

The **EDGE**

Strategic relationships & influence Toolkit

July 2023



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Top 10 Steps to growing a network of Champions

The 'Andy Lopata' Guide to Building Business Relationships

Tip 1: 24-7-30

Following up promptly and positively after your initial interaction is a vital step in building relationships. If you leave it too long you'll find yourself having to start developing the relationship from the beginning again.

The best advice I have heard on following up with people is '24-7-30'. Follow up with a new contact within 24 hours of meeting them. Create another 'touchpoint' within seven days and again at the end of a month.

Each 'touchpoint' should be positive, different from the others and, ideally, a two-way interaction. Rather than a series of automated emails after a day, week and month, they may be an email, a meeting and a phone call. The interactions should be engaging and personalised.

Tip 3: A Mile in their Shoes

Take the long-term view when building your relationships. The most successful people nurture relationships by helping the people to whom they are connected, rather than simply looking to help themselves.

Put your own objectives to one side and get to know your network. Find out what their challenges are, what they want to achieve and how you can help them. Who can you introduce them to?

Pursue the relationship, not the sale. The more that people feel you are genuinely interested in them and concerned about their success, the more they will want to interact with you and, in time, reciprocate.

Tip 2: In Sight, In Mind

Once you have established your relationship and cemented your role in the other person's network, it is important to nurture the connection.

It certainly helps to meet up face to face when you can. Even if it's only two or three times a year, there is something about a personal interaction that helps to deepen a relationship.

However, social networks are fantastic at helping us nurture relationships when we can't meet in person. Don't leave it just at the connection though. Comment on each other's updates where appropriate and leave supporting messages. You'll be amazed at how quickly you feel you're seeing someone regularly even if the interactions are only online.

Tip 4: Think 'We' not 'Me'

One of the biggest skills in relationship building is the ability to take yourself out of the equation and see things from the other person's perspective. If you can recognise what motivates and resonates with the other party, it is always so much easier to find common ground.

When you meet new people, take the time to see things through their eyes and find how you can help each other, rather than just seeing them as a means to an end.

Think 'we' rather than 'me'.

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Tip 5: "I Saw This and Thought of You"

Regular light touches, just to show the other person that they are in your mind, can have a tremendous impact. The key is that those touches must be about your contact, not about you.

If you know the people in your network and their interests then you can truly personalise your follow up to them.

Read general interest magazines and blogs (I subscribe to The Week, a weekly digest of world news and columns, and Harvard Business Review, as well as regularly reading The Huffington Post and a number of other blogs) and you will frequently find something of interest to other people in your network.

Clip or scan the piece, or copy and paste the link, and send it across using the magic words, 'I saw this and thought of you'.

Tip 7: No Agenda

A great way to make an impression is to touch base with people when they're not expecting to hear from you and you're not looking for something.

We each know someone who only calls when they need something. Don't be that person. Touch base with people when you have no agenda for doing so.

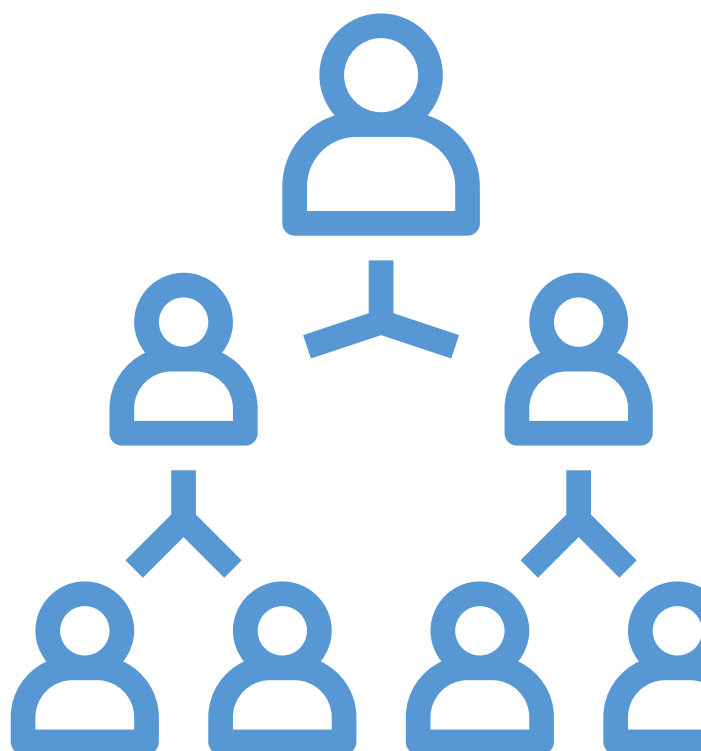
A great way to do this is to use 'dead time' such as long journeys or airport queues to send a few emails or call people. Scroll through your mobile phone address book and call people who you haven't seen or spoken to for a while and catch up.

