

Networking in Creative Industries

Creative Technologies Professionalism

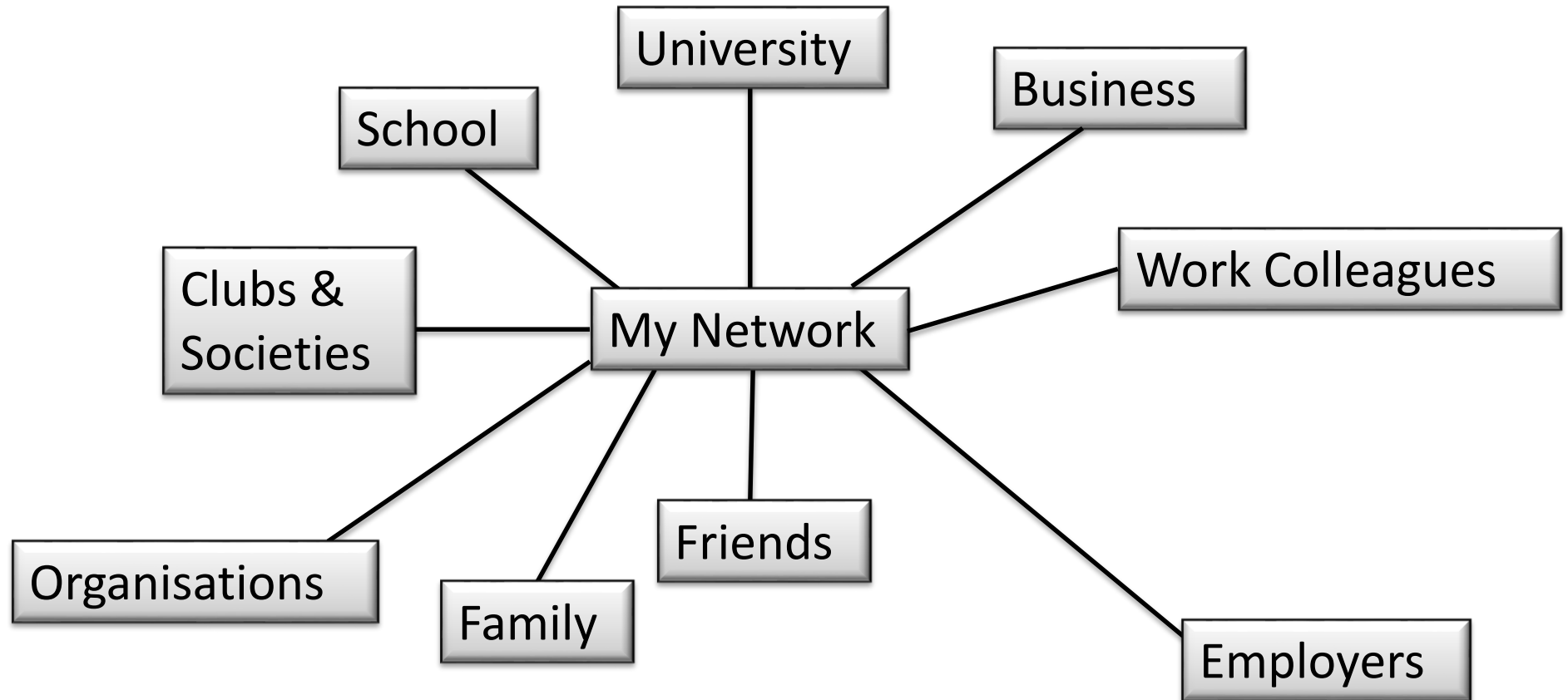
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WHAT IS NETWORKING?

