



# Book Networkling

## Building Relationships and Opportunities for Success

Melissa Giovagnoli and Jocelyn Carter-Miller  
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### Recommendation

Tired of schmoozing at cheesy networking functions? Would you rather strangle that next contact than give him your business card? Authors Melissa Giovagnoli and Jocelyn Carter-Miller offer a better way to do business. They advise you to build relationships for long-term mutual gain, not short-term self-interest. This shouldn't be a revolutionary concept. But, as the authors persuasively argue, business relationships often suffer due to narrow, short-term thinking. While the authors occasionally repeat themselves, the writing is lively and full of concrete examples that can help you develop deeper business relationships. *BooksInShort* recommends it to anyone who wants to develop more meaningful, productive connections for fun, profit and purpose.

### Take-Aways

- Traditional networking can lead to dissatisfaction; networkling strives for fulfillment.
- Networklers create a primary circle of like-minded people.
- Networklers then add secondary circles of relationships.
- While networking focuses on a single transaction, networkling establishes deeper relationships.
- Networkling is based on values and principles.
- Networkling doesn't happen without effort and focus; it requires hard work.
- Networkling relationships are fruitful because they offer mutual support.
- Networklers open themselves to new possibilities, so they constantly improve their skills and knowledge.
- Redundant connections overlap; they create the illusion of diversity.
- Divergent connections involve people from unfamiliar industries and at different positions.

### Summary

# Networking by Networkling

You already know about networking. It's a process not unlike a mass mailing: You hand out your business card to everyone you meet in hopes that you'll strike up a lucrative relationship. Many times, networking leads to stress and fatigue. The line separating our professional and personal lives disappears, and work and fun feel like the same things. This scattershot approach is only occasionally successful.

“For many of us, the line between personal and professional blurs, and some of us are hard-pressed to differentiate between work and fun.”

So what's the difference between traditional networking and the new concept of networkling? Unlike networking, networkling is a transforming concept that's especially useful in a world where connections matter. Networking is a disorganized process of establishing contact to achieve short-term and usually one-sided goals. It is an opportunity-specific process, and those who frequently network often come to feel that they're taking advantage of those in their networks.

“Networking is an often haphazard process of making contacts to achieve short-term and often one-sided goals.”

Networkling, on the other hand, is opportunity-expansive. Networkling requires building long-term relationships based on mutually beneficial goals. Networking is one-dimensional, while networkling is multi-dimensional. While networking focuses on a single transaction, networkling involves establishing deeper relationships with people who share similar goals.

“Networks are often just big, homogeneous clusters. As a result, little new or outside information or resources come into the networks and fewer new opportunities are realized.”

Consider Robert, a typical networker. A hard-working extrovert, Robert is a successful publishing executive. The business leaders in his community respect him. Robert always has his networking tool kit, which includes business cards and promotional giveaways. Still, Robert is dissatisfied. He feels as if networking is using his contacts in a negative way.

“Shared goals, values and beliefs can help you transcend whatever barriers keep you from meaningful interactions with CEOs and other top executives.”

Bonita, on the other hand, has used networkling to build a satisfying career. An accountant, Bonita always wanted to help poor people become financially stable. She realized that financial education is a key to financial success for the poor. So Bonita developed relationships with investment-savvy professionals who also were committed to helping the community. Instead of merely passing out her business cards, Bonita looked for people whose goals resembled hers and who shared her values. Bonita developed relationships with them and began running investment seminars for the disadvantaged. She also introduced members of her network to each other so they could pursue their own projects. Bonita showed her network partners that they could make money while doing socially meaningful work.

“Awareness and intention are crucial for networkers. You need to be alert to the possibility of a connection in every situation.”

Networkling takes effort, intent and hard work, particularly in the form of communication. While networkling is effortless for a few people, most must learn networkling skills and then work at using its techniques. When you meet someone new, you must explain your goals and values clearly and concisely. That gives people who share your values a chance to respond, but it requires you to open up to people you've just met and, therefore, risk rejection. Still, it's the best way to narrow the focus of your personal marketing efforts. Networking, in contrast, is much more superficial. A networker establishes many contacts and referrals but shares meaningful relationships with very few of them.

“Networkers are open to new possibilities. They are always increasing their skills, knowledge and experiences because they're receptive to taking advantage of all the new things being offered them.”

Do you think you have what it takes to be a networker? You might, especially if you already do some of the following:

- Spend time with people based on shared values, goals and beliefs.

- Communicate your goals with your close associates, and understand theirs.
- Develop contacts into meaningful relationships.
- Exchange various types of support with those in your circle.
- Leverage relationships to create opportunities, both for others and for yourself.
- Expand your circle to include those with diverse backgrounds and skills.
- Request the expertise of others to fill in your own resource gaps.
- Develop relationships with influential people who can help mutually beneficial projects.
- Form personal strategic alliances and collaborate on projects with those in your circle.

## Mutual Support

Network relationships are more fruitful than networking relationships because they offer several types of support:

- Emotional support - Members of a network group share mutual trust.
- Informational support - This follows the rapport that is built with mutual trust.
- Knowledge support - This involves the sharing experiences in addition to information.
- Promotional support - Networking partners can supply each other with business opportunities.
- Wisdom support - Networking partners share compassion and caring.
- Transformational opportunities - The networking group eventually results in business leads, referrals and job opportunities.
- Community - As the networking group deepens, members begin to make a difference in each other's lives.
- Fulfillment - The purposeful pursuit of meaningful goals leads to self-satisfaction and to material rewards.