Tip 6: The Personal Touch

"Go on, admit it", challenges Paul McGee in his book 'How to Succeed with People', "which would you prefer - a gift voucher or a present that has been bought with you in mind? A valentine card with your name on it or one that says, 'To whom it may concern'?"

It always concerns me how many bottles of whiskey and wine are given away as thank you gifts and Christmas presents in business....to people who may be teetotal. Or who may just not like whiskey or wine.

Get to know your network individually and make gestures that show you have paid attention to them. Whether gifts or simply sending them articles that you feel they may be interested in, make connections based on something they have said in the past or a personalised note thanking someone for the faith they've shown in you or help that they've offered.



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Tip 8: Checking In

Make a note of forthcoming big occasions in the life of your network and show them you care. Whether it's a simple life event such as a Birthday or arrival of a new baby or an important business presentation or promotion, encourage them and comment.

You don't have to be the world's greatest spy to gather the intelligence you need. Social networks will now tell us everything we need. Skype and Facebook prompt us on the birthdays of the people in our network; LinkedIn updates let us know about changes in their career while anyone who uses Twitter regularly will share good news with their followers.

Don't rely solely on social networks though. When you talk to your network, find out what is coming up for them and make a note to check in nearer the time to wish them luck or find out how things have gone.

Tip 10: Give and Take

Ultimately, we know the power of surrounding ourselves with a supportive network that will help us achieve our objectives more easily and take our careers to the next level.

So you have to be willing to ask for help when the need arises, assuming that you have built a strong enough relationship at that point for you to be able to ask.

However, before asking your network for help, you should always seek to give. It doesn't necessarily have to be to the same person, it's best to avoid transactional, quid pro quo relationships.

Ask yourself how you can help the people in your network and offer your assistance to them. Make sure that the people around you know that they can turn to you for help and to do so would be a pleasure for you, not a burden.

