



How to Build Your Network From the Ground Up

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Contributors



KATHRYN MINSHEW, CEO + FOUNDER OF THE MUSE

Kathryn Minshew is the CEO & Founder of The Muse, a career platform used by 50+ million people to research, explore and apply to great companies. She's also the author of The New Rules of Work, a modern playbook to help millennials navigate their careers. A WSJ and HBR contributor, Kathryn has spoken at MIT and Harvard, and appeared on TODAY and CNN. She's been named to Forbes' 30 Under 30 in Media, Inc.'s 15 Women to Watch in Tech and Crain's New York Business 40 Under 40.



MONA PATEL, CEO + FOUNDER OF MOTIVATE

Mona Patel is a dynamic, engaging entrepreneur with 17 years experience convincing leaders at some of the world's biggest brands to understand, value, and optimize their customers' experiences. She is the author of the bestseller, Reframe: Shift the Way You Work, Innovate, and Think, which inspires others and offers an actionable roadmap for ideation, and is the Founder/CEO of Motivate, a User Experience (UX) research, design and staffing agency.



DAVID OLK, CEO + CO-FOUNDER OF VORAY

David Olk is the CEO and Co-Founder of Voray, helping people more authentically build meaningful business relationships. Prior to Voray, David co-founded ShopKeep, a SaaS Point-of-Sale technology company, which under David's leadership, grew to one of NYC's largest software companies with over 25,000 enterprise customers and raising over \$100 million in capital. He is an active advisor and investor to multiple early-stage startups. David lives in New York City with his wife and two sons.

Contributors



SHANA GLENZER, CMO AT CROWDSKOUT

Shana is the CMO at Crowdkout. She is also heavily involved in the D.C. Tech community as co-organizer of D.C. Tech Meetup, cofounder of DCFemTech, on D.C. advisory board of The Vinetta Project, & founding board member of BEACON. With over a decade of work at various tech companies—including Blackboard and SocialRadar—Shana has also become a go-to technology commentator for national television networks.



MICAH KEAWE, HR MANAGER AT QUARTET HEALTH

Micah is the HR Manager of Quartet Health bringing experience from tech stars: Apple, Squarespace, and Betterment. At Apple and Squarespace, Micah leveraged his teaching background to create L&D initiatives. At Betterment, Micah managed the HR Operations of the company ensuring timely and efficient HR compliance. Outside of HR, Micah is a musician and avid runner.



JULIE WEBER, CMO + PRINCIPAL AT BRLLNT

Julie is the Chief Marketing Officer and Principal at Brllnt, a creative strategy and full service marketing agency. Throughout her 15 year marketing career, she has worked with international hospitality brands and destinations, including the City of Washington, D.C. where she created and launched the #WeDC movement - one of the largest grassroots campaigns at SXSW. She currently resides in Washington, D.C. with her husband, dog, bicycles, and books.

Introduction

The Why of Building Your Network

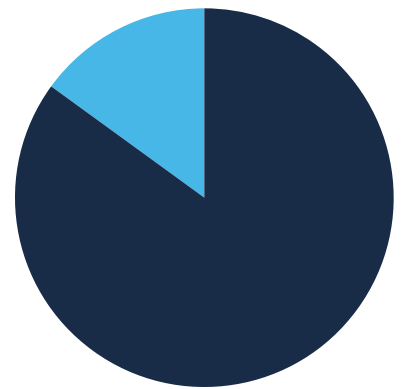
Networking is pivotal to a successful career, yet it's something most people have little to no formal instruction on.

In fact, when we asked several of our contributors how they learned to effectively network, one of them joked that he learned, "partly just from failure." That's why we've written this eBook — to give you insights from business and networking experts who understand the benefits, along with the pitfalls.

We probably don't need to convince you much of the importance of networking. According to a survey conducted by LinkedIn, a whopping 85% of jobs are filled through networking. But in this eBook, we will explore beyond networking just to land your next job and take the the long view instead.

Professional networking is a way to enrich your interests, create long-lasting mentorships, and gain knowledge in complex industries. It's also a powerful tool to enrich your current position, and make yourself a more valuable contributor to the workplace in general.

