

"The Relationship Economy - Why Your Network Matters More Than Ever"

1. Network Strength Score Worksheet

****Instructions:**** Answer each question honestly. Score 0-4 points per question. Total possible: 100 points.

First-Degree Network (Strong Ties)

****Q1: How many meaningful professional contacts do you have?****

- 0-5 contacts = 0 points
- 6-15 contacts = 1 point
- 16-30 contacts = 2 points
- 31-50 contacts = 3 points
- 50+ contacts = 4 points

****Q2: How often do you maintain contact with your strongest 10 connections?****

- Haven't reached out in 2+ years = 0 points
- Once or twice a year = 1 point
- Monthly = 2 points
- Bi-weekly or more = 3 points
- Weekly or constant communication = 4 points

****Q3: How diverse is your network across industries/roles?****

- All in same industry/company = 0 points

- Mostly same industry, 1-2 others = 1 point
- 3-5 different industries represented = 2 points
- 5-8 different industries/sectors = 3 points
- 8+ industries, significant diversity = 4 points

****Q4: How many people in your network would advocate for you to their employer?****

- 0-2 people = 0 points
- 3-5 people = 1 point
- 6-10 people = 2 points
- 11-20 people = 3 points
- 20+ people = 4 points

****Q5: How many introductions or leads have you received in the past 12 months?****

- None = 0 points
- 1-2 = 1 point
- 3-5 = 2 points
- 6-10 = 3 points
- 10+ = 4 points

Second-Degree Network (Extended Reach)

****Q6: How many second-degree connections do you have accessible on LinkedIn?****

- 0-100 = 0 points
- 101-300 = 1 point
- 301-700 = 2 points
- 701-1500 = 3 points
- 1500+ = 4 points

****Q7: How actively do you use LinkedIn?****

- Don't have a profile or never log in = 0 points
- Log in monthly, minimal activity = 1 point
- Log in weekly, some engagement = 2 points
- 2-3 posts per week, regular engagement = 3 points
- Daily active, consistent content creation = 4 points

Network Quality & Strategy

****Q8: Do you have a clear networking strategy/goal?****

- No strategy, networking is random = 0 points
- Vague sense of wanting to network = 1 point
- Strategy for specific industry/role = 2 points
- Documented strategy with quarterly reviews = 3 points
- Actively managed strategy with monthly metrics = 4 points

****Q9: How many alumni networks or professional communities are you active in?****

- None = 0 points
- 1 (passive membership) = 1 point
- 1-2 (regular attendance/participation) = 2 points
- 3-4 (active participation in several) = 3 points
- 5+ communities (leadership or consistent engagement) = 4 points

****Q10: How many weak ties (acquaintances, former colleagues) could you reconnect with?****

- Few or none = 0 points

- 5-10 people = 1 point
- 10-25 people = 2 points
- 25-50 people = 3 points
- 50+ people readily accessible = 4 points

Giving & Reciprocity

****Q11: How many introductions or job leads do you give to others annually?****

- None or very few (0-2) = 0 points
- 3-5 = 1 point
- 6-10 = 2 points
- 11-20 = 3 points
- 20+ = 4 points

****Q12: How often do you offer help to people in your network without expecting immediate return?****

- Rarely or never = 0 points
- 1-2 times per year = 1 point
- Monthly = 2 points
- 2-3 times per month = 3 points
- Weekly or constant = 4 points

****Q13: Do you celebrate others' wins and successes?****

- Rarely acknowledge others = 0 points
- Occasionally congratulate people = 1 point
- Regularly celebrate in private = 2 points
- Publicly celebrate others' wins = 3 points

- Actively create celebration moments, make intros, amplify others = 4 points

Visibility & Reputation

****Q14: How clear is your professional brand/reputation?****

- No clear professional identity = 0 points
- People know your name but unclear what you do = 1 point
- Clear on what you do, within your immediate circle = 2 points
- Known for specific expertise in your industry = 3 points
- Recognized thought leader or go-to expert = 4 points

