

Networking Plan

All projects need managing. Networking can be considered like a project, and so it needs managing. You can use various tools to manage your networking.

- As with any project, you will only move towards your aim when you keep focused on that aim.
- It is important to know exactly what you want, because you will be asked - very directly by powerful potential contacts - and you will need to give a clear answer.
- If you don't know what to plan, then probably some research is necessary:
- An activity which has no clear planned outcomes is liable to be pulled in all sorts of unwanted directions.
- Some people plan with shapes and connections on a big sheet of paper. Others prefer a spreadsheet. Use whatever you find comfortable.
- In terms of evaluating and choosing a potential networking group - especially a big online community - investigate the tactics that successful members are using. Ask a leading member for pointers. This will help you assess the group's relevance to your needs and strengths.
- You will save yourself from attending time-wasting events, and registering with time-wasting websites, if you do some research before committing valuable time to deeper involvement.
- A structured approach can be especially important for very sociable networkers.
- Business networking can be a very enjoyable activity, and for some people can seem a lot more productive than it actually is, so stay mindful of business results and cost-effectiveness.
- Have some targets and measurables, and monitor results.

Here is a simple example for planning and monitoring networking:

Just use the headings as a guide if you prefer to work more intuitively, or if you favour a certain type of planning method.

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
what is my aim?			
ideal connections (people) - describing words			
group name and type			
group profile/sector/interests (relevance to me)			
tactical group notes/tips - what works well?			
my elevator speech (for this group)			
what I can do for these people			
what do I want from these people?			
diary dates/scheduled tasks			
targets/expectations			



actuals			
time spent			
compare with my other marketing activities			