



# BUILDING YOUR NETWORK WORKBOOK





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# What is networking?

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- It is the **exchange of information or services** among individuals, groups, or institutions.
- Specifically, the **cultivation of productive relationships** for employment or business.

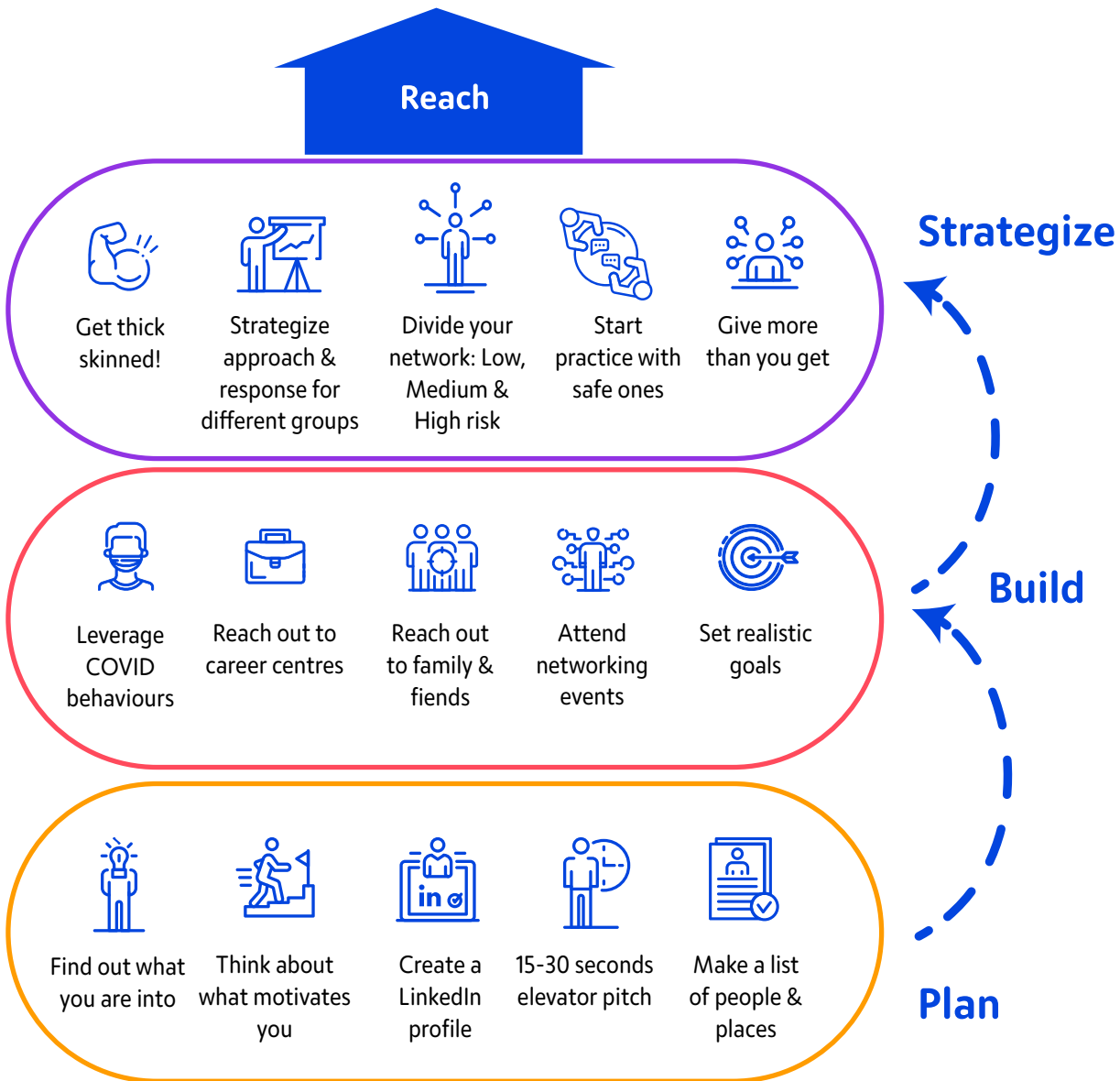
## Why Do We Network?

- An avenue to exchange ideas
- It makes you noticeable
- Avenue for new opportunities
- Reassessing your qualification
- Improves your creative intellect
- Growth in status
- An extra resource library
- Growth in self-confidence
- Develop (long-lasting) relationships
- Support from high profile individuals

## Network Map

Here is a simple map of building your Network (or your **NetWorth**).

