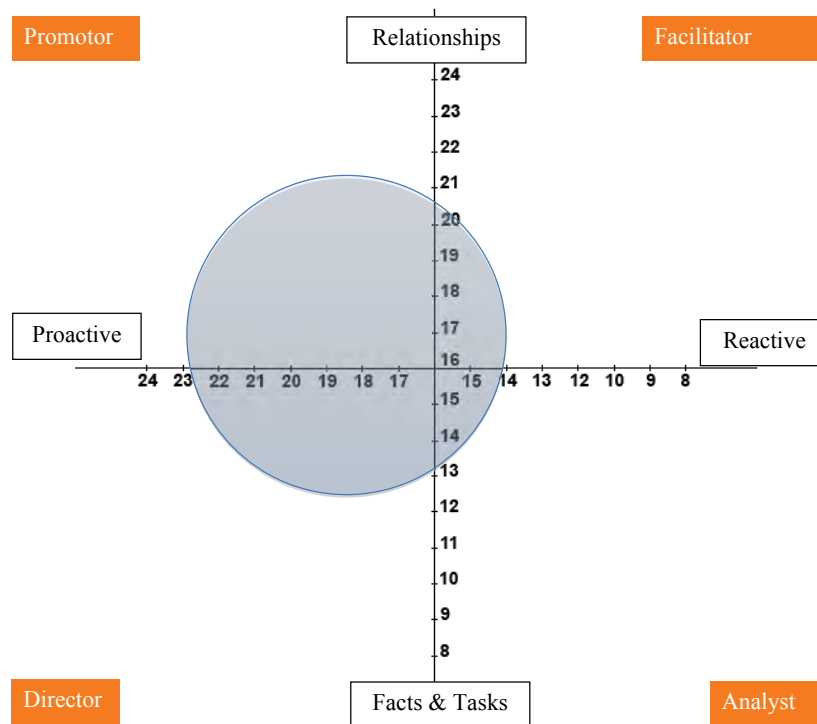
Ask questions, even/especially if you don't know anything about the subject.

Qualities	Challenges
Rational, exact and precise Organised Prefers written communications Analyses before acting Prefers to work alone Strives for correctness and quality Problem-Solver Serious	Loses him/herself in details sometimes Has trouble keeping to deadlines Not very expressive Can come across as distant Doesn't make new contacts easily Is or seems wary Often feels uncomfortable discussing feelings

6.5.1 How to work with these types

Of course, no-one is just one type. Instead, we have certain inclinations. You may be more of a director at work, especially when things become stressed. And more promotor at home where you feel at ease. We do have a center, from which we can expand in all directions. The more outspoken our character, the less access we have to other types.

Draw a circle with a diameter the length of one half of a spectrum. That should look a bit like this:



The above person is predominantly promotor, with a big part of red. He or she would be lively, outgoing, but also quite direct and results-oriented. A sales person, a business trainer, a manager with client contacts... There's still connection with facilitator and analyst, so he or she would be able to get along with those types. There might even be an attraction, as opposites attract.

Now write down **what percentage** you are, on average, of each type. There is no right or wrong, it's impossible to measure perfectly. It's just an indication that can give you more insight into yourself. If you want feedback from others, have them do the same and compare.

If you want to be more specific, choose **one context** (the work floor, your relationship to your boss, family life, the sports club...).

In the above example, it could be:

Promotor: 40%	Facilitator: 15%
Director: 35%	Analyst: 10%

This person can probably work on being a bit more patient and in-depth. Slowing down, appreciating the relationships he or she has and not making too many rash decisions.

