

NETWORKING GUIDE



ANNA FEDUSIV
coaching & consulting

Networking is about
building relationships,
not transactions.

By Anna Fedusiv



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1. Rules to keep in mind when you start expanding your network

The first element of networking is building a solid personal brand. And it always starts from inner work.

1. Know what you want to achieve and show the real you!
2. Define your core values.
3. Be distinctive. Know your strenghts and uniqueness.
4. Be perceived the way you want to be perceived.
5. Find out what you are good at and know your limiting beliefs.

Start building your visibility.

1. Be consistent.
2. Become a model of what you're selling.
3. Tell your story.
4. Build a fanbase.
5. Keep investing in your network.

What to keep in mind when you start expanding your network

1. Contact before the contract, and make friends before you need them. Connect with people because you genuinely are interested in them.
2. A simple thank you goes a long way. When you want to give a compliment, write a recommendation, or express gratitude, don't stop yourself from doing so.

Maya Angelou

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."



3. Do not hesitate to introduce people to each other. I like to help because I know that connecting with others connects more people with me. Be kind, be genuine, show up generously.

4. Behind every successful person is a network.
5. Networking is an organic process: attend that meeting, invite people you like.

2. LinkedIn

a) Content Creation and Rules of Engagement

What you can do on LinkedIn?

You can use LinkedIn in different ways:

- *Create your content to position you as a thought leader;*
- *Share the news you find helpful and relevant, adding your perspective (I started with this one when I was kicking off my LinkedIn presence);*
- *Comment on people's posts, create sustainable relationships, contribute to your network, and genuinely connect.*

All the above actions help you to position yourself through the lens of how you want to be perceived, build your credibility as a thought leader, improve recognizability, and send a particular message to the world.

You are in charge of your narrative. People will perceive you in the way how you let them perceive you.

Let me delve deeper into the value and power of commenting.

You are well on your way when you contribute by sharing your amazing insights through your content. But... it is still a one-way street. You are sending. You've decided what your target audience needs to know, wrote a great piece on the topic and posted it.

When you comment on someone's post or reply to a comment on your post, you are directly talking to someone; the chances that they notice and remember you are much higher.

You engage in conversation, AND it draws more attention to your post. For this to work, your posts need to get comments. Asking a question is a great way to encourage readers to comment. Word on the street (Sept 2023) is that the algorithm will start to penalise posts with a literal question asking for comments. But you know what? We don't know if that is true, and even if it is... When your content is good, people start to pay attention to you and comment - and this is what pleases the algorithm, so there'll never be that much damage.

One way of increasing the chances of people commenting on your post is by repeating the question. Open with the question. Then, write your post and finish with the question again. Some people don't even read your post, they'll hop straight over to the comments if the opening is a question or a strong (opinionated) statement.

Reply PROPERLY to comments on your post. Instead of saying "Thank you," start a conversation. Was all they said: "Great post!" Not to worry, thank them AND ask them what resonated with them or with a "7 Tips to..." post, ask which tip they will implement today.

When people give you a bit more to go by, reply in a way that starts the conversation. Talk a bit more about a point they made and (if possible) end with a question to keep the conversation going. Always (when I say always, I mean 90% of the time when you start, 80% of the time once things are going nicely for you on LinkedIn) use one of your keywords or values in your comment. These are the things you want to be known for.

You might have realised I often use the words authentic, perseverance, and consistency, even in a different context, as these words resonate with my dream clients. This is where your post-its come in handy. Keep them in full view when you are working.

Commenting on Other People's Posts

By now you realise that a "Great Post", "Well said," or "Congratulations" from you won't get you noticed. There are a few reasons why those comments are no good. Especially when you 'just want to support a friend.' When that friend is sitting across the table and excitedly talks to you, do you just sit there, give a thumbs up and say something like that? When writing a comment that is at least one sentence, you:

- *Are way nicer to the author of the post when you comment, mentioning what you find great about the post.*
- *Help boost their post, as lots of short comments can be seen as coming from an engagement pod, and the algorithm might reduce the post's reach.*
- *Can easily weave in one of your keywords or values or even share some of your expertise.*

When you share some of your expertise, ensure it is directly related to the post and creating conversation. Be careful to come across as someone who makes it all about them. Instead, contribute to the post by adding value.

b) Using LinkedIn for Networking Purposes

LinkedIn is my goldmine for building and nourishing relationships. The system has limited the number of personalised invites to 5. Still, I would encourage you to use the free trial and maybe a paid subscription for the time being when you will be actively working on growing your network.

When you are establishing your personal brand and building your network, think about several target groups you would like to connect

- *Peers*
- *Potential employers/ hiring managers*
- *Thought leaders*
- *Industry Experts*
- *Think of anyone else who could be of service to you.*

Connect and invite some of them for a virtual coffee/ informational interview. In this way, you will broaden your understanding and context of the industry's challenges. You will start building associations about who you are and what you stand for, and once the right opportunity arises, people will think about you (if you did all the things right).

Linkedin: setting a call with someone you do not know (just yet)

Are you reaching out to someone to introduce yourself and ask some questions?

