

Personalized Networking Plan Worksheet

Use this worksheet to build a personalized networking plan that will prompt your professional and academic growth. Plan to revisit this worksheet every six months. You will want to keep track of your progress and adjust your plan as your professional ambitions change.

1. **Train yourself to adopt a ‘Growth Mindset’**

Before you begin any challenging or new project, it’s important to center yourself in a ‘[Growth Mindset](https://medium.com/leadership-motivation-and-impact/fixed-v-growth-mindset-902e7d0081b3).’ Someone with a growth mindset believes that their skill set and abilities are malleable and able to improve over time. Whereas someone with a fixed mindset might say, for example, that they simply will never be good at math or writing, someone with a growth mindset will instead say that they are simply not good at math or writing *yet.* That *yet* is crucial!

A growth mindset is key to the networking process because it will allow you to tackle new challenges with confidence and to rebound when you encounter setbacks.

1. **Define your goals**

Start at the very beginning by identifying your goals for networking. What do you want to achieve through networking? Do you want to expand your knowledge, meet potential collaborators, find a job, or increase your visibility in your industry? Are you interested in growing your leadership skills? Establishing a career map?

Pick a goal or combination of goals. Then, note why this goal is important to you at this moment in your career (a different goal may be more relevant in six months and that’s ok!).

My goal:

Why is this goal important right now?:

1. **Assess your current strengths and weaknesses**

Take a look at your current contact pool. Identify what your strengths and gaps are relative to the goal(s) you identified above.

For example, your network shouldn’t be oversaturated with current colleagues if you want to find a new job - this is a gap to fill. Alternatively, if you’re interested in growing your leadership skills, you’ll want to build up your network by reaching out to potential mentors or peers who can help you find a relevant platform or project.

Strengths relative to my goal:

Gaps relative to my goal:

1. **Identify prospective audiences and resources**

Once you have identified your network’s current strengths/weaknesses, you’ll need to identify the people who can help you achieve your networking goals. Who are the key players in your industry? Who can be your partners or collaborators? Who are the thought leaders and influencers? What resources do they cite when talking about industry-relevant topics? What kinds of conversations are they having?

Do a bit of research and write down three individuals and three resources you think can help you reach your goal in this six month period. Pick at least one individual that is an ambitious connection for you to make and one resource that will challenge or grow your abilities. This will keep you in a growth mindset!

 Prospective Connection #1

 Prospective Connection #2

 Prospective Connection #3 (Reach)

 Target Resource #1

 Target Resource #2

 Target Resource #3 (Challenge)

1. **Choose your networking activities**

Once you identify your target connections and resources, you’ll need to select the right spaces for those networking activities. Examples of networking spaces might include industry events or conferences, professional associations, professional message boards or Slack channels, online meetings, or even LinkedIn.

Looking ahead to the next six months, identify up to three networking activities and/or spaces where you will be able to reach your prospective connections or access your target resources.

Networking Activity #1

Networking Activity #2

Networking Activity #3

1. **Plan your approach and set SMART goals**

Now that you’ve got the beginning of a plan in place, let’s map it out in a strategic way using SMART goals. SMART goals are tasks that are Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Relevant, and Time-Bound. Establishing SMART goals for yourself is a great way to keep yourself on track and ensure that your goals aren’t too abstract or unattainable. This is the “checks and balances” part of your Networking Plan. Let’s pull your above plans together into a single SMART goal for the next 6 months.

**Specific** (*What will be accomplished? What actions will you take?*)

**Measurable** (*What accomplishments or milestones can you use to measure success? Will you simply establish a connection on LinkedIn or would you prefer to meet for coffee?*)

**Actionable** (*Is the goal doable? Do you have the necessary skills and resources? - your target resources should help you here*)

**Relevant** (*How does the goal align with your broader goals? Why is the result important important to your growth? - your goal definitions should help you here*)

**Time-Bound** (*What is the time frame for accomplishing the goal? Will you accomplish this goal in 6 months or fewer?*)

1. **Keep tabs on your growth**

Go ahead and set a calendar reminder for yourself to revisit this networking worksheet in 6 months. When you come back for a review, think about what went well (or maybe not so well) with your plan. What challenges did you face? How did your strategy change in those six months? What do you know now that you wish you knew when you started?

Don’t forget to celebrate your achievements and pat yourself on the back for forging those new connections. Then, get right back to it and create a new six month plan!

Key achievements towards my goal:

Key learnings:

What I will do differently next time:

**Additional Resources**

[Create a networking plan in 7 easy steps](https://www.betterup.com/blog/networking-plan)

[How to Develop a Successful Networking Plan](https://www.rivier.edu/academics/blog-posts/how-to-develop-a-successful-networking-plan/)

[Growth Mindset vs. Fixed Mindset: What’s the difference?](https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/growth-mindset-vs-fixed-mindset)

[How to Write SMART Goals](https://www.ucop.edu/local-human-resources/_files/performance-appraisal/How%20to%20write%20SMART%20Goals%20v2.pdf)