

# **Role of Networking Skill to Career Success**

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## **Introduction**

All human beings want to be successful in their personal and professional life. Success makes people happy and happy people are usually more productive. It is true that success means many things to many people depending on our values, faiths, beliefs, religions, culture, experiences, and stages of life. Thus, the indicators of success are not identical for all. Individuals define career success from their own perspective. Career success can be explained mainly from two perspectives- objective and subjective (Nabi, 2003; Judge, 1999). Objective success is measured by financial and material accumulation. It is measurable, visible, and tangible attainment. Examples are position, power, promotion, and compensation. Subjective success is intrinsic, and it is personal satisfaction that an individual receives from his job. Examples of intrinsic success include the employee's job, interesting and meaningful work, doing good for the society, autonomy, life satisfaction and recognition. There is a positive association between subjective and objective career success (Gu, Q and Su, Y, 2016).

Researchers identified many factors that are likely to contribute to career success of an individual (Akkas,2021; Tracy ,2019' Grimland,2012; Greenhaus,1990; Judge,1994), The main factors, among others, are education, connectivity/networking, performance, exposure, knowledge in organizational politics, proactive personality, organizational sponsorship, and luck. These factors are interrelated. This paper deals with only the role of networking/connectivity in promoting and building the career success of an individual. Success in both personal and professional life depends mainly on a person's ability to build a strong and meaningful relationship. The objective of networking is to build, maintain and strengthen real and authentic relationships to access information, resources and support that individual can use to make personal and professional progress. It is a process that is required throughout all stages of a person's professional journey. Networking is viewed as a critical competency when employees are pursuing protean or boundaryless careers as employees are making

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frequent career moves. Few people today work for the same organization throughout their careers whether because of downsizing or because of the boundaryless or protean nature of modern careers (Arther, 1996; King, 2004; Eby and Lockwood, 2003; Gunz, 2007). Interpersonal relations are critical to self-manage careers. Now the economy is becoming more and more digital, the workforce is becoming more mobile, and people will engage in short term employment (Hossain, 2019). Examples of the gig employees are freelancers, *contract workers*, and *part-time employees*. Employees shift their jobs continuously. In the eras of gig economy and boundary less careers, the responsibility for an employees' careers has shifted from the organization to the individual. This transformation has heightened the need for self-career management behaviors, namely, networking, and visibility (Drucker, 1992; Sturges, 2008). We need to understand how to manage and develop our careers.

Networking skill is key to boosting social capital, managerial behavior, and career success (Janasz, and Forret, 2008; Singh, 2006). Networking will not only help an individual to find a job faster, but it will also give a person a competitive edge throughout every stage of his or her career. It is the lifeblood of a person's career. However, many individuals have a negative attitude towards networking and feel unpleasant about networking. Students who are shy and introverted are poor in networking skills. There is an absence of understanding/awareness of the importance of networking skills among many students and employees. They assumed that people use it to get special favors from others or to enjoy an unfair advantage. They do not believe in the unlimited power of networking in personal and career development. That is why, they undermine the vital role of networking. The reality is that it is not about begging for favors. Given the importance of networking for employees, college and university students, an attempt has been made to discuss the concept, benefits, determinants of networking, barriers, and challenges of networking and then suggest strategies or ways that an individual should use to increase their networking skills throughout the course of their career development. This paper also helps employees, businesspersons, and job seekers to avoid the common mistakes they are likely to make in their networking practices. This paper is based on a detailed review of available literature on different aspects and issues of networking. The author makes an insightful analysis based on his long working experience. As a result, this is a descriptive qualitative study.

## **What is Networking?**

People have mixed feelings about networking. It is often misunderstood. The mindset of people matters. People with introverted mindsets consider networking as a necessary evil when they are engaging in it (Lee and Chen, 2017). They are also known as prevention-focused people. They try to engage in it the least. They feel uncomfortable engaging in it. It is an exploitative, manipulative, and inauthentic human activity. It is an unethical way to get things done. They consider networking as an unpleasant task of trading favors with strangers (Ibarra and Hunter, 2007). People engaging in networking to gain more favors. It is an opportunistic practice. Even some people think that they do not have time for it.