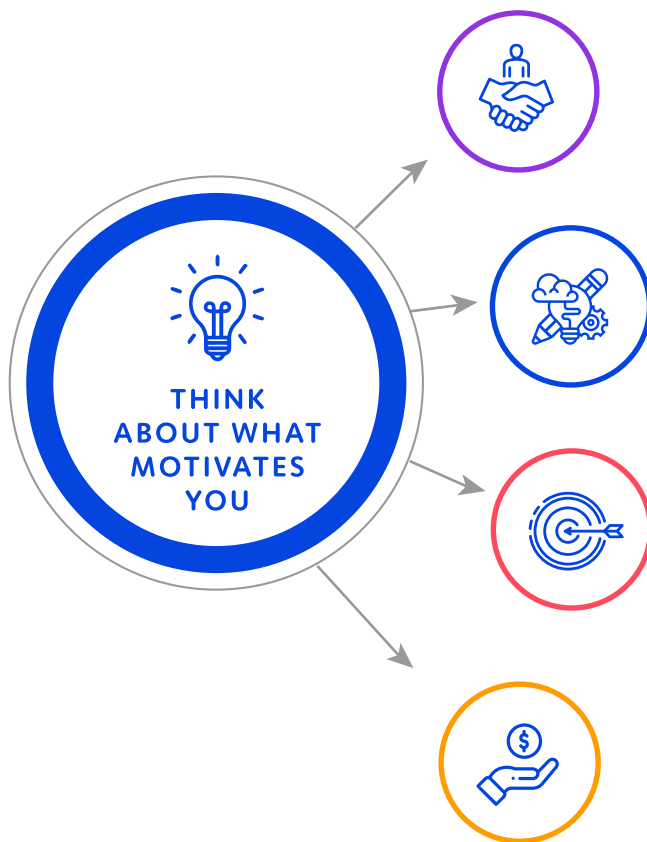
While the three layers listed here are **Plan**, **Build** and **Strategize**, you could also consider it this way:



**PLAN** - Invest in yourself! Before you go out and seek a mentor or advisor, consider who you are, where you might be successful, what workstyle you like, what inspires, all the things that you would personally bring to your successful career.

**BUILD** - Once I have an idea of who I am and what I am looking for, this circle is about how I interact with those around me to build my career.

## Plan: What do you want?



**STRATEGIZE** - As I build my network and start to build the career this circle becomes about how I interact with the sector, industry and extended 'world' of my career.

The further we move to the outside circles, the less personal control we have over the outcomes of our actions. It is **important to build thick skin** and work really hard on the things we can control, **so we feel more resilient when we face setbacks.**

### Relationships

Some of us are naturally attuned to family, friends and coworkers. If you are motivated by relationships, make sure to investigate relationship dynamics in the industry you want to be a part of.

### Creativity

Some people are best aligned with jobs that allow them to create, invent, and repeat. If this is what motivates you, steer clear of careers in mature industries where "we've always done it this way" is likely to be a prevailing attitude.

### Mission

You may be motivated by a mission, such as supporting Canadian startups or reducing barriers to youth employment. Identifying your mission can be exhilarating. There are lots of ways to achieve a mission. You don't have to do all the work yourself – you can choose a small piece of the problem and work hard on it.

### Money

Money is a common motivator. Explore how much money truly motivates you. You may want to make more conscious tradeoffs between money and something you value more highly. Don't let the fact that money is not your prime motive derail you from earning what you are worth.

## Plan: What makes you tick?

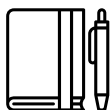
1



### OBSERVE

Take some time to notice the things in your life. What activities **energize** you when you do them?

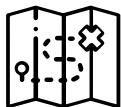
2



### REFLECT

Over the next week, grab a **journal and record** how you feel as you're going through your day-to-day activities, as these activities can be big clues into what your passions are.

3



### EXPLORE

Give **yourself permission** to follow your interests.

4

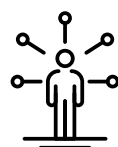


### COMMUNICATE

Connect with people who are doing something you're interested in. Ask them questions like:

- What is your day-to-day like?
- What steps can I take to transition from where I am now to doing this full-time?
- What are the things I need to consider before working in this industry?

5



### FLEXIBILITY

Know that when you follow your interests, they could lead you on a different path than you ever expected. So, it's important to stay open and flexible without any attachment to where you'll end up.

