



Make Connections Through Networking

Level 3 Project



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Make Connections Through Networking

About Make Connections Through Networking

Networking improves interpersonal communication skills, increases confidence, and strengthens relationships.

In this project, you will learn how to present yourself as friendly and engaging, maintain contact with those in your network, and engage and interact with people to network effectively. You will also learn how to acknowledge the interests of others to cultivate mutually beneficial relationships and behave as a competent and professional ally to all the people in your network.

Resources

The following is a list of resources available in your digital project on Base Camp. Some of these resources, such as evaluations, are also available on the Resources section on Base Camp.

Project Checklist

Evaluation Resources

Prepare to Network

Project Completion Form

Introduction and Assignment

Introduction

Networking with other people provides opportunities to learn from differing points of view and experiences. In return, you may build your reputation as a reliable and supportive person through networking by offering useful information.

Your Assignment

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to develop and practice a personal strategy for building connections through networking.

Overview: Prepare for and attend a networking event. After the event, present a 5- to 7-minute speech to your club. Your speech can include a story or stories about your experience, a description of what you learned, or a discussion on the benefits of networking. Your speech may be personal to you or informational about networking. If you attend a non-Toastmasters event, you must give your Vice President Education a signed Project Completion Form.

Your speech can be persuasive, humorous, informational, or crafted in any style that appeals to you and supports your speech content.

Throughout this project you will see icons in the margins next to the text. These icons indicate additional resources available online.



Video: Sign in to Base Camp to watch a video that supports this project.



Interactive Activity: Sign in to Base Camp to complete an interactive activity.



Resource: Sign in to Base Camp to view this resource online.



Weblink: Return to your digital project when you see this icon to link to a website or Base Camp location.

For all assignment details and requirements, review the Project Checklist.

Learning in Make Connections Through Networking

Assess and Reflect

To assess and track your knowledge, complete the activity below by listing what you already know and what you wonder about the topic today. Add up to five items to each list. After you complete your project, you will have an opportunity to review your answers and add what you have learned.

Know

For example: I know I am friendly and engaging when interacting at a networking event.

Wonder

For example: I wonder how to be a competent and professional ally to all people in my network.

Competencies

The following is a list of competencies that you will learn and practice in this project.

- Present yourself as friendly and engaging.
- Engage and interact with people to network effectively.
- Maintain contact with those in your network.
- Acknowledge the interests of others to cultivate mutually beneficial relationships.
- Behave as a competent and professional ally to all people in your network.

Understand Networking

Networking is the process of interacting with others to exchange information and develop contacts to create mutually beneficial relationships both in person and online. The further you go in your Toastmasters journey, the more often you will encounter opportunities to extend your network and practice pertinent interpersonal communication skills.

The Benefits of Networking

Establishing new contacts and building relationships can give you fresh perspective, advice, and support. Opportunities are created by sharing ideas and knowledge with others through collaboration and partnerships. By networking, you can better understand the ways in which interpersonal communication contributes to personal and professional growth.

Where to Network

Networking can take place at any gathering that allows you the opportunity to connect with others.

Social Events

These are gatherings organized to celebrate life events and ceremonies. Common social events include anniversaries, weddings, and birthdays. New contacts are often made at these types of events and personal connections can play a powerful role in professional success. Remember to be respectful of the reason for the gathering and be willing to pursue a professional conversation after the event.

Community Service Events

Community service organizations meet regularly and provide an excellent opportunity to develop professional relationships. Establishing rapport with like-minded people who share common interests can lead to dynamic associations. For example, you might attend a Rotary International event in your community.

Professional Events

Professional events allow you to cultivate a broad and diverse roster of contacts. Interacting with people in your own field and others who share your professional interests can open a myriad of opportunities. Professional events may include trade shows, conferences, and conventions.

Social Media Platforms

Social media platforms give you the ability to communicate, connect, and stay connected with others. Social media can be used to increase your visibility and establish connections with those you may not have the opportunity to meet face-to-face. Sharing your knowledge and interests can help build your network.

Prepare for a Networking Event

Develop Your Plan

When developing your networking plans, consider what you want to accomplish. Aside from the connections you want to make, you also need to make note of the talents, strengths, skill sets, and connections you can offer to others. Effective networking requires preparation and practice.