Perhaps you've dreaded the thought of networking, felt overwhelmed with options, or simply haven't known where to start. Maybe you're already an expert but are looking to hone your craft. Whatever the case, we have a bit of something for everyone in this eBook. We hope some of these tips help you feel more confident about making connections that will last throughout your career.



WOW.

85%

**OF JOBS ARE FOUND
BY NETWORKING**

PART ONE

Building a Solid Foundation

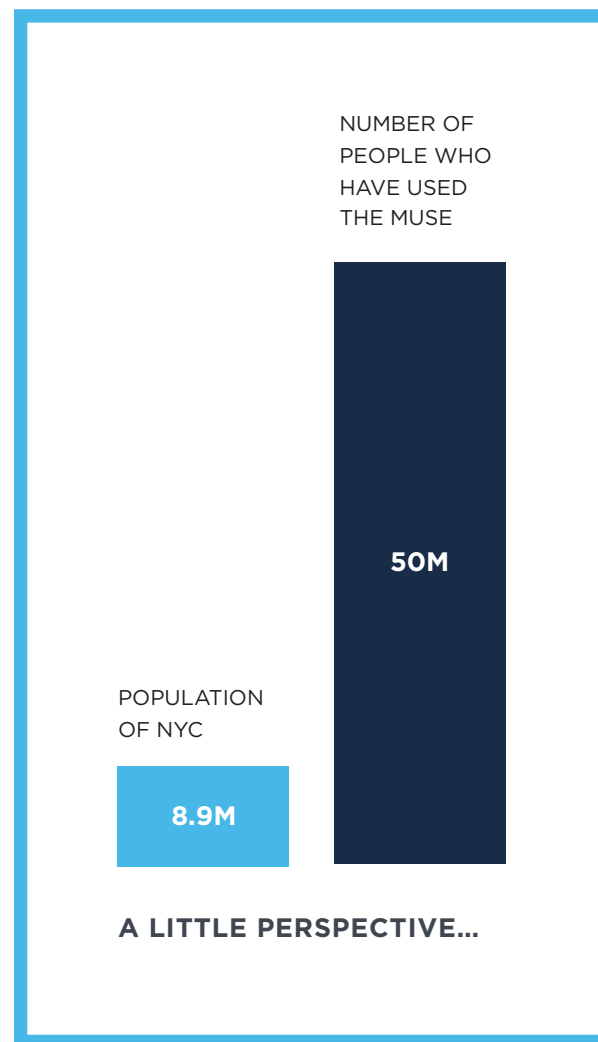
6 Ways to Start Building Your Network

If you've downloaded this eBook, maybe you've thought, "Networking seems like such a big task. Where do I even start?"

If you're looking for where to begin, Kathryn Minshe has some great advice.

Kathryn is the co-founder and CEO of [The Muse](#), a company that has helped over 50 million people with their careers, including looking for jobs, getting professional coaching, building a personal brand, and growing in entrepreneurship.

Kathryn wrote in to give her expert advice on how to build a solid foundation for your network. Here are her tips.



1

DON'T LIMIT YOURSELF WHEN LOOKING FOR EVENTS TO ATTEND.

Consider everything from alumni mixers to conferences to events hosted by industry groups to online networking sites like [meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com). Then pick the opportunities that seem the most interesting to you and are in line with your goals.

2

THE KEY TO PRODUCTIVE NETWORKING IS QUALITY OVER QUANTITY.

Don't feel like you have to go to the biggest events you can find (where you'll have to introduce yourself to more people in order to find someone you connect with). Smaller groups, like a book club or a even a cooking class, are a great way to get to know people who share your interests.

3

IF YOU CAN'T FIND AN EVENT THAT APPEALS TO YOU, CREATE YOUR OWN. Seriously! Invite a few friends to a café or your favorite brunch spot and have each of them bring a friend or two. Pretty soon, you'll start to see your network skyrocket.

4

MAKE DIGITAL CONNECTIONS BY JOINING A DISCUSSION GROUP ON LINKEDIN, or start your own thread. You can also participate in Facebook and Twitter chats. Bonus tip: Make sure you're contributing something valuable to the conversation.