While promotion-focused people consider networking is a necessary skill. They think primarily about the growth, advancement, and accomplishments that networking can bring them. Promotion-focused people make contacts to find out all possible opportunities to reach the goal with excitement, curiosity (Casciaro, Gino, and Kouchaki, 2016). Networking should not be confused with selling oneself. It is not only the exchange of information with others. In today's dynamic business world, networking is not a luxury, rather it is a necessity. It is about creating and cultivating long-term, mutually positive relationships with the people known to an individual. It is a process of building and maintaining a network of contacts. It is an ongoing process. It needs to happen all the time. Networking refers to the ability to exchange ideas and information between two or more persons to create long term relationships for gaining mutual interest and benefits. Networking skills are the ability to make contacts through a two-way process. When building a network, one must provide something back. It is a give-take approach. For finding and promoting a career an individual must have competencies to build and maintain social or professional contacts.

Researchers and experts define networking as behaviors that are aimed at building, maintaining, and using informal relationships that possess the (potential) benefit of facilitating work-related activities of individuals by voluntarily granting access to resources and maximizing common advantages (Podolny & Baron, 1997; De Janasz, Dowd and Schneiders, 2002; Wolff & Moser, 2006; Forret & Dougherty, 2004). It facilitates resource mobilization. The relationship is informal, voluntary, and reciprocal. The best networking comes from genuine and authentic relationships. Networking may be internal (within the organization or external (outside the organization). Through networking, individuals expand their relationship arrangement by forming relationships with those

internal to the organization (e.g., peers, and senior managers,) and those external to it (e.g., members of professional associations; Higgins & Kram, 2001). Individuals who are well connected enjoy a strategic competitive advantage ( De Man,2004). Networking has been defined as a mental and emotional need to connect, socialize, and work with others (Van Winkelen, 2003). It meets people's need for affiliation. Employees make personal and professional relationships to access information, and supports (DeJanasz, Dowd and Schneiders, 2002).

### **Determinants of Networking Behavior**

There are many factors that influence the networking ability of a person. It is influenced and determined by individual psychological attributes such as proactiveness, a five-factor model of personality (extraversion, openness, neuroticism, and agreeableness conscientiousness), individual motivation for safety and security, gender, (Fuller & Marler, 2009; Klein and Mayer, 2004; Wolff,2012).Let us briefly explain these points. . Proactiveness is acting earlier before the problem becomes more serious or unmanageable. Proactive people do not wait for something to happen rather they make something happen. According to Thompson (2005, there is a strong association between networking and proactiveness. A proactive person has more capability to build connections across the organization that lead to career success.

Personality matters at work. Researchers found a strong relationship between personality traits and the networking behavior of individuals. The big-five personality traits have a strong impact on the psychological foundation of networking behavior of individuals (Rapp and Ingold,2019). For example, people with high extraversion are more powerful in their networking behaviors than people with lower extraversion (Wanberg, Kanfer, & Banas, 2000. Who are extroverts? Extroverts are usually talkative, assertive, sociable, friendly, approachable, and outgoing. Extraversion facilitates networking because Individuals with extraversion actively seek social attention and this nature persuades individuals to engage in interactions at work. Extroverts are more closely related to building contacts than to maintaining and using contacts. Therefore, they will make many useful connections over time, which may provide many opportunities in the future. Additionally, extraverted people are more relaxed meeting new people (Digman, 1990; Goldberg, 1993; McCrae & Costa, 1987). Extroverted persons demonstrate a preference for networks with powerful ties ( Rapp and Ingold,2019).

People who are low in extraversion (or introverted) do not like to invest more in social settings. They are more comfortable working by themselves. Due to the more social interactions, extroverts have higher confidence levels compared to introverts and confidence is a key to success in various stages of life. They are courageous and are not afraid of taking a stand if they do not like certain thing. People with low confidence feel that keeping silent is better than talking a stupid. The degree of extraversion differs as per the situations. It has been observed that the same person is extraverted in some situations and more introverted in other situation (Cherry, 2021). They remain silent to talk with people holding powerful positions in the organizational hierarchy. Because of personality traits, some individuals experience more barriers to networking than others.