Prepare Your Elevator Pitch

An elevator pitch is an exceptionally brief, unassuming summary that is meant to be delivered in the time it takes to ride an elevator, or less than one minute. Introduce yourself in an upbeat manner.

Communicate Important Points

Be concise and communicate the most important things that you want others to know about you. This could include what you have accomplished, important knowledge, skills, and traits. Allow it to be a natural, relevant extension of your interaction with the new people you meet.

Set Personal Goals

Set goals for yourself before you engage at an event and develop strategies for achieving them. For example, you may tell yourself: "I will talk to five different people before leaving this event."

Decide on Talking Points

Decide what you want to talk about and how your skill set can help those around you. This process can be made easier by using the Prepare to Network resource.

Prepare to Network



The Prepare to Network resource serves as a tool for the member to gather their thoughts before entering a networking environment.

- Elevator pitch
- Personal objectives for making connections at this event
- Ideal connections
- Skills and knowledge

How to Network

Consider the types of connections you would like to make and identify areas in which you need guidance and support. As you look to make contacts, seek out groups and individuals with relevant skills and knowledge. Be flexible by remaining open to diversity and planning to build relationships over a long period of time. The broader the scope of your networking group, the more likely you are to have the connections you want and need over time.

The goal of networking is getting to know people, not necessarily gaining something.

Define Your Strengths

Clearly define skills and strengths that you can contribute to help others before you join your networking event. Be willing to confidently share your experience and volunteer for projects that allow you to demonstrate your knowledge and skills.

The Networking Event

Make an Effective Introduction

Take the initiative to interact with new people. Ask open-ended questions and demonstrate your interest by actively listening. Make it your mission to learn something about each person with whom you speak.

Help Others Build Their Networks

Once you begin to meet people and get to know their individual skill sets, you may understand how a new connection might help someone else. Make it a point to connect people you feel have something of genuine interest to offer each other. Generosity is an attractive quality, and it is something special that people will remember about you. Share your contacts with others in ways that are beneficial to them.

Define How You Can Be of Help

Before a conversation comes to a close, ask how your skills or knowledge may be of service. Some examples are, "How can I help?" or, "In what ways could I contribute to this project?"

Consider the Future

Even if your new connections don't need your assistance immediately, something may arise in the future. Make sure that you communicated your expertise in a memorable way so that your connections will think of you when they need help. Convey a giving nature without an expectation of receiving something in return.

Share Contact Information

Keep your email address, website information, LinkedIn, or other contact information available for a quick connection. Many groups and networking events have apps that make it easy to connect and share information with others. At some in-person events, you may want to have a few business cards, just in case.

After the networking event, be sure to sustain relationships with new and existing contacts.

Nurture New Contacts

Organize your list of new contacts and determine their preferred method of correspondence. Be trustworthy by doing what you said you would do, such as connecting via LinkedIn, calling, or emailing. Make sure to personalize your correspondence by letting each person know you enjoyed meeting them and referring to topics you discussed.

Maintain Existing Contacts

Maintaining existing relationships with your connections is just as important as making new ones. Similarly, if you told one of your connections that you would introduce them to someone, do so. Take the opportunity to act as a bridge between two contacts and encourage both parties to follow up with you after they meet. Introducing your connections to each other can exponentially expand your opportunities.

Communicate Often

Posting content on LinkedIn or other social media platforms is an excellent way of staying in contact. Post updates when you complete a unique Toastmasters project, take a class, read an interesting article, or learn something new. You can monitor changes in your connections' career paths, their employers, and what they find interesting, new, and engaging.

Review and Apply

Before you complete the assignment, take a moment to read through the questions you see here. If you are not able to answer them comfortably, review the project.

- What strategies can you use to network more efficiently?
- How can you turn your skills, knowledge, or hobbies into relevant networking talking points?
- What are some strategies you could use for maintaining contact?
- How might you effectively use the internet to network?

Complete Your Assignment



Project Checklist

Now that you have read through the project, plan and prepare your speech or report. First, review your assignment.