- ❑ **“Good networking is making the most of the people you meet to your mutual advantage”**
- ❑ **“... networking is about developing even further your professional reputation and building a support network that you can call upon”**
- ❑ **“Networking is using connections with others intelligently”**
(D’Souza, 2010, p.10)
- ❑ **“In the creative industries, having a network is a great asset, particularly for freelancers and portfolio workers. Professional bodies, local groups of practitioners, conferences, events, workshops and seminars organized by and for professionals – all of these can be valuable networking opportunities”** (Davies and Sigthorsson, 2013, p.239)

YOUR CURRENT NETWORK



EFFECTIVE NETWORKING

Target Relevant Groups and Connections

- ☐ Relevance can relate to:
 - ☐ creative sector – games, animation, web and mobile
 - ☐ trade groups/organisations/professional societies/industry institutes
 - ☐ technical groups (meetups, eventbrite)
 - ☐ conferences, seminars, speakers events
 - ☐ exhibitions, trade events, expos, conventions
 - ☐ training events
 - ☐ careers service
- ☐ Events where people are connected for the same reason are likely to be more productive than more random gatherings of people
- ☐ Target groups that fit your purposes because you are more likely to fit theirs

EFFECTIVE NETWORKING

Do your Research

- ☐ Research what other people/businesses are doing so you can talk about their projects/work.
- ☐ You may be able to help them with something yourself or offer advice
- ☐ You may be able to offer a recommendation or referral if they are looking to recruit staff
- ☐ It shows you are interested and allows you to build up a rapport when you know about other people's challenges and aspirations are

EFFECTIVE NETWORKING

Help Others

- ☐ Make a conscious effort to ensure that you are helping and giving to others
- ☐ Ask yourself the question “What’s in it for them?” and say to them if you think your relationship is one-sided
- ☐ If you help someone they will remember it. You get known as someone who is helpful and this builds trust and enhances your reputation. As a giver you are more likely to receive referrals and get positive benefits from your business relationships

EFFECTING NETWORKING

Personal Skills

- ☐ Be positive and enthusiastic when talking to people it will have a good effect on them
- ☐ Believe in yourself and what you are doing
- ☐ Be friendly when approaching people and make people aware of you and your business or product without labouring your points
- ☐ Be knowledgeable – keep current with developments in your field so you can talk to people and hold their attention
- ☐ Be confident – do not be shy about telling people who your clients are, what you have done and your achievements.
- ☐ Be a good Listener – take an interest in what people are saying, ask questions and be positive in your replies

EFFECTIVE NETWORKING

Personal Skills

- ❑ Be curious and find about other people's businesses and what they are doing because you may be able to offer your services or give advice
- ❑ Be engaging - engage with the person you are talking to, show your interest by looking alert and asking questions
- ❑ You are building relationships and this takes sustained, focused effort over a period of time

EFFECTIVE NETWORKING

Your Integrity and Trust

- ☐ Maintain your integrity because it is vital for your business relationships that you are someone who can be trusted
- ☐ You should aim to be a good listener and a person who follows up when they say they will
- ☐ When you commit to something you must be reliable and dependable enough to see it through
- ☐ All these elements count towards your reputation and make you trustworthy

EFFECTIVE NETWORKING

Follow up

- ☐ If you make a commitment or promise to do something when you are networking, make sure you follow it up.
- ☐ If you are given a referral/recommendation follow it up even if it comes to nothing
- ☐ Where you want to keep contact with the person then follow up appropriately by adding them as a LinkedIn contact, sending them the url or an article they might like or introducing them to someone in your network
- ☐ Following up builds up trust and your reputation and helps cement your relationship
- ☐ If you do not follow up there is no point in networking

EFFECTIVE NETWORKING

Systematic Approach - Organisation

- ☐ When you attend networking events be systematic about recording who you have met, where and when you met them and anything you remember about them/their organisation/current projects/things that they talked about
- ☐ Do this as soon after the event as you can – otherwise you will forget
- ☐ If you did not get contact details for the person, try contacting the organiser of the event for details or other people that you know who were there

NETWORKING MYTHS

Networking is not Manipulation

- ❑ If you think networking is about manipulation then you are not getting it. It is about building relationships and connecting and co-operating with others to obtain mutual benefit
- ❑ Good networkers build trust based on being reciprocal – giving and receiving and taking accounts of the needs and wishes of others.