Awesome! That's a pivotal step in lighting some fire under your job search:

- *Introduce yourself.*
- *Find the common ground.*
- *Tell them where you've been + what you've accomplished that is relevant.*
- *Ask whatever you need to ask or get to the point of why you are messaging them.*
- *If you overload a person with information and your whole story, they might run away quicker than you think. I usually exit the email and mark it as unread until I have the time...*

Don't overload; make it simple. Here are a few examples of how I do it:



Hi Jo,

We don't know each other in person, but we have several acquaintances in common. We also both share a passion for brand building and sustainability. And the idea of your "pace moments" project is close to my heart. I will be happy to connect.

Best regards, Anna Fedusiv

After the person accepts the invitation to connect, be specific and invite the person for a virtual coffee (informational interview). We will talk about that a bit later.

Here is a sequence of just 3 messages that started my connection with my future boss, who later on offered me a job:



Hi X,
We don't know each other in person, but your professional path and BHAG's desire to make an impact sincerely inspired me. Also, your aspiration to teach young women about their abilities resonates with my ambitions.
I will be happy to get connected.

Kind regards, Anna Fedusiv

Thank you for your kind words, Anna. And thank you for reaching out. Happy to connect!



Hi X,
Once again, it is a great pleasure to connect. After looking at your profile, reading the circularity gap report, and learning about other initiatives you are running, I thought I would be delighted to talk to you. After working in brand building for large corporations for my entire career, I have also decided to dedicate my time and efforts to making an impact. This is why I would love to hear about your journey in the sustainability field and learn from you. I know you are busy, and your time is valuable. Thus I'd be grateful if you could find 20 - 30 minutes for a talk. If not - I understand, no worries.

Kind regards, Anna Fedusiv

Sure, Anna! It would be my pleasure.
Let's do next week on Friday at 10 am CET.
You can send an invite to



3) follow up after the call

So, the call is scheduled. Now comes the time to prepare for the informational interview.

c) Informational Interviews

An informational interview is an informal conversation, usually lasting 20-30 minutes, with someone working in a career field that interests you. It is not a job interview; its purpose is not to find job openings.

Instead, it's a way to explore a given field and get an inside look at an organisation where you may want to work in the future.

You may feel awkward reaching out to people you don't know. However, most people enjoy taking time out of their day to reflect on their professional lives and give advice to someone interested in their field.

Informational Interview Structure

1. You start with a brief context of what brought you to the call (make an elevator pitch),
2. If you see fit - you can say that your objective is to get information and advice, not to ask for a job.
3. Be prepared to direct the interview, but also let the conversation flow naturally and encourage the interviewee to do most of the talking.
4. Always wrap up with the two questions: is there a book/podcast/ course you would like to recommend? Are there any people you think I should talk to?

Potential Ideas for the Informational Interview Questions

1. How did you become interested in this field? How did you land the job you are currently in?
2. I am so flattered to speak to you. X told me you are the person to talk to. I am inspired and very impressed with what I know of your work, and I would love to hear your story. Would you have 30 minutes to chat?
3. What steps would you recommend I take to enter this field?
4. What can I do to make myself more marketable and competitive if I enter the field?
5. What's the best/ most challenging part about working here?
6. What kinds of accomplishments tend to be valued and rewarded in this field?
7. In your opinion - do you think there will be new opportunities for employment as a result of future changes?
8. What are the biggest challenges that the industry is facing now? What resources/ skills are/ will become in high demand to address them?
9. Are there any particular skills that are vital to breaking into the field?
10. Based on our discussion, can you recommend one or two people you think I should speak with? Are there any book recommendations/ resources you would advise reading?

Always send a thank-you note after the interview, as the person took the time to speak with you.

3. Networking at the Events

Preparation before the event:

1. Start preparing by checking who is going (quite some events have apps/ chats) and who you can connect with, as well as scheduling the catch-up at the conference.
2. Post on LN that you are coming to this or that event. Is anyone joining as well?
3. Check the panels you want to attend, look up the speakers, think about coming after their presentation and ask questions.
4. When coming to an event - rehearse your pitch and think about what story you will tell.
5. Why do you attend the event, and what do you want to take away from it?
6. Remember that an NPA Networking Panic Attack can happen. What is your escape phrase? When you are talking with someone who is super annoying, for example.

You are at an event. Here are the ideas for conversation starter questions:

1. What initially drew you to this conference? Any specific topics or speakers you're excited about?
2. What brings/ brought you to this field or industry?
3. What panels are you planning on attending and why? Which panel did you enjoy the most and why?
4. Have you attended this conference before? If so, what were some highlights for you? What has changed/ what fascinated you the most this year?
5. What are some emerging trends or developments in our industry that we should keep an eye on?
6. I always seek new books, articles, or resources to deepen my knowledge. Do you have any recommendations on topics related to our industry?
7. Is there a concept or strategy you've encountered recently that has challenged your thinking?
8. What are some of the biggest challenges we're currently facing, and how can we work together to address them?

9. What helps you meet new people and connect at events like these? How do you make it easier and more enjoyable for you?
10. Do you have in mind other worthy conferences/ meetings/communities to be a part of?



I hope you enjoyed reading this guide and will use it to broaden your network to achieve the goals you set for yourself.

BEST REGARDS,

Anna Fedusiv CPCC
Leadership & Career Coach