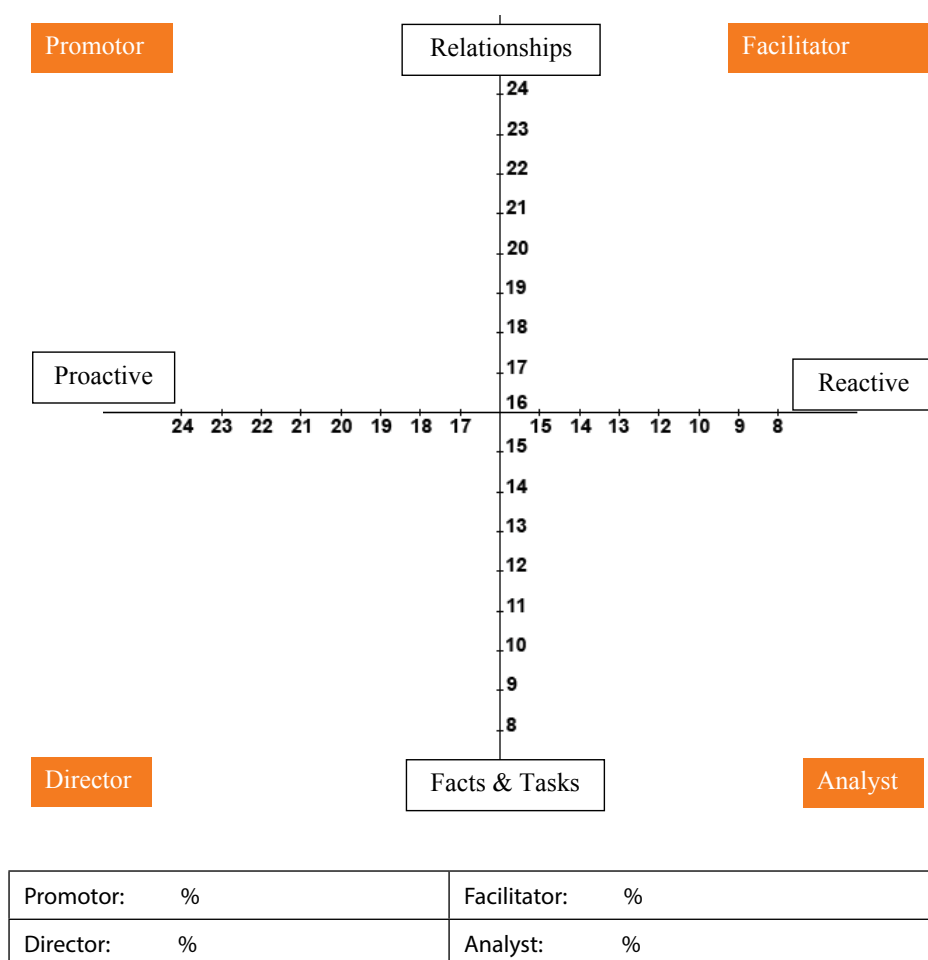
Is it best to have the circle in the middle of the quadrant or away from it?

There is no right or wrong. Being outspoken in a certain type has the advantage of clear qualities, and people get what they see. It has the disadvantage of not being able to deal or get along as well with other types, because our own qualities and challenges are too prominent.

The opposite goes for being the middle: you can adapt easily to other types, but are you always doing what you want to? Do people actually know who you are, do they trust in your reactions?

6.5.2 Your personality type

Now it's your turn! My advice is to draw the circle intuitively, and then to see if it fits with what you think. The difference between those two is what can help you define who you really are.



Let's summarize!

Which networking style fits you? Describe yourself as a networker: a typical event, kinds of contacts you make, way of speaking and following up...

Write down 3 THINGS that you already do well.

What's ONE THING you'll pay attention to from now on.

6.6 Step 4 – Where & When?

This ties into the first part of the previous section: if you know who you want to reach, find their habitat of choice and 'infiltrate'. If you're building a reputation for yourself, you should basically be networking all the time, wherever you go.

Needless to say some locations are more likely to yield professionally relevant contacts than others... Some great and bad ideas:

Good idea	Not such a good idea
The gym The hallway The coffee and/or copy machine Having lunch with people Openings of art galleries/restaurants... Network events in your town/industry <i>What else is there in your surroundings?</i>	Your local sleaze bar A loud night club The living room with some old friends Your mom's place Network events in another town/industry <i>What else is there in your surroundings?</i>

That's not to say that it's impossible to meet someone interesting and professionally supporting in nightlife or at home. It's just a lot less likely.

When using your time to network, you may want to be as efficient as possible. That means you want to optimise the likelihood of meeting people that are looking for what you have on offer. They may not always be easy to find! That's where some preparation and again, networking, can help you. If you network regularly and in good places, the people you meet will let you know where and when they'll be going next time.

A good idea is to create a group of people like you (but not competitors) that you can go out networking with. You don't have to come in alone, and the likelihood of knowing someone increases dramatically. It also gives you the comfort of always having someone to fall back on. That's also the danger: that it's so comfortable or the setting so scary that you stick to each other all night.

Where & When will you network? (With whom?)