To get you have to give

NETWORKING MYTHS

Networking is not worth the effort and takes up too much time

- ☐ Networking is hard work, it takes up time and requires effort but you are discussing your favourite subject with people who share your enthusiasm
- ☐ In the long run networking will save you time because your network will work for you

Focus on relevant events - do your research and target specific people

NETWORKING MYTHS

I am too junior to network no one will want to connect with me

☐ Networkers are always willing to connect to new, interesting people who attract their attention

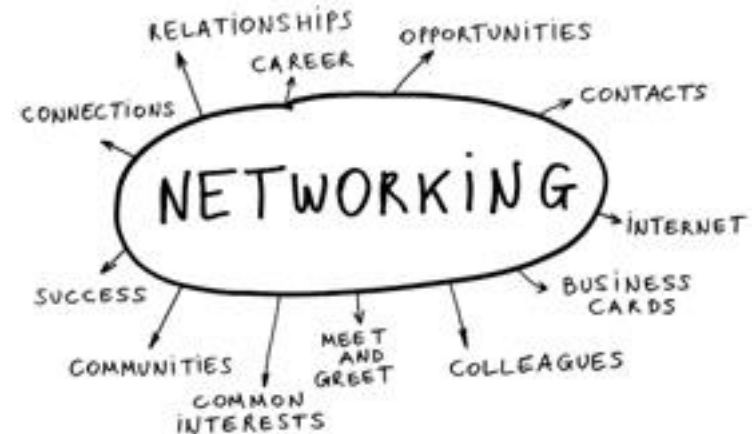
☐ You may be junior but you may have fresh ideas worth listening to

Attend events and let others judge whether you and your ideas are interesting

NETWORKING MYTHS

I can be successful by working solo and putting in the hours

- ❑ If you never try networking you do not know how much more successful you might be by engaging with others and being exposed to their opinions, influences and ideas
- ❑ You miss out on the different viewpoints and the diversity that being in a network affords



NETWORKING TIPS

1. Keep your contacts list updated – contact details should be current and keep notes on people who are in your contact list.
2. Take time to nurture people – remember important events that are happening to your contacts – new projects, new job and message them about it.
3. Use your business cards – hand people your business cards and get theirs (use the card to note things you want to remember about them).
4. Put the power in your hands – work to get the person's contact details, risk a snub in your efforts.
5. Follow through with contacts within 24 hours. Do not let things get stale.
6. If you missed someone at a meeting, message them and tell them so, do not miss a chance to connect.
7. Be generous with your contacts and help to make connections.
8. Take an interest in people and they may take an interest in you and get a conversation going.
9. Look after people at an event. If you want to move onto another person, invite the person you are talking to come along. Do not leave them standing.

CREATIVE INDUSTRY NETWORKING

- ❑ Working in the creative industries involves networking and maintaining and expanding your circle of contacts so that you hear about new projects
- ❑ Many creative industry jobs are filled by informal recruitment – word-of-mouth and recommendation.
- ❑ People will “call someone they trust and ask for a recommendation so building up those kinds of relationships is really important” (Davies and Sigthorsson, 2013)
- ❑ Becoming established requires you to have a portfolio of good work and a network of contacts to get repeat custom (Davies and Sigthorsson, 2013)
- ❑ An independent film producer sums it up: “We really do prefer to work with people we’ve already worked with... Our greatest success has been when we’ve taken people where there’s been some recommendation. You know they’ve worked with somebody that we know and we can be sure of getting a completely frank recommendation” (Davies and Sigthorsson, 2013)

CREATIVE INDUSTRY NETWORKING

- ❑ Tom Jubert, computer games writer, has said that building up a portfolio of work (build an indie game, write reviews, work in QA) and networking are keys to getting into professional games writing.
- ❑ He recommends going to events, connecting at events, blogging, tweeting
Jubert, T. (2011) Tips on How to Become a Professional Games [Online] Available: Writer <http://tom-jubert.blogspot.co.uk/2011/03/10-tips-on-how-to-become-professional.html> [Accessed 18 August 2016]
- ❑ Davies and Sigthorsson (2013) suggest “strategic” networking “to create, maintain and extend a network of contacts .. to maximise your opportunities to work” Randle and Culkin (2009) quoted in Davies and Sigthorsson (2013, p.109)
 - ❑ Use your existing network of friends, family, lecturers, former employers to start with
 - ❑ Research your professional sector to find out who the professionals are, what they do and events they attend
 - ❑ Be generous with information you have about projects, jobs and contacts – if you help someone they’ll be more likely to reciprocate
 - ❑ Go to events and be prepared to talk to people and engage with them
 - ❑ Always carry a business card – might seem old fashioned but can be useful (Davies and Sigthorsson, 2013)

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