****Q15: How many people would describe you as a "connector" or "networker"?****

- Nobody = 0 points
- A few people (2-5) = 1 point
- Some people (5-15) = 2 points
- Many people know you as a connector (15-30) = 3 points
- Widely known as a connector/trusted node (30+) = 4 points

Network Strength Score Interpretation

****0-24: Starting from Scratch****

- Priority: Build foundation of 15-20 solid first-degree connections
- Focus: LinkedIn profile optimization, alumni network activation
- Timeline: 3-6 months to reach 25+
- Strategy: Aggressive outreach to weak ties, informational interviews

****25-49: Weak Network****

- Priority: Deepen existing connections, increase to 30-40 quality contacts
- Focus: Regular maintenance (monthly contact), strategic additions
- Timeline: 2-3 months to reach 50+
- Strategy: Quarterly meetups, active LinkedIn, weak tie reactivation

****50-74: Good Network****

- Priority: Increase strategic leverage, expand reach and diversity
- Focus: Thought leadership, positioning as connector
- Timeline: 2-4 months to reach 75+
- Strategy: Monthly strategic adds, content creation, giving-first mindset

****75-100: Strong Network****

- Priority: Leverage for career advantage, mentoring others
- Focus: Thought leadership, creating opportunities for network
- Timeline: Maintenance and optimization
- Strategy: Quarterly network reviews, strategic positioning, scaling giving

2. 30-Day Network Activation Checklist

Week 1: Foundation & Audit

- [] Complete Network Strength Score Worksheet above
- [] Do a LinkedIn profile audit (headline, about section, experience descriptions)

- [] Update LinkedIn headline with keywords related to your target role/expertise
- [] Make your LinkedIn "Open to Work" status visible (if applicable)
- [] Review your LinkedIn About section—is it compelling and clear?
- [] List 20 weak ties you could reconnect with (former colleagues, classmates, etc.)
- [] Send 3 "low-pressure reconnect" messages: "Hey [name], been too long. How are you?" (no agenda)

Week 2: Profile Optimization & Connection Building

- [] Refresh your LinkedIn profile photo (professional, friendly, recent)
- [] Rewrite 3-4 key experience bullets with impact and keywords
- [] Add 5 skills to your LinkedIn profile (relevant to target roles)
- [] Set up LinkedIn content strategy: commit to 2-3 posts/week
- [] Create your first LinkedIn post: share a recent win, lesson learned, or industry observation
- [] Send 5 weak-tie reconnection messages
- [] Send 3-5 first-degree connection requests to people in your target industry
- [] Leave 3 thoughtful comments on others' LinkedIn posts

Week 3: Outreach & Informational Interviews

- [] Identify 5 people you'd like informational interviews with
- [] Send personalized connection requests + informational interview request
- [] Schedule 2 informational interviews (aim for 30 minutes each)
- [] Create informational interview script/questions (see template below)
- [] Send 2-3 posts on LinkedIn (continue consistent posting)
- [] Engage with 5-7 people's content (comments, thoughtful reactions)
- [] Follow 10 people in your target industry or interest area
- [] Send weak-tie reconnection messages to 5 more people

Week 4: Deepening Relationships & Giving Strategy

- [] Conduct scheduled informational interviews (2+)
- [] Send follow-up emails to informational interview subjects (within 24 hours)
- [] Post on LinkedIn 2-3 times (consistency is key)
- [] Make 2 introductions or share 2 job leads with people in your network
- [] Attend 1 networking event, meetup, or community meeting
- [] Send personalized check-in message to 5 people (ask how you can help them)
- [] Share someone else's content on LinkedIn with thoughtful commentary
- [] Review Month 1 progress against Network Strength Score