5

KEEP YOUR RELATIONSHIPS STRONG. Once you've established a connection, don't let things fizzle! I try to send a follow-up note within 24 hours. (This is perhaps the most important aspect of building a solid network.)

“**In the early days of The Muse, I didn’t exactly have a ton of connections in the startup space...**”

KATHRYN MINSHEW, CEO + FOUNDER OF THE MUSE

PART TWO

Networking at a Startup

4 Tips on How to Network in the Startup Industry

Kathryn Minshew doesn’t only have tips on how to build your networking foundation — she also had a unique experience of having to network at startups for the first time in her career.

“In the early days of The Muse, I didn’t exactly have a ton of connections in the startup space,” Kathryn said. “I went to five (sometimes six!) events per week to connect with people in media, tech, and HR. It was hard work, but the experience proved that practice is the best way to get better—or even become an expert—at something.”

Read below for four tips Kathryn shared with us about networking in the startup space.

Luckily, a lot of the same rules and networking tips still apply! Going from corporate to startup life doesn't mean your existing network is no longer important—in fact, you should keep these connections strong (yes, I said it again). You just have to focus your efforts on meeting different people.

1

THINK ABOUT WHO YOU ALREADY KNOW. You've heard of the six degrees of separation, right? So maybe you're chatting with an old coworker about your new start up gig and you mention that one of your goals is to better understand online demand generation. By sharing something specific, some people will realize, "Hey, now that this person is in a new field, I should introduce them to my sister-in-law's cousin's brother's best-friend who works at a startup, too!" (Okay, that's a confusing example, but you get the idea).

2

GET TO KNOW YOUR (NEW) CO-WORKERS. Yes, you see them every day, but it never hurts to get to know the people you work with on a more personal level. What do they like to do for fun? What kind of music do they listen to? Beyond that, try to connect with employees in different departments. Start by saying hello in passing, and then extend an invitation for coffee or lunch. And, of course, you can always take part in office activities, like happy hour or team outings.

3

...AND THEIR NETWORKS. In fact, asking your new coworkers if they know anyone you should speak to as you're getting up to speed on startup life, can be a great way to meet new folks and learn more about the industry from veterans.

4

ATTEND STARTUP NETWORKING EVENTS. This one is pretty straightforward, but it makes sense to seek out opportunities within the startup community—you never know who you're going to meet!

PART THREE

Connecting as an Introvert

8 Ways to Network, Even if You'd Rather Keep to Yourself

Sweaty palms. Hot cheeks. That overwhelming feeling of awkwardness.

Networking with a roomful of strangers might give you the impulse to run and hide rather than get out and socialize.

However, after speaking with several experts about networking, we're convinced: networking as an introvert (and doing so successfully) is actually easier than you'd think.

In fact, introverts have innate networking strengths that not all extroverts possess. "Introverts are great listeners," said Julie Weber, CMO at [Brllnt](#). "We seek out people to have one-on-one conversations versus standing in a social circle where you're not engaged with anybody."

And authors like Anita Bruzesse have pointed out that [introverts bring unique strengths to the workplace](#) as well, such as the ability to collaborate better on a team.

So, what are some concrete tips you can use to network as an introvert? Now the next time a networking opportunity arises, you can embrace the opportunity instead of avoiding it altogether.

“Almost everyone feels awkward at networking events — yes, even extroverts.”

KATHRYN MINSHEW,
CEO + FOUNDER OF THE MUSE

1

REMEMBER YOU'RE NOT ALONE “Almost everyone feels awkward at networking events — yes, even extroverts,” said Kathryn Minshew, co-founder of career website [The Muse](#) and author of [The New Rules of Work](#). “Some people are just really good at putting on a comfortable face and pretending that standing in a room full of strangers is totally normal.”

With that in mind, find some comfort in the fact that you're not alone. Everyone feels a little awkward at networking events, but it's nothing that can't be worked through.

2

BRING AN EXTROVERT WITH YOU More than one person brought up the power of a networking buddy. Invite one of your more extroverted friends to join you at your next professional networking event. They can do the heavy lifting, like introducing you to a new group of people. After that, you'll likely have the opportunity to engage with one of those group members one-on-one, an interaction where most introverts thrive.