Motives also influence and shape networking behavior. Motive explains the reason for doing something. People act in a given way because of motives. Human behavior is motivated. A study found a strong relationship between networking behavior and an individual's need for power, achievement, and affiliation (Wolff, 2018). To meet these needs, people try to build and use contacts.

Demographic factors such as Individuals from the higher socioeconomic background (Forret & Dougherty, 2001) and the more educated (Klein et al., 2004) are better skilled in developing and maintaining relationships instrumental to one's career. People with high socio-economic status have more access to resources, wealth and power and can easily establish and maintain networks with high profile and powerful people of the society and this strong network plays a big role in their career achievement. For example, youths with well-connected parents tend to have choices in selecting work (Bengston, Biblarz and Roberts, 2002). If a youth's relatives are unemployed and they lack job contacts, their choices are restricted to other kinds of contacts (such as peers) that do not lead to long-term earnings benefits. Children can receive better education when their parents are financially affluent, and the quality of education has a tremendous influence on a person's career success. Attaining higher education from a reputed institute may provide opportunities to build strong connections. Thus, socio economic status determines a person's human, social and cultural capital.

Network patterns and objectives differ across gender (Volkovich and Laniad, 2014; Venkatesh and Morris, 2000). Gender influence on access to networking often varies according to local and cultural practices. Female employees encounter several networking challenges compared to men that

hinder their career advancement (Lahtinen and Wilson, 1994). Women utilize their networks less effectively than men, which leads to men experiencing more career satisfaction than women (Van Emmerik, 2006). Men are more likely than women to use networking for searching for a new job (Zikic , 2008). Perceptions of the social networking practices of female employees are different from those of men. Women see their networks in terms of close social friendships, while men see their networks as alliances rather than friendships. Men tend to use networking to promote their careers. Women feel hesitation to ask for help from other people due to moral and cultural concerns. They do not feel comfortable demanding a favor if they cannot return it in kind. Women are much more likely to connect with other females as their initial friends who are in the same professional levels Networking approaches of women and men are also different. Women perceive themselves to be more emotional in their networking approach and men are more direct and women are more emotional in their approach to networking (Bogaards, 2012 ).

Women with children find it more difficult to establish networks due to tight work schedules and family responsibilities. Women need to spend more time than men taking care of children and family members (Gordon and Whelan-Berry, 2004) This leads to women spending less time than men networking after work hours (Linehan, 2001). Networking cuts into family time. Women also face the difficulty of entering typically male-dominated networks, especially when interactions are often informal and occur outside of work (Hoffman, 2008). Women face more uncertainty of joining new groups in male-dominated professions. Women have little access to men dominated network within an organization (Linehan, 2001). Due to these and other factors, women usually fail to build multiple networks and cannot leverage their networks to advance their careers as their male counterparts are likely to do. The exclusion of female employees from social and business network impedes their building of a strong connection. These studies confirm the existence of gender differences in networking. The above analysis shows that men and women experience a different set of barriers to networking.

There are many challenges and barriers to effective networking. Some people are suffering from fear of failure. They lack self-confidence. Their self-efficacy level is low (Bandura, 1999). They feel intimidated or frightened by people who know more than them. They are suffering from an inferiority complex. They think that they are not knowledgeable enough to talk to other professionals. They feel nervous to talk to a stranger. People do not like to talk with people with more status or power than them (Hofstede,

2012). Many people feel uncomfortable asking for help or assistance and they think they are good enough to take care of themselves and asking for assistance hurts their ego. Many people are proud and ego-driven. They are afraid that people perceive them as weak, needy, or vulnerable.

It is more advantageous if individuals build diverse network with people different from themselves because it will allow them to access new information and resources. We are uncertain about the norms and expectations of new groups with different backgrounds. Cultural differences act as a hindrance (Bochner, and Hesketh, 1994). As a result, people tend to build connections with homogeneous groups. This may act as an obstacle to getting new ideas and opportunity.

