

Action plan



Building a network from scratch

Building a network isn't only about reaching as many people as possible or making sales. It's about making contacts who can provide guidance during critical moments and help your business move in the right direction. And, while a business network isn't built in a day, there are a number of easy steps you can take to get the ball rolling and start reaping the rewards.

- **Effort:** High
- **Impact:** High

Actions:

Make a list of your existing contacts and think about where it would be useful to develop relationships further.

- **Impact:** Low
- **Suggested duration:** 5 days
- **Why this will help:** There's plenty of knowledge and experience to be gained from "everyday" relationships, from suppliers to local partners. Developing relationships with those already around you is a logical place to start with your network.

Spend time creating an online presence and connecting with those in your industry to build your network.

- **Impact:** Medium
- **Suggested duration:** 14 days
- **Why this will help:** Creating a profile on networking sites like LinkedIn is a fast way to make new connections and view the experiences and skills of others.

Research and attend online groups and meetups with other business leaders.

- **Impact:** Medium
- **Suggested duration:** 21 days
- **Why this will help:** Groups and meetups are often categorised by sector, business size or location, so you can choose the event based on the sort of connections you want to make.

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Speak openly about your business and be prepared to give as well as take.

- **Impact:** High
- **Suggested duration:** 14 days
- **Why this will help:** The more you help your network, the more they'll be willing to help you further down the line. Offering advice and speaking transparently about your business will encourage other business leaders to be honest too.

Think about how you will continue to build your network and set a relevant goal, whether it's the number of connections in a certain industry or the amount of time spent at events per month.

- **Impact:** High
- **Suggested duration:** 5 days
- **Why this will help:** Setting goals provides a motivator to continue building and growing your network.

How will I know if my action plan is working?

Way to measure success

Number of meaningful connections.

Why this metric?

Tracking the number of meaningful connections in your network will make sure you're building it based on quality, not quantity.

How do I start tracking?

Examine your network after three months and ask yourself whether you've managed to build three meaningful connections that you could turn to for support – or offer support to – in the future.