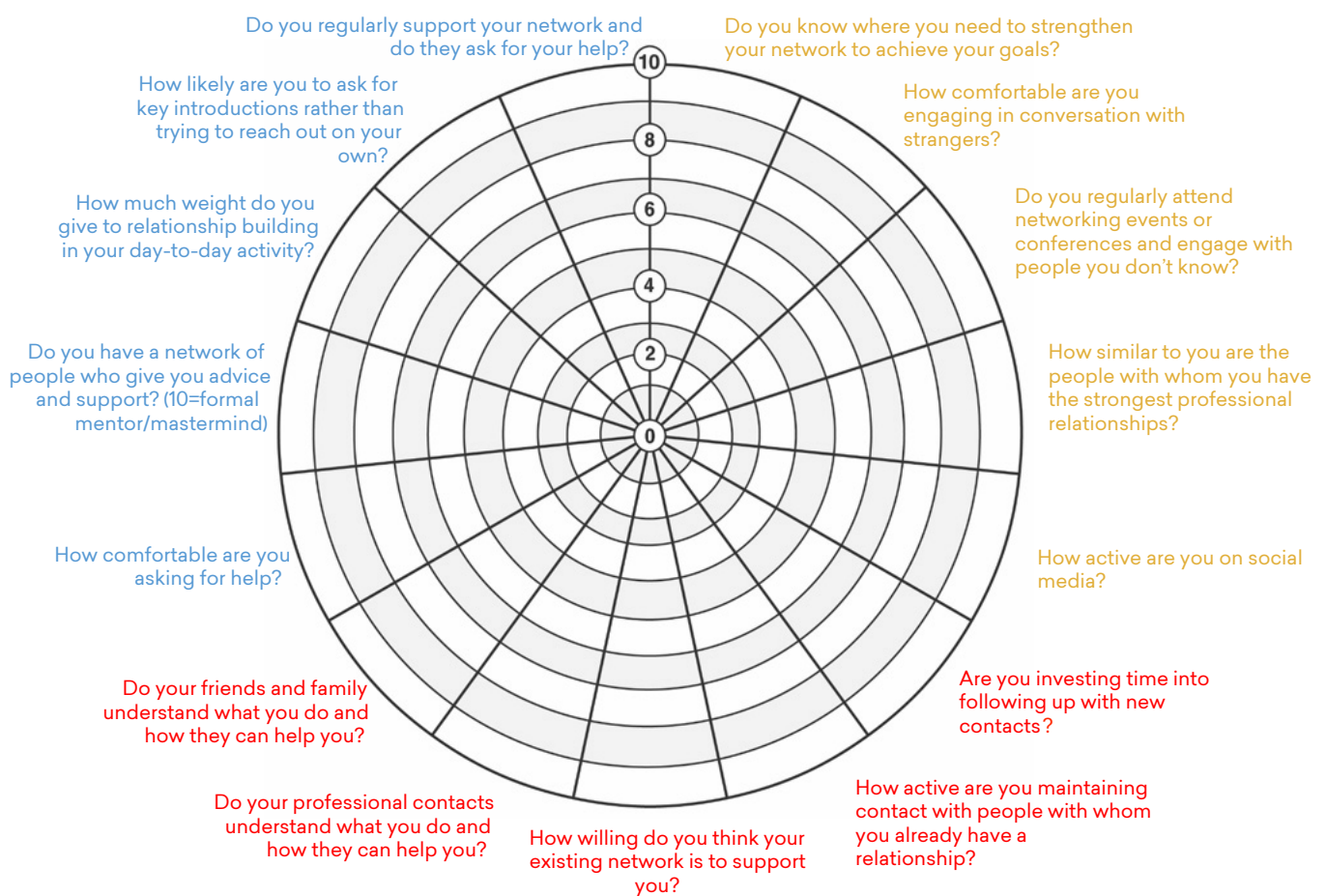
Tip 9: Two Simple Words

Saying 'thank you' and showing genuine appreciation for help and support offered by your network is the simplest and yet, in many ways, most effective thing you can do to build relationships.

How many relationships do you think fall by the wayside because one party doesn't feel appreciated by the other? Make sure you show your gratitude and appreciation for the support offered by your network.

You don't need to rely on grand gestures or elaborate responses. Two simple words can make a tremendous difference.


The Professionals Relationships Wheel



What are you trying to achieve and who is going to help you get there?

Success becomes easier to reach with the help of other people. Surround yourself with a network of people **who are in a position to help you, want to help you and know how to help you** and you will be far more effective in your role and successful in your career.

The Relationship Matrix™ is designed to help you to recognise where that success can come from, whether your relationships are strong enough to seek the support you need and identify what questions you need to ask to maximise the power of the relationships you build.


		THE RELATIONSHIP MATRIX™							
		Strength of Relationship							
		7 Friend	6 Advocate	5 Support	4 Trust	3 Like	2 Know	1 Recognise	0 Don't Know
Stakeholder Group	Stakeholder Group 1								
	Stakeholder Group 2								
	Stakeholder Group 3								
	Stakeholder Group 4								

Influencer

Introducer

Information, Insight, Ideas

Implementers



andylopata
Connecting is not enough

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Step 1

What is Your Objective?

Be **laserfocused** on what you are setting as your objective for each individual **Relationship Matrix™**. If you go too broad, you will be at the risk of missing key people who can help you. Start with a laserfocus and broaden your sights if you need to.

For example, a broad goal for your career might be ‘I want to be a senior manager within five years’. For sales it might be ‘I want to increase my sales by the end of the year’.

Laserfocused goals could be ‘Within five years I want to lead our Communications Team’ or ‘I want to win a new contract with ABC Corporation to deliver all of their new widgets’. Those clearer objectives will make it easier to then complete the next stages of the **Relationship Matrix™**, identifying the key stakeholder groups and individuals within those groups who are going to help you reach your goals.

Instructions: What would be three key laser-focused objectives to support you in what you are trying to achieve in your role? What would be three to help you develop your business or progress your career?

Role-related Objectives	Career/Business-related Objectives
1. <hr/>	1. <hr/>
2. <hr/>	2. <hr/>
3. <hr/>	3. <hr/>

Step 2

Who Are Your Stakeholder Groups?

Identify groups of people who can have an influence on your success. Now is the time to broaden your thinking. Many approaches will only ask you to consider directly relevant parties. But people across the board can influence the success of a project.