Some people feel shame to begin the initial conversation. They feel uneasy to connect with those who are senior in terms of power and position. Networking may be expensive. Networking meeting involves cost. For example, to be a member of a professional club (e.g., Lions Club, Rotary Club, Dhaka club) one needs to pay a huge subscription and donation. Networking takes time. Networking is a long-term game. Many people expect quick returns. They cut off networking after a short period of time. Networking will be stronger if one can provide value. Strong networking depends on a person's ability to respond to other's challenges or problems. It is a two-way street. It is important to me oneself useful. It is essential to demonstrate one's value to others.

### **Forms of Networking**

Networking takes mainly three forms, namely, operational, personal and strategic and all these are distinct in nature but interdependent (Ibarra and Hunter, 2007; Uzzi and Dunlap 2005). These different types of networking are critical to succeed as a manager. Leaders must have all three types of networks, and not just one or two. As a leader rises through an organization, he or she must master these three kinds of networking in succession. We shall need to utilize all three kinds of networking skillfully.

Operational networking is needed to perform current internal activities. The purpose is to get work done efficiently and the contacts or networks are mostly within the organization or group and the routine and short-term demand determine ties or connections. Colleagues, peers, and other members of the group have the power to block or support a project. All managers need to build good working relationships with the people who can help them to do their jobs. Cross, Davenport, and Cantrell (2003) stated that the ability to create maintain personal networks distinguishes between

high and poor performers. Building a diversified personal network across the organization should be a part of an ambitious manager's development plan because it improves personal and professional growth and success.

Personal networks are mostly external and oriented towards current and future interests. Through professional associations, alumni groups, clubs, religious groups, and personal interest communities, managers gain new perspectives that allow them to advance in their careers.

Networking is critical to play the leadership role. Top managers or business leaders must be good at strategic networking, it occurs both within and outside the organization. That is, inside and outside links are needed to be a successful leader. They need stakeholder support to become successful leaders. As Ibarra and Hunter (2007) found in their research, strategic networking is the ability to marshal information, support, and resources from one sector of a network to achieve results in another. It deals with broad strategic issues. Strategic networking provides top managers or leaders with the power to achieve personal and organizational goals. Successful leaders and managers place networking at the heart of their new leadership roles. The following section deals with the importance of networking to acquire career success.

### **Why is Networking Important?**

Networking can provide an individual with many tangible and intangible benefits. In a rapidly changing business world, it is a reality and absolutely a necessary skill for employees across the industries to have a strong personal and professional network. Networking is viewed as a powerful tool for making a career successful. Networking is an essential; skill for career success (Naderman and SunHee, 2018). Networking serves as a catalyst to find employment and to make the expected move in a career. A strong and wide network provides a person knowledge and understanding of trends as well as insider information on job openings (Wolff and Moser, 2009). People like to do business who are well known, and they like to recommend people they trust. A survey shows that 85% of the best jobs in the USA are filled as the result of a third-party recommendation or through a referral from a trusted source (Tracy, 2019). Many jobs do not get advertised and many people are hired through the recommendations. The best networkers usually do not remain jobless for a long period. They use the backdoor to have access to the secret job market in the private sector (Adler, 2016). Networking is the key to a successful job search for many people. This is an indication that most of the jobs are filled via networking.



Networking behaviors are essential to career success (Nierenberg, 2002; Torres, 2005; Welch, 1980). Networking is the process through which people make interactions with others to exchange information and build contacts, which results in advancing one's career. The business world is guided and influenced by connecting the right people with each other. Many studies found a strong positive relationship between networking and career success or outcome in terms of subjective (career satisfaction) and objective (salary or position, number of promotion) perspectives (Eddleston and Baldrige, 2004; Forret & Dougherty, 2004; Langford, 2000; Michael & Yukl, 1993; Orpen, 1996). Studies show that the most successful managers spend 70% more time engaged in networking activities (Luthans, Hidgents and Rosenkrantz 1988). Performing traditional management activities is not good enough to go ahead, even without networking ability managers find it difficult to do their routine management function. That is, the ability to network is a strong predictor of managerial success. It is a powerful tool to climb up the career ladder.