## Building Circles

Accomplished networkers use a number of techniques to expand opportunities for themselves and for those in their circle. These techniques include:

- Identify bridgers - These are people who can bring divergent groups together to create new opportunities. Bridgers seem to know everyone and enjoy making introductions.
- Create inner and outer circles - Successful networkers organize relationships based on things such as frequency of contact and the types of opportunities created. Savvy networkers will spend 80% of their time developing their inner circle, which is their most important group. They devote the remaining 20% of their time to their outer circle, those with whom they share weaker ties.
- Spot influencers - Influencers get things done through knowledge, reputation and skills, such as high-ranking executives, journalists or community activists.

“Like fruit-bearing trees, networks yield the sweetest opportunities when the relationships between its members have taken root and grown strong and their fruit has ripened.”

### To network, follow these ten rules:

1. Connect - People don't always make a phone call or introduce themselves to someone at a conference because they don't realize how important that contact might be. Your work, family and community put you in contact with many potential network partners. Be sure to make the connections.
2. Think and link - Intent and awareness are critical. Stay alert to the possibility of a connection in every situation. This doesn't mean you need to participate in the frenzied schmoozing of a networker, but you should think constantly about possible links with friends and acquaintances.
3. Broaden your horizons - Networkers open themselves to new possibilities, so they constantly improve their skills and knowledge.
4. Make redundant and divergent connections count - Redundant connections overlap. They are unavoidable, but dangerous, because they can create the illusion but not the reality of diversity. For instance, if everyone in your circle is in the same industry, little new information will come into your group. This is why divergent connections are important. Divergent connections involve people from unfamiliar industries and at different positions. These connections can lead you in surprising

and enlightening directions. Don't be afraid to establish connections with chief executives and other high-ranking people.

Common goals, values and beliefs can transcend apparent barriers.

5. Tend to your network - You must nurture your relationships patiently; once relationships have a chance to take root and grow, they'll yield pleasing results.
6. Add meaning to your exchanges - Meaningful exchanges between members of a group are pivotal to networking. These exchanges spark ideas and mutually beneficial opportunities. Some risk is involved since meaningful exchanges, by definition, are open and honest, so hurt feelings can result. Sharing information is crucial to meaningful exchanges; savvy networkers don't hoard information.
7. Collaborate meaningfully - Collaboration can be interpreted several ways. To networkers, it implies superficial, short-term interaction. Some collaborate sincerely, but without structure. To the networker, collaboration is synergistic and driven by values.
8. Court new partners - Even networkers tend to get stale, repeatedly collaborating with the same people. Cross-pollination is crucial. Take advantage of your relationships with your entire network to learn new skills and accomplish surprising goals.
9. Make equality a goal - At their best, networks benefit everyone involved. Participants give and take equally. This distinguishes networking from networking, where one partner in a relationship frequently feels imposed upon after an interaction.
10. Redefine success - Networking can lead to unconventional, unexpected accomplishments. Success doesn't limit itself to a promotion or a raise. Some networkers find new careers, and ideally everyone will find new levels of meaning and fulfillment.

## Seven Steps to a Successful Network

Networking requires the following actions:

1. Define your values and set goals - Values are the principles that guide your actions, and they are critical to networking. The ideal is to base your life and relationships on principles rather than on pure self-interest. After you've defined your values, you can set goals based on what really matters to you. Develop a plan for achieving these goals.
2. Build a primary circle - You will find good reason to focus on the quality of networking interactions rather than on quantity. The people in this circle share your values and can support you professionally and emotionally. Screen potential networking partners based on their knowledge, listening skills, reliability and empathy. Networkers phone you when they need something; networkers call just to maintain a relationship.
3. Expand your circle - Once you've built a primary circle, watch for others who can complement that circle. Influencers in particular are important here. Influencers aren't always easy to spot, since many people are community-minded and supportive. Influencers typically have a broad base of knowledge; they're experts in topics aside from their specialties. Influencers are active in a variety of professional or trade organizations, charities and community groups.
4. Initiate exchanging relationships - These relationships offer mutual long-term benefits. Don't be shy; remember that you bring something worthwhile to these relationships.
5. Nurture relationships - This requires time and care, and a few tips help. Keep conversations focused. Share personal background with your partners, and listen to theirs. Spend an equal amount of time talking and listening.
6. Expand opportunities - You and the other people in your network can collaborate to create nearly unlimited potential a number of ways. Ask others in your network if they'll take you to meetings or seminars where participants' backgrounds are different from yours.
7. Maintain your network - Keep up with your partners to take advantage of new opportunities.

## About the Authors

**Melissa Giovagnoli** co-authored *The Power of Two and Make Your Connections Count*. She is the founder of [networking.com](http://networking.com), an online community for socially responsible businesspeople. **Jocelyn Carter-Miller** has been an executive and vice president and chief marketing officer of Motorola. She has an accounting degree from the University of Illinois and an MBA from the University of Chicago. Both authors live in Illinois.

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