

Our ability to create, expand, and maintain a variety of relationships can mean the difference between finding a new job quickly, getting the resources needed for a project or helping us to grow professionally in the shortest amount of time. Dedicating time regularly to building and maintaining professional relationships is an essential activity for career success. Even if this doesn't feel like a strength today, with practice and time, we can all become more skilled in this important component of our work life.



WHAT IS IT?

Whether you call it networking or relationship building, it is the process of creating and building connections with others. It includes the colleagues that we work with on a daily basis as well as clients, mentors, stakeholders and others within our field of expertise. Some key behaviors of effective relationship building include: strong communication skills, building trust, respect, empathy, listening, and the ability to ask good questions.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT?

Building positive working relationships is vital to career success. Creating positive relationships can affect job satisfaction, advancement, recognition and your ability to influence. We start our careers using our skills and knowledge and gain expertise to manage our work. As we advance, our work is done in cooperation with others or through influencing others. While we continue to need our expertise, more of our work and success is through insight and input of others, and gaining and sharing information.

ARE YOU A TALENTED, STRONG OR A FAIR RELATIONSHIP BUILDER? ¹

Can you answer "positively" to all of these questions:

- 1** Do you have a broad network of individuals identified and relationships built that you can depend on and who depend on you?
- 2** Do you nurture this network daily? Or only focus only on those you work with daily? Or only reach further out when an issue or problem arises vs. looking for ways to help others first?
- 3** How much influence do you have in your organization or department?
- 4** Do you get the cooperation, support, money, people and other resources you need to work well?
- 5** Do you have a group of colleagues, friends, mentors & trusted advisors outside your organization or department?

TYPES OF NETWORKING

OPERATIONAL

includes those involved in your group's daily work

STRATEGIC

helps you prepare for the future

DEVELOPMENTAL

helps you grow & provide personal, emotional support when you need it

IDEAS ON HOW TO DO IT



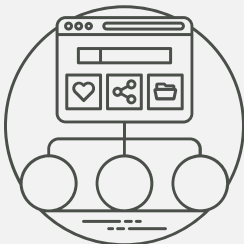
1. Map your Current Relationships

- a. Who are you dependent on (internally and externally)
- b. Do you have diversity
- c. Categorize those on your list (important, more important, very important)
- d. Assess the quality of the relationship (needs attention, strong, very strong)



2. Ways to Expand your Network

- a. Be intentional (seek others out at functions or meetings)
- b. Join social networks
- c. Establish both a professional & human connection
- d. Seek out those who have different points of view
- e. Ask current network who to add



3. Sustaining Your Network

- a. Share – don't hoard information
- b. Be a bridge yourself
- c. Build coalitions
- d. Spend one-on-one time with colleagues
- e. Be the initiator in interactions and communications
- f. Remember the "human" side
- g. Periodically step back and assess your relationships
- h. Use all interactions to maintain & strengthen your long-term relationships

RESOURCES

- Book: *Being the Boss* by Linda Hill & Kent Lineback
- HBR Article: *How to Build Relationships at Work* by Gorick Ng
- TedTalk: *10 Ways to have a better conversation-* Celeste Headlee (11:20 minutes)

¹ from the book [Being the Boss](#)