## Plan: Where do you want to work?

Think about what matters most to you when picturing a potential workplace. There are different reasons why you would want to work somewhere including **Culture and Values, Perks and Salary or Learning and Opportunities.**

### Culture and values



Once you know what matters to you in a work place, make a list of people or companies you would want to work for. Company culture and values have a big impact on how employees interact with each other and their own work. Company culture can range from people-oriented, team-oriented, outcome-oriented or aggressive.

Everyone will function differently on each culture depending personal preference. You can gauge company culture by their website's Mission and Vision to find out what is valued in that workplace.



### Perks and salary

What a company can offer you in terms of financial gain, benefits and perks can be a big deciding factor when it comes to choosing a place to work. Getting paid is the most common reason to take a job however, you should feel like you are getting paid a fair wage for your work. You can gauge perks and salary from the job description.



### Learning and opportunities


Often times, the value of a job isn't defined by just the monetary gain or the company culture, but by what you gain in experience, growth and opportunities to advance. Sometimes, the most valuable thing you can gain from a job is learning new skills, connecting with new people and chances to advance in your career. You can get a sense for the learning and opportunities available to you by reaching out to someone who currently works at the company.





**Reflect** about what motivates you and what would attract you to a job.


## Plan: The 15- to 30-second pitch

An important part of networking is having an “elevator pitch” to introduce yourself to new people quickly and effectively.

**1**  **Who are you?**  
A brief introduction which includes your name.

**3**  **What do you want?**  
What are you into? What do you hope to gain from a job opportunity?

**2**  **What do you do?**  
Are you currently working, volunteering or going to school? If so where?

**4**  **Call to action**  
Let the person know if you would like to stay in touch, ask what is the best way to reach out.

“Hi, my name is **[your name]**.  
Thanks so much for meeting with me today.  
After graduating from **[your program]**, I’ve **[worked/interned/volunteered]** at **[organization]**.  
I am passionate about **[what you are into]** and I’m looking for experiences to learn more about **[area(s) that you want to grow into]**. I would love to keep in touch to learn more about what you and your company do.”



### Practice

Practice makes perfect! Practice saying your pitch outloud to friends/family until you feel comfortable saying it to a stranger.”

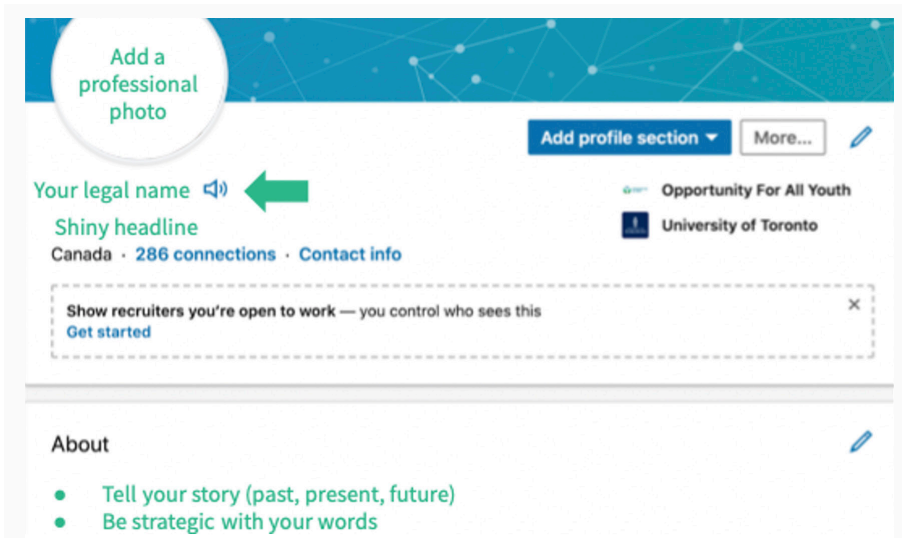
## Plan: LinkedIn

Take advantage of how the internet allows us to connect to so many people. LinkedIn is a great tool to grow your network online. First, you need to set up a profile for yourself.

### Avoid using:

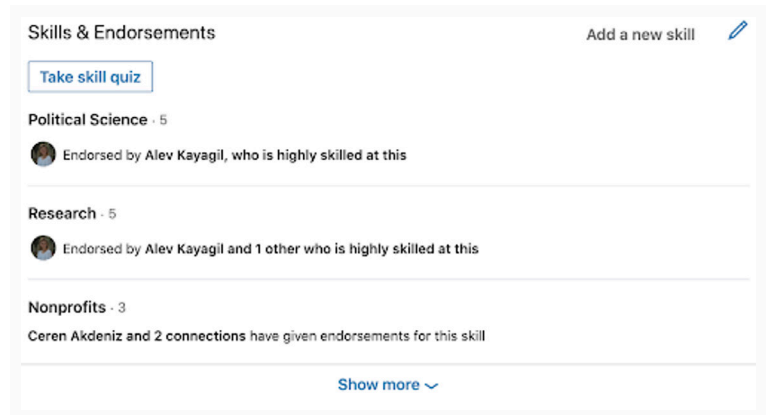
- Specialized
- Experienced
- Leadership
- Skilled
- Passionate
- Expert
- Motivated
- Creative
- Strategic

These are the most popular words showing up on LinkedIn profiles. You aim to stand out, not to blend in the crowd.