Post-30 Days: Ongoing Maintenance Plan

- **Daily (10-15 min):** Engage with LinkedIn content, respond to messages
- **Weekly (1-2 hrs):** Post 2-3x, add 1-2 new connections, check in with 5 people
- **Monthly (2-4 hrs):** Informational interviews (1-2), review network health
- **Quarterly (4-8 hrs):** Strategic audit, gap analysis, adjust priorities

3. LinkedIn Profile Optimization Checklist

Profile Photo

- [] Professional headshot (business casual, friendly, eye contact)
- [] Clear face visible (crop to shoulders/head)
- [] Good lighting, plain background (avoid busy patterns)
- [] Current photo (within last 2 years ideally)

- [] Approachable expression

Headline (120 characters max)

- [] Include target role OR current title + value proposition
- [] Include 2-3 keywords (skill, industry, role type)
- [] Avoid: "Open to Work" alone or generic titles
- [] Example: "VP Product at TechCo | Product-Market Fit Specialist | Building AI-Powered Solutions"
- [] Update if seeking new role (include "Open to Opportunities in [specific area]")

About Section (2,600 characters available)

- [] Write in first person (starts with "I" or direct statement)
- [] Lead with value proposition (what you help with, not just what you do)
- [] Include 2-3 specific accomplishments with metrics
- [] Mention target industries or role types
- [] Include 2-3 keywords naturally
- [] End with clear call-to-action ("Let's connect," "Happy to grab coffee," etc.)
- [] Keep paragraphs short (2-3 lines max)
- [] Proofread for grammar/typos

Experience Section

- [] Each role has specific accomplishments, not just duties
- [] Use numbers/metrics wherever possible
- [] Include 3-5 bullet points per role (most recent role more detailed)
- [] Target keywords naturally integrated
- [] Dates are accurate

- ☐ Add media (links, PDFs, images) to showcase work if relevant

Skills Section

- ☐ At least 5 skills listed
- ☐ Top 3 skills are what you want to be known for
- ☐ Remove irrelevant or outdated skills
- ☐ Ensure skills match target roles
- ☐ Consider endorsement potential (ask top contacts to endorse key skills)

Recommendations Section

- ☐ Aim for at least 2-3 recommendations visible
- ☐ Request recommendations from recent managers, colleagues
- ☐ Write recommendations for others (often reciprocated)
- ☐ Prioritize quality over quantity
- ☐ Update older recommendations if better options available

Additional Sections

- ☐ Add volunteer experience (if relevant)
- ☐ Add certifications or courses completed
- ☐ Add publications or articles written
- ☐ Link to personal website, portfolio, or blog (if applicable)

Privacy & Settings

- ☐ Set "Open to Work" status (visible to recruiters and connections)
- ☐ Choose specific roles/companies you're interested in
- ☐ Enable activity broadcasts (shows when you engage)

- [] Review who can see your activity

4. Informational Interview Script & Templates

Email Request Template

****Subject Line:**** "Quick 15-min chat about [specific topic/role]?"

****Body:****

Hi [Name],

I've been following your work at [Company] and was really impressed by [specific accomplishment/insight/article]. I'm currently exploring [specific direction: industry/role/transition] and would love to pick your brain for just 15 minutes about [specific question you're trying to answer].

I know your time is valuable—would you have 15-20 minutes next [specific week]? Happy to work around your schedule. Coffee/Zoom, your preference.

Thanks,

[Your Name]

Informational Interview Questions Template

Opening (Build Rapport):

1. "How did you end up in your current role?"
2. "What's the most interesting project you're working on right now?"

Career Path & Role Understanding:

3. "What does a typical day/week look like in your role?"
4. "What skills or experiences do you think were most important to getting to where you are?"
5. "Looking back, what would you have done differently early in your career?"

Industry/Market Insights:

6. "What trends are you seeing in [industry/market]?"
7. "What skills are most valuable in [specific role/function] right now?"
8. "How do people typically break into [this role/industry]?"

Specific Guidance (Tailored to YOUR Situation):

9. "Based on what I've shared about my background, what gaps would you suggest I address?"
10. "Who else in your network do you think I should talk to? Would you be willing to make an introduction?"

