



# Networks are only effective if you stay connected.

7 ways networking enables great career management.

Most people no longer believe in the idea of a job for life. Even permanent employees seem to contract as independent operators, through a series of employment engagements. A new trinity has emerged in contemporary management science, after several years of extended financial crisis. Employees use work places to improve their mobility by building transferable skills and capabilities; they are attached to purpose rather than tenure. Employers demand more effectiveness and performance than at any previous time; knowledge, experience, competencies and personal attributes are the assets rather than headcount. The relationship between both parties is enabled by strategies designed to increase engagement, wellbeing and discretionary effort rather than conventional contractual obligation.

The most confident leaders and professionals we meet are those that know they have choices. They combine a focus on mobility and transferability with an active approach to career management and choose new roles and/or employers that will enable the next one. This is not just about ambition, but rather a form of Mastery of their personal careers, one in which effective networking is the absolute catalyst.

For some, the idea of networking is a daunting prospect. Visualised as a room full of unknowns, each of whom must be approached, introduced and a rich conversation held. The reality of course is that few people are so venturesome or socially adept that they can carry off such a performance. Good networking can happen when we meet or interact with others in any circumstances. Build up your career network and optimise its value by following these seven steps:

- 1. Give before receiving, networking only happens when the experience is mutually beneficial.**
- 2. You don't always know who you are speaking with, directly or by proxy. Interact in a way, so that contacts are open to repeating the experience.**
- 3. Increase the number of events that you attend meeting smaller selective numbers, rather than rare event participation and feeling pressure to superficially meet lots of people.**
- 4. Active networking brings you to the forefront of your connections minds. Step up if there is something you can do to help someone that you meet.**
- 5. Seek to develop relationships with connections facing similar challenges. Whether ahead of or behind you, fresh perspectives on similar paths are helpful to your reflection.**
- 6. See your network as a productive platform to raise questions that help you understand the boundaries of your current capability or direction.**
- 7. Ensure your network contains a variety of contact types, including peers, leaders, competitors and trusted search and talent acquisition executives. This latter group can keep you in touch with the dynamics of your talent market.**

Contemporary workplaces are consistently changing and our career patterns with them. It's both liberating and alarming to realise how much responsibility we must take to remain relevant and ahead of the curve with our career management. Having a carefully crafted network, built through engagements that emphasise mutual benefit will give you a great foundation on which to build, or continue to grow, your career.



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