



Sales & Network: The Right Network is Vital

You've spent the early part of this week gaining a deeper understanding about your company's industry, your competitors as well as exploring who your ideal customer is. These make up the core of your company's sales ecosystem.

But one of the most important parts of increasing our reach into new markets or deeper within our current customer base comes from having the right network.

When we first launch our first company, we often do so with a very narrow network that may consist of family, friends, and colleagues from work or school. It can be exhausting, expensive and eat up valuable time we could be spending on our company if we try to grow our network by attending every local event or showing up to all of the conferences focused on our company's industry.

While showing up to certain events - and learning how to make the most out of that event - is necessary, it is only the beginning of how we should be creating the network around us that will help us extend our reach, increase our access to the right industry leaders, and provide the needed support for us to achieve our goals.

It takes being very strategic and focused in our efforts to truly take advantage of the power that lies within having the right network in helping us scale our businesses.

EXERCISE

Leveraging Your Current Network

1. Using a separate sheet of paper, create three columns at the top labeled: 1, 2, and 3. For Column 2, it will require that you research the connections of people within your network. Look at their friends lists on Facebook if that is where you are connected, etc.

Look through the email addresses in your inbox and the people you are connected to on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Write down the name of anyone within those online networks who falls within one of the following categories:

Column 1: anyone who is directly involved in your industry who is either a current or potential client or partner.

Column 2: anyone who is not personally involved in your industry but who may be able to connect you to people within their network that could be helpful to you.

Column 3: anyone who has expertise in a specific area which would be helpful to you within a specific capacity of your business.

Column 1: Direct Network

These are the people you currently have access to who are already involved and savvy about your industry. How can you leverage this network? Ask for testimonials from clients as well as warm introductions to their colleagues who might be potential clients. Ask how you can help them with your network. Ask if you can include them on your newsletter list; this will allow you to stay engaged with them more regularly.

Column 2: Indirect Network

These are the people who may be married to, related to, work with or are friends with people that you want to connect with. Be aware that you need to be strategic about the requests you make from this group. If you continually ask for new introductions into their network, there will come a point where they don't want to help you anymore, so make sure you have decided who is the most important within their network before you make the ask. Be sure you also make the offer to return the favor - and follow up with they ask for that help.

When you do receive an introduction to someone else through this network, follow it up with an expression of gratitude so they know you are aware that they helped you. And treat that new connection with respect. If you don't, it will get back to the person who asked to help you, and it will hurt that relationship.

Column 3: Expert Network

The people within this network can be invaluable to you - if you treat them with respect and are very limited and specific in the requests that you make. You cannot tap into this network to get free bookkeeping on an ongoing basis, but you might be able to get a few hours of coaching on how to set up a tracking system for your business financials.