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7 Step 5 – how? networking techniques

Classical networking courses include an array of practical techniques to walk up to people, present yourself, make conversation, collect the business card, follow up and convert... For me, most of this ground was already covered nearly a 100 years ago in a book by Dale Carnegie that still defines the way successful people create networks today.

Most courses derive from it in some way or another. The best thing is, it's free to download and it contains pretty much everything you need to know. I've collected my personal favourites and noted them down below. You're sure to find more inspiration and great techniques in [Dale Carnegie's book 'How to win friends and influence people'](#) (link to a free download on the YourCoach blog).

Here's some of his best advice:

7.1 Dale Carnegie's Top 5 Tips

*You can make more friends in two months by **becoming interested in other people**, than you can in two years by **trying to get other people interested in you**.*

– Dale Carnegie

The next five tips hardly need any explanation, so here they are:

- Smile
- Ask questions
- Listen
- Remember names
- Business Cards: always carry something with you that you can give as a reminder.

Dale Carnegie doesn't make a distinction as to your personality type. It's important to take what fits you from it, and to not force yourself into doing things you don't like. Here's some more advice from mister Carnegie:

- Be prepared.
- Give compliments.
- Anything beats trying to fake it.
- Don't apologise.
- Show your passion(s).
- Make it simple.

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7.2 Networking Do's and Don'ts

Do	Don't
Come regularly – be reliable Introduce people to each other Show an interest Overdeliver Help others out Build long-term relationships (what if I see you again?) Follow up quickly and personally Come early and leave early What else?	Force yourself upon others Stare or stand in a corner Forget what you promise Be pushy, loud or arrogant Fake it (too badly) Stick to people Use people What else?

7.3 Your Professional and Public Self

Many people think you can't be yourself when you're networking. The truth is somewhere in the middle. You can be yourself, but a Professional and Public version. You don't need to change who you are, only leave out certain things. Imagine you were being filmed and broadcast the whole time: would you still do what you do?

Would you still say those things about that person or company? Would you have that extra glass of wine?

When you enter a professional atmosphere, people are watching. They're looking if they like you, if they can trust you, if you look like a capable person. What if your future employer is in the room, and he overhears you criticising your current employer in no uncertain terms? You may be undermining yourself.

That's not to say you should smile all the time and pretend to be interested in everyone. On the contrary, people want to see who you really are. It's up to you to show them your best self, not your shortcomings.

You could even see it as an exercise in personal development. By being positive, diplomatic, and not focusing on the negatives and lesser aspects of yourself and others, you become generally a nicer person – even when you're with friends and you can do what you want. And that makes you more successful.

7.3.1 Some traits of a pleasing Professional and Public Self

Appreciative

Passionate

Interested

Supportive

Forgiving

Humble

Positive

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7.4 How to enter groups

7.4.1 The Club Med-habit

The following is easy for some, and incredibly hard for others. The Club Med-technique implies that you say ‘Hello’ to everyone you meet. You look them in the eye, say ‘Hello’, wait for a reaction, acknowledge the reaction and move on. It could be the beginning of a conversation, and it can stand on its own.

This is hard at first, but becomes progressively easier as you do it more. You can practise it anywhere where there’s people. You can also nod, smile.... Find your own way. The essence is to lay a connection with an unknown person.

The more you master this, the easier it becomes to enter a group.

7.4.2 Watch your attitude

Whenever you’re talking to someone or just meeting them, social positions are established. People are trying to place you. Are you important, useful, interesting, confident...? By being conscious of what you exude, you can positively affect the way people see you.

One of the main parameters is whether you position yourself as More, Equal or Less. Do you always act like the superior, do you seem distant even though you’re insecure? Or do you become as pleasing as possible and let everyone interrupt you? Can you look someone in the eye and treat yourself and them as equals?

The art is to master all three of these positions. When meeting a Big Boss, acting like a superior won’t get you far. Then again, when you meet someone that you’re a Big Boss for, acting inferior isn’t good for you either. Learn to play with all three dynamically within a conversation.

7.5 Be a Giver

‘What can I help you with?’

‘What are you looking for today?’

Research reveals that people with a giving spirit, achieve more in life. We’re not talking about the people that give everything away and let themselves be tricked out of their money. I’m talking about people that are genuinely interested in others, that know how to listen, that actively make an effort to help others, that provide information and resources....

Being a Giver is the greatest networking tool available on the market – ever. It takes longer to build up than a pushy, selly way of networking. But once your reputation and network are built, you can expect an easy flow of new contacts that have been warmed up to you beforehand.