3

SET A GOAL Even though Julie is a CMO, she still gets anxiety about attending networking events. But she's found one way to keep it under control, and that's having a goal in mind. “When I attend a panel, I am much less anxious because I have a purpose,” she said.

If you're not doing something as daring as speaking in front of a crowd, there are plenty of other purposes you can create — for example, decide how many people you want to talk to before the night is over. You can even check out the list beforehand and decide who you want to meet by the end of the night.

4

TAKE SOME ALONE TIME FIRST Most introverts feel drained as opposed to energized when socializing with large groups of people for long periods of time. If you know that about yourself, take some alone time first to re-energize and come prepared.

“It takes a lot of energy for introverts to work a room. Take a minute, whether going to a coffee shop before the event or taking time in your office,” said Shana Glenzer, CMO of Crowdskout. “Give yourself a target goal that you want to talk to five people tonight and if you want to hang to the side and observe, give yourself the flexibility and permission to do that after you meet your goal.”

COME PREPARED Introducing yourself to new people might leave you flabbergasted, but that's fixed easily enough.

5

"The trick to staying calm and collected when you already feel uncomfortable is to prepare accordingly," said Kathryn. "Have some talking points ready to go, practice your 'elevator pitch' (a thirty-to-sixty-second snapshot of who you are and what you do) ahead of time, and know what your goals are for attending an event."

For example, if you're attending an event to gain industry knowledge and contacts, prepare questions you'd like to get insight on ahead of time.

6

SEEK OUT QUALITY TIME Time and again, this advice also came up. As mentioned before, introverts possess a unique strength in developing fewer, but closer relationships overall. Use this to your advantage, and invite someone you'd like to get to know for a cup of coffee or a walk around the park.

Doing so is also a great way to express a more genuine side than you may be able to show at a large, professional networking event.

7

GET TO KNOW PEOPLE YOU ALREADY KNOW It sounds a bit silly, but talking more to coworkers you already know is a great way to expand your network. It's also a great way to understand your coworkers outside of the office, which will usually benefit your working relationship. You already have your job in common, which makes starting conversations easier.

"It never hurts to get to know the people you work with on a more personal level," said Kathryn. "What do they like to do for fun? What kind of music do they listen to? Beyond that, try to connect with employees in different departments. Start by saying hello in passing, and then extend an invitation for coffee or lunch. And, of course, you can always take part in office activities, like happy hour or team outings."

REFRAME YOUR THOUGHTS ON NETWORKING If you hate the term and idea of networking in general, you're definitely not alone.

"If you have baggage around the word networking, use another word. The same goes for the word introverts," said Mona Patel, CEO of [Motivate Design](#) and author of [Reframe: Shift the Way You Work, Innovate, and Think](#).

"If networking means you're not as 'insert word here' as someone who is extroverted, that statement doesn't serve you. Instead, consider thinking of it as, 'meet cool people at events, and then go home.'"

8

Another way to flip traditional networking on its head is to instead capitalize on easy one-on-one time throughout an event, instead of designated networking times with large groups.

"I usually talk to the person I sit next to on the train, in line waiting to register or get coffee, or in the front row where people are here to learn like me and sat down early. I don't think of networking as having to meet every person at the event, but rather to have one fun conversation," said Mona.

CONCLUSION Will reading these business networking tips suddenly make talking to a bunch of strangers easy? Probably not. But you'll find that leveraging your many strengths as an introvert will help you make genuine connections if you approach it with a different mindset. And who knows — you might just make some lifelong friends in the process.

“ I don't think of networking as having to meet every person at the event, but rather to have one fun conversation. ”

MONA PATEL, CEO + FOUNDER OF MOTIVATE DESIGN



PART FOUR

Reaching Out Online

5 Ways to Make Connections From Your Computer

Business networking can feel tiring. Even if you're a social butterfly, occasionally it's nice to skip networking events and relax at home instead. The good news is, you can still expand your professional networking connections even if you begin online.

In fact, many small business owners and entrepreneurs use online networking to boost their businesses and make valuable connections — and websites like [Startup Nation](#) and [The Small Business Hub](#) include online forums and community meetups to help expand your reach.