Showcase your abilities on LinkedIn and your connections can endorse them. It will increase the likelihood of you being discovered for opportunities related to the skills you possess.

You can also take assessments for the skills you've listed on your profile to showcase your proficiency.



## Practice

### Practice makes perfect!

Write down 3 skills you have and who can endorse each skill on LinkedIn.

Skill
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Contact
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

## Build: Set a realistic goal

“When setting a goal avoid the cardinal sin of I want a job! You do not ask someone to marry you on the first date.”

- Raj Uttamchandani

After you have spent some time getting to know yourself and what you are looking for, set some realistic goals for networking, based on your starting point.

Here are some good questions to guide your goal setting:

- What do I want to **learn** about this sector or industry?

- What type of person do I want to **connect** with to learn from?
- What understanding do I want to **validate** or **challenge?** (ie: Lawyers and Suits)
- What is my capacity to manage meaningful **relationships?**
- What specific **skills** am I trying to develop? (hard and soft)
- What **inspiration** and **motivation** am I looking for?

Setting a realistic goal is about the journey as much as the destination. In building a career, you want a strong network for the long term. Just seeking a job as a goal means you can only have 1 measure of success and it is only for right now. Yes, we all need a job to meet our needs, but view your network as distinct from your job search. Cultivate and grow it for your whole career.



## Practice

### Practice makes perfect!

Write down your top 3 networking goals.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Build: Reach out to family and friends

Your friends and family will be your single greatest source of support. You should always inform them of your career journey and progress, keeping them in the loop of any changes or pivots.

- They care and are invested in your success
- You can practice with them without feeling fear

- As your progress in your career, your peers will become your greatest source of collaboration, support, future jobs, dialogue, etc. .... They are the most important part of your network!
- You never know who they may know

## Build: Reach out to career centres and professional associations

Once you have an idea of what you are looking for out of a network reach out to career centres or professional associations.

What career centres offer:

- Skill Development opportunities
- Mentorship
- Job Search Practice
- Job postings

What professional associations can offer:

- Early professional programs
- Networking events
- Publications
- Mentorship
- Professional Development Accreditations
- Sector specific job boards

## Practice

### Practice makes perfect!

Make a list of people and places you can reach out to in order to jump start your network.

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

## Build: Attend networking events



### Put yourself out there!

#### Show up prepared:

- Have a goal (even if it as small as walking in the front door)
- Dress for the moment
- Have your contact details ready (Business cards might not be where you are at, but find an easysare way of connecting)
- Know who is going be in the room and have some questions prepped

#### When you are there:

- Make an effective introduction
- Listen first, speak second – find things in what people are telling you that provide follow up, don't work off a script
- Be sincere in your interest in that person
- After: Follow Up! Wherever possible, send a follow up message

## Build: Leverage COVID behaviours



### COVID changed everything, even networking.

#### Digital coffee:

- People have been more likely to take a virtual coffee or chat with people, even those distant in their networks

There is universal recognition of how challenging the labour market is, especially for young people

- Generally, there is a greater sense of give back
- It is a lot easier to schedule a 30 virtual chat than drag yourself to an in person meet up
- In uncertain times, people are reaching out for connection

## Brainstorm

### Think of ways to leverage COVID behaviours.

What is available to you and how can you use it to your advantage?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Strategize: Divide your work

Categorize everything you can do to grow your network by their risk level

### Low Risk

These are people closest to you who know you the best. Could include family, friends, teachers, coaches, etc.

**Benefits:**

- Provide a relatively safe starting point
- Know you very well and can provide tailored feedback.

**Challenges:**

- A small circle
- May not have access to your sectors of interest
- Often a pool you share with your peers

### Medium Risk

Your second ring connections. Friend of friends, a more senior colleague, a great speaker you see, a head of department. These are friends of friends or people you know minimally/have a small connection to.