A person with high networking has more capacity to control alliances, connections, and social capital. Networking also helps a person to receive an adequate and acceptable performance ratings (Sturges, Conway, Guest, & Liefhooghe, 2005; Thompson, 2005; Wanberg, Kanfer, & Banas, 2000). People engaging in networking behaviors can easily build and sustain unofficial contacts that boost career success (Forret & Dougherty, 2004; Luthans, Rosenkrantz, & Hennessey, 1985; Michael & Yukl, 1993). Individuals can gain access to needed information or resources, social support and guidance (Janasz and Forret, 2008). Social support can be used to accelerate career success. Networking with professionals can provide access to information about job opportunities, influence career paths, and create possibilities of mentoring within a chosen field (de Janasz & Forret, 2008). Networking has been shown to relate to concurrent salary, salary growth, and career satisfaction (Wolff & Moser, 2009; Gould and Penley, 1998). Networking increases an employee's visibility, development opportunities and capacity to negotiate promotion (Claes and Ruiz, 1998).

Networking is a specific career competency critical in this era of boundaryless careers (Hall, 2002; Grimland, 2012). In today's dynamic, unpredictable and turbulent environment, employees are often changing their careers and the responsibility for managing careers lies with the employees, not the organization. That is, the responsibility is on an employee to take control of his career development. Contemporary careers are boundaryless than the more traditional linear career, especially in

private sector organizations. One way in which employees can increase their careers is through networking (Wolf and Moser, 2009). This is an indication of the importance of networking for career development.

Networking skill is essential to make human capital effective. The formal education systems are designed to build and develop the right kind of human capital. Human capital consists of education, training, skills, experience, knowledge, and ability that increase our value in the workplace. People and their expertise and competency are an organization's primary asset and source of competitive advantage in today's knowledge-driven economy (Drucker, 1992). However, managers and professionals need to give emphasis on the development of social capital also to make them marketable. Networking is a key human capital skill that is unique in its ability to increase an individual's social capital (Seibert, Kraimer, and Liden, 2001; Baker, 2000). Human capital is not enough, there is a need for social capital to make human capital effective (Monica, 2006). Both human and social capital makes us marketable (De Janasz & Forret, 2008). Social capital is meant by the networks of relationships among the people living and working in each organization and society. Social capital facilitates the flow of knowledge and information. Managers and professionals with protean career attitude need to use their social capital to be flexible, self-directed, and concentrated on their employability (Hall, 1996; 2002). Baker (2000) describes social capital as the resources available to an individual because of his or her personal relationships. Social capital can offer individuals huge benefits in their careers (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Baym and Larson, 2021). It contributes to lower absenteeism and employee turnover, and higher organizational performance. Moreover, social capital is harder to replicate than human capital (Forret & Sullivan, 2002). That is, education, training and work experience are easier to obtain and replicate than relationship with others. As a result, individuals enjoy a valuable and distinctive advantage in the competitive market.

Networking serves as a path to create and sustain long-term relationships with mutual benefits through exchanging information. It is an avenue to exchange ideas and information. It broadens our exposure to new ideas and solutions and provides access to resources (Dulworth, 2006). Success in a career is mostly attributed to the pool of information or ideas a person has accumulated over the past. Many successful people in different fields have attributed their career success to the networking channel they have created over time.

Networking makes a person prominent in an organization and society in

general. It makes an individual more noticeable. People quickly notice others who have stronger capabilities to make them relevant. Networking within an organization makes a person a better candidate when a promotion opportunity arises. When two people are equally qualified for a position employers or top managers hire one whom they like and trust more. Having contacts with the right persons will help a person to move next career movement.

Networking provides avenues for newer opportunities. We are surrounded by unlimited opportunities, and we can tap these opportunities when we relate to the right kind of people. When a person can draw the attention of senior managers, it opens the door for newer opportunities. Career-minded individuals are incredibly good at networking and thus they are more capable of reaching their career destination with minimal effort. Because networking creates more avenue of newer opportunities. Sometimes, performance or academic qualification is not a guarantee of success, the roadmap to reach the top ladder of an organization is possible if an individual has a strong network and a good relationship with others.