After speaking with the experts, we've learned how to improve your online networking skills in five simple steps. Here's their advice.

1

DO YOUR RESEARCH Before you get in touch with someone, do your research on their background. Where have they worked in the past? Have they written any books or made any public presentations or seminars? Most of this information can be found on LinkedIn or Google.

If you reach out to someone online without knowing these basic bits of information, you'll risk appearing ignorant or uninterested in the other person — a bad start to any networking opportunity.

2

FIND SOMETHING IN COMMON Once you've done your research, find out what you have in common. Whether that's attending the same university, your love of corgi puppies, or a passion for employee onboarding, reaching out with specifics will help you to form a connection.

3

RESPECT THEIR TIME Everyone has a finite amount of time in their day. Respect the time of whomever you're reaching out. As someone who has a steady stream of people trying to talk to him on Twitter, HR Manager at Quartet Health Micah Keawe understands the potential frustration.

"People hounding me diminishes my want to interact with them because it's aggressive," said Micah. Instead, he suggests giving people enough time to respond and ask when would be the best time to reach out and talk.

4

MAKE IT EASY TO MEET UP If a contact has expressed interest in getting together, your job is to make it as easy as possible for that to happen. Suggest a specific time and place — of course, keeping in mind their convenience and limited time.

You can do this by choosing a venue that is convenient for them and won't take up a chunk of their day. "It's can be annoying when people you just met ask for a two hour lunch," said Mona Patel, CEO at Motivate Design and author of Reframe: Shift the Way You Work, Innovate, and Think. Instead, she says, "Ask what the most convenient way is to meet — perhaps you can workout or join them for their morning coffee run instead."

This removes some of the barriers between you talking to them online and actually getting to meet up and talk in real life.

KEEP UP CONTACT Nothing says disingenuous like only reaching out when you need something. After establishing a connection with someone, find ways to keep up, like asking how they're doing or sharing an interesting article.

5

“The most important part of making connections is maintaining them,” said Kathryn Minshew, CEO of the Muse and author of the book *The New Rules of Work: The Modern Playbook for Navigating Your Career*. “Send a thank you note, share relevant articles as they come up, engage with your contact’s LinkedIn updates—gestures that show you’re not just interested when it’s convenient.”

CONCLUSION In online networking, just as networking in-person, it pays off to be genuine and thoughtful. If you show that you respect that person’s time and value what they have to say — and add some value to them, too — you’re more likely to make long-lasting connections that will become even more fruitful in the future.

“**Engage your network on a regular basis. It’s about understanding how to use social media and things you do everyday to engage your network, like sharing a relevant article and calling out someone you think it pertains to.**”

KRISTY WALLACE, CEO OF ELLEVATE



PART FIVE

Maximizing Relationships

6 Ways to Make Long-Term Connections at Networking Events

Let's be real for a minute. Sometimes, networking can feel, well, *fake*.

This makes sense — a lot of networking environments have a contrived feel about them. After all, how often do you walk around hotels with a nametag and ask a roomful of strangers what they do for a living?

The good news is, business interactions don't have to be so dry and awkward. In fact, they can be fun, beneficial, and long-lasting, like the many quality friendships and relationships in your life.

After interviewing many CEOs, company founders, and thought leaders on the topic, we've come up with six ways to build genuine networking connections that will last beyond that dinner or professional networking mixer where you met someone.

DON'T ASK ABOUT WORK FIRST More than once, interviewees stressed the importance of not diving straight into dry discussions about work. Bringing up topics other than work will help you see the person beyond their job title, and build a real connection early on.

1

“It’s always about seeing the person before seeing their role or their work,” said Micah Keawe, HR Manager of Quartet Health. “If a person works at Google, you can say, ‘That’s cool you work at Google. What do you like to do for fun?’ It helps build a more genuine connection than transactional.”

FIND A MORE INTIMATE SETTING Rarely are large conferences the place to develop close and long-lasting relationships. Luckily, there are still many places where you can develop business networking into long-term connections and friendships. Take [Voray](#), a marketplace David Olk founded to build a unique networking experience.