This project includes:

- The Prepare to Network resource
- Attending a networking event
- The Project Completion Form
- A 5- to 7-minute speech

The following list includes tasks for this project. Please remember, your project is unique to you. You can use the checklist here or complete the digital version in your project on Base Camp.

Select a networking event to attend.

Identify your skills and abilities and select a few you would like to highlight.

Prepare your elevator pitch.

Rehearse your pitch in front of your mentor, friends, and family.

Set goals for the networking event. (Be specific: make five new contacts, share my contact information with two new contacts, etc.)

Attend the networking event.

After the event, follow up with new contacts.

Schedule your speech with the Vice President Education. If you need more time to share your experience with your club, you may schedule an 8- to 10-minute speech with the approval of the Vice President Education.

Write a speech about your experience at the networking event.

Rehearse your speech.

When all components of your assignment are finished, complete your self-reflection by adding what you have learned to the last column of the Know-Wonder-Learned activity.

Evaluation Criteria



Review the criteria for the evaluation in this project. Your evaluator will use the following scale:

5 – Exemplary 4 – Excels 3 – Accomplished 2 – Emerging 1 – Developing

Clarity

- 5 – Is an exemplary public speaker who is always understood
- 4 – Excels at communicating using the spoken word
- 3 – Spoken language is clear and is easily understood
- 2 – Spoken language is somewhat unclear or challenging to understand
- 1 – Spoken language is unclear or not easily understood

Vocal Variety

- 5 – Uses the tools of tone, speed, and volume to perfection
- 4 – Excels at using tone, speed, and volume as tools
- 3 – Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools
- 2 – Use of tone, speed, and volume requires further practice
- 1 – Ineffective use of tone, speed, and volume

Eye Contact

- 5 – Uses eye contact to convey emotion and elicit response
- 4 – Uses eye contact to gauge audience reaction and response
- 3 – Effectively uses eye contact to engage audience
- 2 – Eye contact with audience needs improvement
- 1 – Makes little or no eye contact with audience

Gestures

- 5 – Fully integrates physical gestures with content to deliver an exemplary speech
- 4 – Uses physical gestures as a tool to enhance speech
- 3 – Uses physical gestures effectively
- 2 – Uses somewhat distracting or limited gestures
- 1 – Uses very distracting gestures or no gestures

Audience Awareness

- 5 – Engages audience completely and anticipates audience needs
- 4 – Is fully aware of audience engagement/needs and responds effectively

- 3 – Demonstrates awareness of audience engagement and needs
- 2 – Audience engagement or awareness of audience requires further practice
- 1 – Makes little or no attempt to engage audience or meet audience needs

Comfort Level

- 5 – Appears completely self-assured with the audience
- 4 – Appears fully at ease with the audience
- 3 – Appears comfortable with the audience
- 2 – Appears uncomfortable with the audience
- 1 – Appears highly uncomfortable with the audience

Interest

- 5 – Fully engages audience with exemplary, well-constructed content
- 4 – Engages audience with highly compelling, well-constructed content
- 3 – Engages audience with interesting, well-constructed content
- 2 – Content is interesting but not well-constructed or is well-constructed but not interesting
- 1 – Content is neither interesting nor well-constructed

Topic

- 5 – Delivers an exemplary speech about some aspect of experience networking
- 4 – Delivers a compelling speech about some aspect of experience networking
- 3 – Shares some aspect of personal experience networking
- 2 – Mentions some aspect of experience networking but does not fully address
- 1 – Speaks on a topic other than personal experience networking

Complete Your Project



Once you have delivered your speech and received your evaluation, take a minute to review what you recorded under “Know” and “Wonder” in the Assess and Reflect section at the start of this project. Then add what you have learned while working through this project. Add up to five items.

Learned

For example: I learned how to effectively maintain contact with people in my network.

Before You Move On

Review Your Learning

Review all materials in this project.

Deliver Your Speech

Plan, practice, and deliver your speech.

Receive Your Evaluation

Receive your evaluation and complete any other tasks required by your club.

Assess and Reflect

When all components of your assignment are finished, complete your self-reflection by adding what you have learned to the last column of the Know-Wonder-Learned activity.

Congratulations!

If you have completed every task, CONGRATULATIONS! You have completed your Make Connections Through Networking project and you are ready to move on to your next project.



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