Networking improves subjective career success. It enhances the physical and mental health and overall, well-being. Professional networks improve the quality of work and increase job satisfaction (Casciaro, Gino, and Kouchaki, 2016 ). Social connection is positively related to long-term happiness and success. This is a big predictor of happiness and success. Success does not make us happier, but happiness makes us more successful (Achor, 2018). Individual happiness is possible, but it may not last long. Gross or collective happiness is good for a society and through networking a group of individuals works together towards a common goal. Success and happiness cannot be designed in isolation.

Networking competencies provide a person with a great opportunity to share ideas and information. It improves learning and knowledge acquisition (Luthans, Hidgetts and Rosenkantz, 1988). Professional networks lead to a broader and deeper knowledge and improved capacity to innovate. It leads to We can take lessons from other's experiences. Through networking, we can see things differently. It enriches our knowledge base.

Networking improves a person's creative intellect. People having contacts with other influential persons over a longer period can easily utilize and release their creative talent. For example, a new learner can be an excellent performer if he has interactions with powerful and knowledgeable teachers in his field. Networking provides support from high profiles individuals.

Good networking with high -profile individuals from the same career path can serve as support whenever any possibility arises. These high-profile individuals can help us manage our challenges effectively by giving advice and linking to the right direction. Individuals with powerful connections always go ahead.

Networking helps a person meet potential mentors, partners, and clients, and gain access to the necessary resources (for example, information, job market and industry trend) that will foster your career development. It is clear from the above discussion that successful people use their network to get ahead.

Networking builds self-confidence (Subrameyer, 2021). Well-connected people usually switch jobs frequently and they do not mind getting out comfort zone because strong networking helps them build invaluable social skills and self-confidence. They can use these skills throughout their professional life. They gain self-confidence by interacting with people in various fields. They know the art of getting things done through others.

It is not easy to choose a right career, but it is more stressful to achieve success in the chosen career. Social networking can be a useful tool to relieve stress. Knowing the right people can help us reduce the stress in choosing the right career and achieve career success. Meeting with people facing similar stress or problem can provide us an opportunity to solve them more prudently. Persons with sound networking skills might have easy access to new and valuable information, resources, and support. This learning opportunity may make a person a better individual. Thus, in crisis situations, individuals with strong and right good networking abilities can utilize their network for help and support. We can take lessons from others' mistakes and successes. Considering the benefits of networking, let us now suggest measures or develop strategies to promote and build networking skills.

### **Ways to Improve Networking Skills**

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that networking skill is crucial for one's career success. It is vital to an individual's professional growth. Networking skills (for example, speaking, writing, listening, sense of humor, positivity, and empathy) are the capacity to make contacts through a process that is two-way (Flaherty, 2019). People are engaged in many different professions; whatever the profession they are in, networking is the fuel to accelerate their career success. People are not the same as per as their networking is concerned. Kay (2004), Taylor (2006) and

Boe (1994) assert that certain people are gifted or blessed with the natural ability to build the appropriate connections and relationships. They are at an advantage in the modern competitive world where relationships and connectivity are so vital.

There are many people who are deficient in this critical skill, and they do not feel comfortable about approaching people and asking people to connect with them. But they must need to develop these skills by practice. This skill can be acquired through learning, practice, and feedback. A person must develop this skill so that he can network efficiently and effectively. A study suggests that most professional jobs are not attained through classified advertisements; rather, professionals are hired through effective and consistent networking (Koss-Feder, 1999). Despite its importance, many students' dearth of the knowledge and skills needed to effectively make contacts. People use different networking tactics to make their careers successful. We need to design and use different strategies to interact with people holding different positions. Networking strategies to interact with the immediate senior and CEO of an organization are not identical. Study shows that effectiveness of tactics depends on the situation. There is no one best strategy. A given strategy may not match or fit all. Different tactics work for different people. For example, shy and introverted people are less likely to use networking. They prefer small group discussions. Extrovert type people have a natural talent or passion for networking, they love and thrive on more social interaction. A combination of two or more tactics works better. Let us now mention several different strategies to build and improve a person's strong networking skills and thereby develop personal and professional development.