Closing:

11. "What's the best way to stay in touch? Can I follow up with you in [3-6 months]?"
12. "How can I help you? Is there anything I can do for you?"

Follow-Up Email Template (Send within 24 hours)

****Subject:**** "Thanks for [meeting time] yesterday"

****Body:****

Hi [Name],

I really appreciated the time you spent with me yesterday. The insight about [specific point they made] was especially helpful and has me thinking about [how you'll apply it].

[Optional: If they recommended someone, add] I'm going to reach out to [Name] based on your suggestion—thanks for that connection.

I'll definitely follow up with you in [specific timeframe: 3 months] with an update. In the meantime, if anything I can help with comes to mind, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Thanks again,

[Your Name]

5. Networking Schedule Template

Daily (10-15 minutes)

- [] Check/respond to LinkedIn messages
- [] Leave 1-2 thoughtful comments on connections' posts
- [] Engage with 1 piece of industry content

Weekly (1-2 hours, I like Tuesday/Thursday)

- [] Post on LinkedIn 2-3x
- [] Add 1-2 new strategic connections
- [] Send check-in messages to 5 people ("How can I help?")
- [] Schedule or prep for upcoming meetings

Monthly (2-4 hours, pick one day/week)

- [] Schedule 1-2 informational interviews
- [] Make 2-3 introductions or share job leads
- [] Review engagement metrics on LinkedIn
- [] Audit network for gaps or strategic priorities
- [] Attend 1 networking event or online meetup

Quarterly (4-8 hours, one full day or split into 2)

- [] Deep network audit: update Network Strength Score
- [] Identify 5-10 strategic contacts to deepen relationships with
- [] Plan next quarter's networking priorities
- [] Update LinkedIn profile if needed
- [] Reflection: who helped you? How can you give back?

6. Tools & Resources

LinkedIn Optimization

- LinkedIn's Creator Mode (enables more content/follower features)
- LinkedIn Learning courses on personal branding
- Docs: LinkedIn Headline Best Practices, LinkedIn Creator Guide

Networking & CRM

- Clay (networking CRM, tracks relationships)
- Dex (personal network management)
- HubSpot CRM (free version for contact tracking)
- Notion (DIY relationship tracker)

Job Search & Hidden Opportunities

- LinkedIn (hidden job market, referrals)
- AngelList (startup jobs, often founder-friendly)
- RemoteOK (remote positions, often referral-friendly)
- Personal network (1st and 2nd degree connections)

Content & Thought Leadership

- LinkedIn articles (long-form content feature)
- Medium (free publishing platform)
- Substack (newsletter platform, builds loyal audience)

Research & Learning

- Alumni networks (university, company)

- Industry associations and groups
- Local meetups (Meetup.com)
- Online communities (Slack groups, Discord)
- Podcasts and YouTube (like Surviving AI!)

Books & Further Reading

- "Never Eat Alone" by Keith Ferrazzi (relationship building classic)
- "The Connector's Advantage" by Michelle Tillis Lederman
- "Weak Ties" research by Mark Granovetter
- LinkedIn's "2023 Workplace Learning Report" (networking trends)

How To Use These Resources

1. **Week 1:** Complete your Network Strength Score. This is your baseline.
2. **Weeks 1-4:** Use the 30-Day Checklist as your daily/weekly action guide.
3. **Ongoing:** Use LinkedIn Profile Checklist quarterly to stay optimized.
4. **As Needed:** Reference Informational Interview Script when requesting meetings.
5. **Monthly/Quarterly:** Use Networking Schedule Template to block time and stay consistent.
6. **Ongoing:** Revisit Network Strength Score quarterly to track progress.

****Remember:**** The biggest mistake people make with networking is treating it like a transaction. The most powerful networks are built by people who give 10x more than they take. Start with abundance mindset, and opportunity follows.

Good luck, and welcome to the relationship economy.