Possible stakeholder groups might be in your own organisation, within competitors, across your industry, among suppliers and consultants to the people you want to impact and beyond.

Think of everyone who has a say and ask yourself what stakeholder group they might belong to.

Please note: An individual is not a group! Challenge yourself and ask who else is in a similar position to them and might also have a say. This is where you can identify people you hadn't previously thought of.

Instructions: Which stakeholder groups might be in a position to impact the success of the objectives you have just outlined?

	Objective	Stakeholder Groups
Role Objective 1		1.
		2.
		3.
		4.
Role Objective 2		1.
		2.
		3.
		4.
Role Objective 3		1.
		2.
		3.
		4.
Career/Business Objective 1		1.
		2.
		3.
		4.
Career/Business Objective 2		1.
		2.
		3.
		4.
Career/Business Objective 3		1.
		2.
		3.
		4.

Who Do You Know or Know Of?

In the table below, list all of the names you can think of in each stakeholder group you have identified so far. Don't worry at this stage about how relevant or not they might be, or how well you know them – if at all. We just want to capture names that spring to mind at this stage.

Stakeholder Group	Names

Who Do You Know or Know Of?

In the table below, list all of the names you can think of in each stakeholder group you have identified so far. Don't worry at this stage about how relevant or not they might be, or how well you know them – if at all. We just want to capture names that spring to mind at this stage.

Stakeholder Group	Names

Step 3

How Can They Help You?

Generally speaking, your network can help you to achieve your objective in four ways:

Implement It's natural to try to win over the key decisionmakers but don't forget the people who put your ideas into action. If they are not onboard, then your chances of success are substantially lower.

Influence To whom are they talking and what message can they share that might sway key decision makers? You can't be in the room every time your ideas or proposals are discussed, so who is fighting in your corner when you're not there?

Introduce You won't know everyone who can support your ideas and move them forward, so who can open those doors for you? People are more likely to take you and your proposals seriously if someone they trust makes the introduction.

Sources of information, Insight & Ideas You need to know what people are thinking, what challenges they are facing and what their priorities are. If you don't, it's much harder to ensure that your ideas will resonate with them.



How Can They Help You?

Implementers

1. Who do you know who are Implementers?

2. What decision(s) do you need them to make?

3. Who decides / who implements?

4. How well do they know you or your reputation?

5. What is most important to them?

6. How much impact will each individual have on a positive outcome for you?

7. Who could be a negative influence or block your success?

How Can They Help You?

Influencers

1. Who do you know who are Influencers?

2. Who can they influence for you?

3. What will resonate for them and how does the outcome impact them?

4. How influential are they?

5. How much impact will each individual have on a positive outcome for you?

6. Who could be a negative influence or block your success?

How Can They Help You?

Introducers

1. Who do you know who are Introducers?

2. Who do you need to meet?

3. Who could introduce you to them? (Introducers)

4. How much/why would they want to introduce you?

How Can They Help You?

Information, Insight & Ideas

1. Who do you know who are sources of information, insight & ideas?

2. What do you need to know?

3. Who could help you? (Sources)

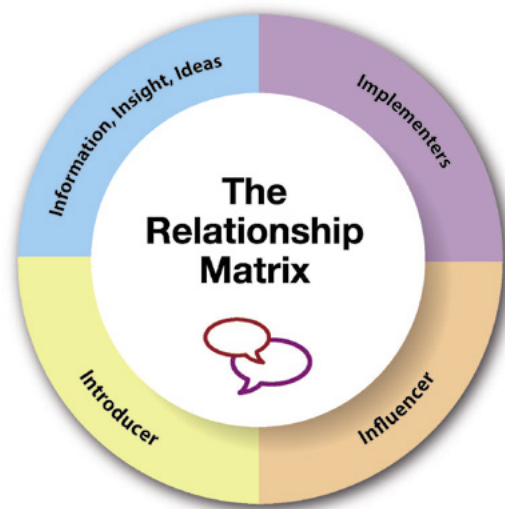
4. Why would they want to help you?

5. What information can you share with them?

What is Your Next Step?

Populate the table below with the names of the people you identified in the previous exercises.

Are they an **Implementer**, **Influencer**, **Introducer** or **Source of information, ideas or insight**? Individuals may appear across different stakeholder groups or categories.