**Benefits:**

- A larger pool to work from
- More experience and world views

**Challenges:**

- Takes a leap to reach out to them
- May not have a reason to support you

### High Risk

The networking equivalent of the cold call. Someone you do not know, but they are in the industry or sector you want to be in. Could be someone you searched on LinkedIn or showed up in your research as a leading thinker.

**Benefits:**

- A huge pool
- Expertise and access in the sector
- Respected

**Challenges:**

- A long shot
- Requires a volume of effort but could be rewarded!

**Write 2 Low Risk actions you can take:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Write 2 Medium Risk actions you can take:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Write 2 High Risk actions you can take:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Strategize: Practice approach and response for different groups

**Each of these levels of your aspirational network requires a different approach.** Much like your cover letter and CV, find a tailored approach for each group and individual. These are just suggestions as you should customize each time.

### Low Risk:

- When asking for help, **appeal to their interest** in supporting your success
- You can **be honest and vulnerable** with this group
- **Ask for support** through feedback and thinking partners

### Medium Risk:

- **Share a common bond** you have found (without being creepy)

- Identify **how you might be connected**
- Have a **clear ask** with what you would like to learn from them
- Provide them **easy options to be in touch** with you

### High Risk:

- Have your written pitch down as chances are this is over email or LinkedIn
- **Introduce yourself** and try to connect it in some way to their story as a reason you would like to learn more from them (Don't force this though, it could get weird)
- **Find meaningful ways to engage with them**

## Strategize: Practice in 'safe' spaces

Networking takes practice... a lot of it. The good thing is you have a whole career to get good at it. **When first starting it can feel strange and embarrassing.**

Everyone has had a moment when they freeze in front of someone they really respect or trip on the carpet at their first industry social, you just **have to keep working at it.**

### What to practice:

- Your intro/elevator pitch – partly because it feels fake at first, mostly because being able to speak confidently about yourself is critical for your career
- Asking questions and listening – you want to be able to build on what is being said
- Your ask of people – what do you want from them?
- How to follow up



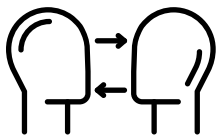
### With who:

- **Your friends and family** – They have already seen you look silly hundreds of times. This is a safe space to be embarrassed
- **Your low risk network** – They will support you with constructive feedback and ideas to improve
- **A public speaking group** – Joining Toastmasters or a public speaking group is a great way to build your confidence talking about anything
- **Improv** – A whole discipline built around thinking on your feet, a great way to build your ability to go back and forth with people
- **Conversation groups** – If you are concerned about your English abilities, lots of places offer practice conversation groups or partners to improve your language skills. (And remember with pride that you are multilingual, a distinct skill set)



## Strategize: Give more than you get

Often, especially early in our careers, we do not feel like we have much to offer those we are trying to network with. This is not true at all and you should be trying **in every networking relationship to identify what you can do for that person.**



How do I know what I can give? **LISTEN** to what they are saying, follow up with suggestions.

### Examples:

- They mentioned they really like Japanese food, **send them a review for a place you loved**
- You talked to them about about a hot topic in current events, **send a follow up article or video**
- They said their kids are huge Pokemon fans, **send them a new event in the city that focuses on that**

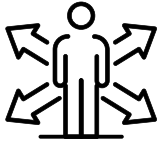
- They say are struggling to find **students to read their articles**, offer to do it
- They say they **do not understand Tik Tok**, show them how it works

It could be any number of things, the key is that you show you are listening to what to they say and you are show some investment in their success. When it comes time for you to ask for support, hopefully you have invested enough in the relationship that the request will feel natural (like a bank account, you cannot take out what you have not put in).

Again, this is hard early in your career and sometimes you will ask for things in advance of having built up enough 'credit'. Most people will give exactly what they got on their way to where they are now. As you continue to grow in your career, always, always do the same.



## Strategize: Get thick skinned- It's not personal!



Most of the time you will get rejected in your request, especially with your identified high risk circle. **Don't worry about it!**

Within our different risk categories, **you could talk to 50-100 people before you have a real catch for what your goals are.** This means you have to keep practicing, putting yourself out there and working on yourself first.

Chances are you've hit that person at the wrong time, they are busy, or they already have a lot of mentees. Generally speaking the **rejection is not about who you are**, it's them, so you have to be able to get over it and move on.

If you can continually work on what you have control over (**What you want, Understanding your skills and yourself, your pitch**), when the moment comes for you to strike networking gold, you will be ready for it!

## Brainstorm

**Identify 3 people you would like to have in your Networking Strategy.**

Under each name, identify a positive potential outcome and a negative potential outcome of reaching out to them.

	1	2	3
Positive			
Negative			