2

When it came to online networking and other alternatives, “I felt like people weren’t being authentic,” he said. “That means meeting people in person and genuinely caring about them and creating relationships that last.”

His company hosts hundreds of professional networking dinners a year, where people can take the time to get to know each other in a real way. Other great settings might include a rooftop mixer, grabbing a lunch with people in your industry, or even inviting someone you already know out to coffee.

“ I love helping people organize and elevate their groups for the cause of getting women involved in tech. I have the amazing privilege of putting my skillsets to use to help make something run and work. ”

SHANA GLENZER, CMO AT CROWDSKOUT

STOP PASSING OUT BUSINESS CARDS This piece of advice probably goes against everything you've learned or observed at networking events, but handing out business cards left and right may signal disinterest in actually getting to know someone.

"Going in and thrusting a business card at someone when you first meet them is a big networking mistake," said Shana Glenzer, CMO of Crowdskout. "It turns me off when someone does that in the middle of a good conversation. Instead, after we chat, I offer my email address — and only if it makes sense to keep the conversation going."

3

Understandably, the temptation is huge: it's an easy way to share your name, job title, and contact info all in one place. But it can also signal an easy way out of connecting with that person.

If you're still nervous about forgoing the business card altogether, that makes sense — but don't wave it in someone's face the second you meet them. Give it after having a real talk with someone and deciding it's appropriate. Then, stay true to your word on following up. That simple gesture will make you more memorable and unique than passing out a business card alone.

CHECK YOUR EGO We've all met that person during networking events — the one who is bragging about himself and only feigning interest in whoever he's talking to. And it probably left you hoping never to run into that person again.

4

David suggests bringing your ego down to earth and learning more about the other people around you.

"It's always easy to see who's going to be the most popular network person in a room," said David. "It's the person who smiles, walks up and introduces herself, happy to be there, engaging, and no matter what their title is, always willing to talk and communicate."

USE YOUR TALENTS TO HELP OTHERS Networking doesn't have to be an inherently selfish act. At its heart, quality networking is about building a community of people who can tap others' knowledge, skills, and passion for mutual career growth. Reframe the idea of networking as needing connections or asking for favors into building mutual connections in which you can contribute or even mentor.

5 Shana, also a co-organizer of [DCFemTech](#), has spoken about the rewarding aspect of lending her talents to a great cause — closing the gender gap in tech.

"I love helping people organize and elevate their groups for the cause of getting women involved in tech. I have the amazing privilege of putting my skillsets to use to help make something run and work," said Shana. "It's incredibly inspiring."

FOLLOW UP IN A GENUINE WAY As multiple people interviewed pointed out, reaching out and keeping contact is important. It's also a genuine way to show your interest, not just when you need something from someone.

6 Share an article related to a conversation you had with the person, ask how their kids are doing, or if they've gone on any fun vacations lately. It will help establish a rapport and build a foundation for the future. Chances are that person will be more likely to remember you when they have an opportunity coming up, because you were near the forefront of their mind.

CONCLUSION Humans have a desire to create meaningful relationships and contacts. Even though networking events can seem inherently artificial, there are plenty of ways to work around that. Reframe professional networking as a way to work towards genuine friendships and mutual interests — even a way to help others. The quality and return on those actions will only multiply over time.



Conclusion

Whether you're an extrovert or introvert, seasoned networker or a budding entrepreneur, improving your networking skills will help you in many different avenues of life.

But quality networking isn't just showing up at events and passing out business cards. Building a strong network requires effort. Gradually and consistently, putting in the effort will pay out over time.

Regardless of where your networking experience takes you, we hope this eBook has given you actionable tips that you can get started on right away.



About Justworks

We know how important it is to care for your team and keep them happy and productive.

Justworks offers affordable employee benefits and perks that will give your small business an advantage.

We achieve this by pooling together customers to increase buying power, with access to top-quality healthcare. Justworks also gives your access to dental, vision, pre-tax commuter, 401(k), life insurance, and numerous other benefits and perks, all on our intuitive and tech-forward platform.

Interested in learning more?

Give us a ring at **(888) 534-1711** or email us at **experts@justworks.com**.