Objective:

Stakeholder Group	Implementer	Influencer	Introducer	Information, Ideas & Insight

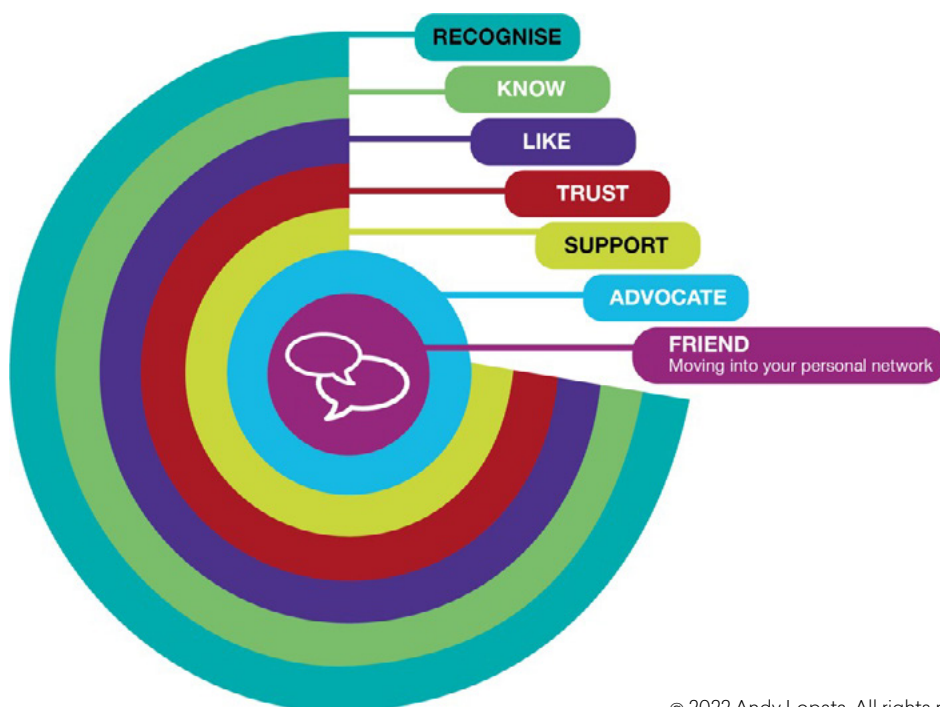
Seven Stages of Professional Relationships

Once you know who you need on board to help you towards your goals and how they can help you, you then need to step back and understand whether they would want to and just how much.

Take people on a journey into the heart of your network. Build the relationship from where they just **recognise** you to **knowing, liking** and **trusting** you. You might not find rapport naturally with everyone you meet, sometimes you'll be looking to establish mutual respect rather than a relationship based on liking each other.


The sweet spot is levels 5 and 6 – Supporters and Advocates. A **Supporter** is someone who, if you picked up the phone and asked, would be happy to help you. With an **Advocate**, you don't even need to ask. If they see an opportunity to help you, they will recognise it and take action.

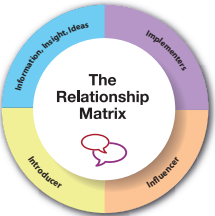
In some cases, professional relationships become **Friendships** but that's not our goal here. It's just a nice bonus if it's appropriate.



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How Strong Is Your Relationship?





The Relationship Matrix

THE RELATIONSHIP MATRIX™								
Strength of Relationship								
	7 Friend	6 Advocate	5 Support	4 Trust	3 Like	2 Know	1 Recognise	0 Don't Know
Stakeholder Group	Stakeholder Group 1							
	Stakeholder Group 2							
	Stakeholder Group 3							
	Stakeholder Group 4							

Influencer
Introducer
Information, Insight, Ideas
Implementers

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Step 5

What is Your Next Step?

Instructions: Once you have completed your Relationship Matrix you should be able to answer the following questions to help you understand the relationships you need to develop.

Who do I have a strong relationship with, would be in a position to help me but hasn't done so yet?

(High relationship/Highlighted as a key Influencer/Introducer/Implementer or Source of Information, Insights or Ideas)

What do I need to ask those people to get the help I need?

Who is in a position to help me but my relationship is not yet strong enough?

What do I need to do to develop our relationship further?

Who is in a position to help me but I don't yet know?

Who could introduce me to them?

Why would they want to meet me?

Further Resources

'Connected Leadership' the book available now in [paperback and Kindle](#).

'The Connected Leadership Podcast' is available on iTunes and all podcast channels.

podfollo.com/connectedleadership

'Psychology Today blog'

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