Imagine the difference between: “Mr. Smith, this is X (you).” <uncomfortable silence> “So,…” This is what it often sounds like when people are introduced to each other by someone who isn’t sure what you can do for the other. They’ll do it to do you a favour, but then they want nothing to do with it.

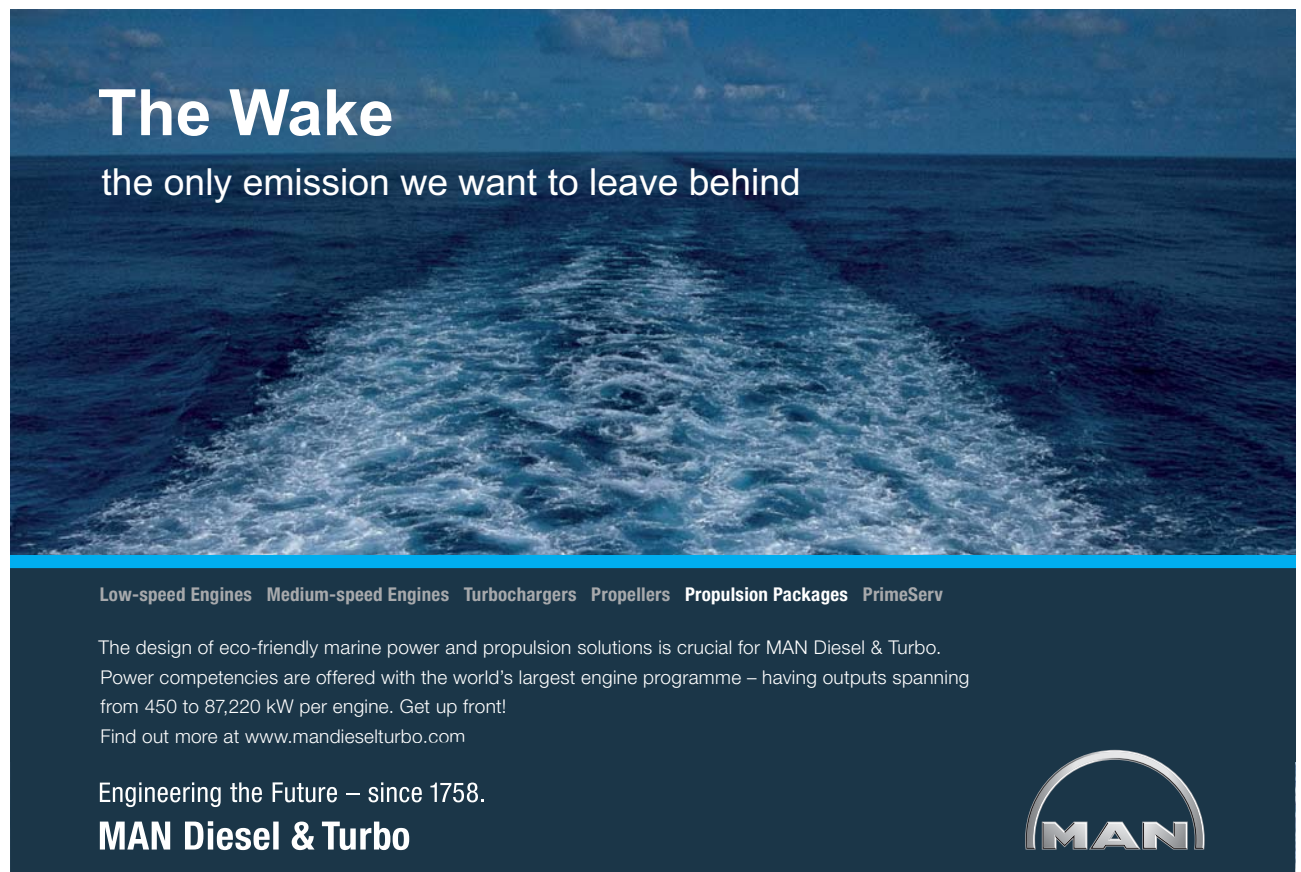
And: “Mr. Smith, I’d like you to meet X (you), that I talked to you about. He/She’s the one who got me that job at COMPANY. He/She also knows Y (someone important), so I think you two might have something to talk about!”. Imagine how different that conversation would go.

