

Building Your Networking Action Plan

Your Networking Action Plan is an essential part of your networking strategy. Set goals. Commit.

Preparation

Identify organizations that you want to join and events that you want to attend. They may relate directly to your profession or industry. Online research can be very fruitful to find groups and activities that are relevant to your interests. Be sure to use:

- Google (or other favourite search engine)
- LinkedIn
- Meetup
- Eventbrite

Read articles that interest you. Peruse industry journals and websites, LinkedIn groups, business publications. Follow industry leaders online and engage with their LinkedIn and other social media posts.

Make a list of people you know already who could be most helpful for you.

- Family, friends and acquaintances
- Co-workers (past and present), clients, classmates, instructors
- People in groups you belong to, such as clubs & organizations, community associations, faith groups
- Your current contacts on LinkedIn

Research employers that interest you.

- What companies are the industry leaders? Do they have offices locally?
- Are there companies that provide a niche good or service that piques your interest?
- What local companies are making a difference in the industry?

Crafting The Plan

Your Networking Action Plan is based on a 4X4X4X4 challenge each month.

1) Share four articles online on LinkedIn

You've been reading articles about your industry. Which ones would be most valuable to your LinkedIn contacts? Share four articles a month - that's about one a week - with your network. Say why it's useful. Bonus points if you write and post an article of your own. You have experience and knowledge in your field.

Monitor the likes and comments. Who else has been reading your article?

2) Identify four new employers to research

When reading all those articles, you've no doubt identified some companies that you want to learn more about. Pick four that you want learn more about. Check their website. Follow their postings on social media. What's being written about them in the media. Who works for those companies?

3) Identify four people you want to get to know better

You have connections already, people who are ready to help you. Who has commented or liked the articles you wrote? Did you engage in conversations with them? Pick four people you want to meet with this month. Go for coffee. Request a meeting.

4) Identify four new people to meet

You want to grow your network. Who works for those companies you've identified? Who has a role similar to yours. Pick four people you want to meet. It will be your opportunity to learn more, and make new contacts.

Go!