This is what giving will do, in the long run. You build out a network of people that, through the Law of Reciprocity, are positively predisposed to you and that actively want to help you back. You may even get some Evangelists, people that like you so much that they can’t help mentioning you and advertising you wherever they go. It can happen for you!

7.5.1 What can you give?

When you start out as a professional or as a networking, you have less to give than when you’re settled, successful and experienced. The thing is, if you don’t build it up you won’t have much to give later on either. So start building today, and increase the amount of things you can offer people.

An easy example is that if you know the owner of a concert hall, you can get tickets to concerts. That makes you a very valuable person! Or if you know someone in the hiring section of a company, you have a lot of inside information on what they’re looking for. Maybe not for you, but for other people you know.



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I'm sure you already have things at your disposal, and people in your surroundings that can provide others with valuable information, leads or an advantage over others in a certain situation. Take a minute to note it down. It could be any of the following:

- Free stuff
- (Inside) Information
- Contacts
- Expertise
- ...

I can give...

Don't have anything to give, or not enough? Don't worry! There's plenty of ways to give, and in doing so creating more. You can give compliments, attention, practical help.... By being a friendly and helpful person, you can build up contacts that want to help you back, meaning you have something to give others as well.

Giving is an attitude. Once you look at things from this perspective, opportunities arise everywhere. Networking no longer becomes a chore where you have to sell yourself, but an exciting place full of possible positive moments.

7.6 Be a Go-To Person

The more you build up your network, the more you have to give. In the end, people will come to you automatically because they know you can make certain things happen. Don't be afraid to help people out, and don't be stingy!

Here are a few specific techniques to make yourself the magnet of an occasion:

7.6.1 Make things happen

Wherever you are, you have the possibility of making things happen. You could be the person that greets people that come in and make them feel welcome. You could tell people where the cloakroom is. You can provide drinks to your group. You can volunteer to pass out promotional materials. And so on. Look around, feel what's available and jump in. When you organise things, you become part of the organisation and people will look at you differently. Not just another participant, but someone who can provide service.

7.6.2 Organise your own events

If you really want to shine, organise your own events. Make sure you have enough time to mingle though. There's no use running around cleaning and filling glasses if you don't have time to welcome people and hosting. Being the organiser makes you an instant VIP.

It's a great way to meet people as you have a reason to start conversations. "Are you having a good time?", "Is everything all right?", "Is there anyone you'd like to meet?". You can walk up to anyone and start speaking to them, if only to check if they're enjoying themselves.

7.7 Follow up on your contacts

Don't let your business cards go cold. Generally, people will have forgotten you in a matter of days. The best thing is to do something the day after. Thank everyone for having met them in a short mail, or as an accompaniment to your invitation for LinkedIn, Facebook...

Mail the people that you made promises to or that were going to deliver something the day after. Focus on what you're giving. Don't make it sound like: "Here's your thing, now can I have mine please?"

People are looking for it and they're sensitive to it. A genuine Giver will mention it in passing ("You spoke to me about XYZ, could you possibly let me know how I can reach him?") and without obligation, or maybe even not at all – trusting that the person will reciprocate. If they don't you can always send a mail a few days after asking for that thing ("I just remembered we spoke about XYZ a few days ago. You said you knew ABC, could you possibly let me know his contact details?").

A possible tip is to **leave people free in their methods; ask open questions**. You can mention the person they know, or the action they would undertake. Try not to ask: "Can you do this for me now please?", as it easily sounds like an order.

Instead, introduce the subject and ask what they could do for you: "You mentioned you know X. Do you think you could help me with getting into contact with him/her?". It'll also create a conversation, which is great if you only just met someone.

The more you interact, the more someone will begin to feel like they know you.

8 Conclusion

Networking can be fun, and rewarding! There are all kinds of people out there that would love to talk to you and help you out. So participate in the Web, Give and get ready to Receive. And don't forget to set your Goals so you know what to ask for....

There will be aspects to this story that are new to you, and others you've already mastered and understood. So now's the time to formulate that one conclusion, that one thing you're going to focus on the next few weeks. Make an action point out of it, something that can be measured, followed up and improved upon.

My focus for the next few weeks:

Good luck, and I hope to meet you somewhere soon!

Benjamin Ball

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PS: me and my company, YourCoach, also guide people towards better jobs, and organise trainings in leadership, communications and coaching. Please contact us if we can help you out with anything, and feel free to refer your friends and colleagues to us.