Always be ready to help. Giving is a strong tool to build and maintain networking. We should do something for others without expectation of return and then others will feel obligated and grateful to help and favor us when the time comes. "Successful people are always looking for opportunities to help others and unsuccessful people are always asking 'What's in it for me?' (Tracy, 2019). Give first and receive later. Expecting too much too early is a common networking mistake (Haden, 2016). So start networking early. We should build a network before we need it. To develop a network of close-minded friends, an individual needs to be honest, free, and frank, and sincerely involved in serving their interests.

Be curious about mutual benefit. Develop relationships with people over time that is mutually beneficial. Networking serves as a path to build long-term relationships with mutual benefits; it works better when it is

reciprocally advantageous (Paul and Kaltenbach, 2004). Creating a win-win situation is especially important for any long-lasting connections. When one party reaps more benefits than the other party, he or she will feel cheated and used. Only through networking we will get help and ideas from surprising sources. We must work together for a common goal and mutual benefits.

A key to success in our personal and professional relationships largely lies in our ability to communicate well. Communication skill helps a person build a strong relationship with others. Communicate frequently both in online and person. Work on communication skills such as speaking, writing, listening and interpersonal. Read body language (facial expression, eye contact, body movement, posture and gesture, tone of voice) of both senders and receivers correctly. An individual needs to pay attention to the body language of the person with whom he is speaking. This will confirm whether other parties agree or disagree.

Relationships will be more cordial and sincere when an employee could focus on the needs of others before his own. It should be a win-win approach, not a win-lose. We must have a mentality to do something meaningful for the people we want to connect with. Kindness or generosity is the key to building good relationships. Usually, people receiving earlier benefits will feel obligated to give returns when the opportunity arises.

Build a relationship with people from a point of common or similar interest (for example, Dhaka University Management Association). The need and interests of the two parties must be aligned. For building a collaborative and long-lasting relationships, it is necessary to work together on tasks that require one another's contributions. Task interdependency is a great source to build a constructive force in professional contacts. Through networking both parties are empowered. .

It is wastage of resources to have a network with everyone. We often make mistakes in choosing people with whom we like to be connected. We are spending our time with people who can be of no help at all because these people are not particularly ambitious or well-connected (Tracy, 2019). It is essential to identify the sign of wrong or bad contact. The signs of a bad contact are absence of reliability or credibility, demanding favor frequently and focusing only on their own needs (Stella, 2018). These people may become a burden and can prevent a person from making real, and strong contacts that might benefit his career. A person should develop network with the right people, who will be mutually beneficial (Cast, 2018). The

single most critical factor in determining the value of an individual's network is the breadth of connections with the right people—people who are willing to recommend. Right people include past or present professional colleagues, bosses, friends with similar interest, past or present teachers/professors, family and relatives, neighbors, and alumni association. The right people are always helpful. They show sincere interest in others, do not focus on themselves, and they genuinely want other people to succeed (Goins, 2019). Right people are those who can assist us with a job search and career move. To succeed we must rely on others being a member of a society. Working towards a common goal will build long-lasting relationships.

Build both internal and external networking. It is just as necessary to build relationships within the organization as it is to do so with external parties. The internal network helps a person to build a strong personal brand. Make short- and long-term career plans when we are meeting people.

Participate in networking events to get acquainted with influential people of a person's career field. When a person frequently attends professional and social events, he can make himself known to others. He can get his face known. Exposure is essential to succeed in career. People quickly become aware of others who have stronger capabilities to make them relevant. This will satisfy our need for social interaction. We can get noticed among the crowd of many talented professionals through networking. Being visible is not about showing up at every event, it is about showing that we are a reliable and supportive member of our profession.

Create a feeling of intimacy. *Intimacy* in a relationship is created when we are emotionally and psychologically connected and supported. Keeping discussion on common issues make us feel happy. People are willing to help those who are already known to them

Networking works better if there is an effective follow-up (Whitemore, 2018). Follow-up is everything when it is timely. Follow up is trying to get more information about something or someone to reinforce or reevaluate a previous action. Always get in touch. Follow-up immediately. It takes huge time to grow and develop a sound relationship. .

Express gratitude and appreciation. People like to be acknowledged, and it is common courtesy to thank those who have helped a person in his or her network (Garver, 2018). Gratitude is a thankful appreciation for receiving something from others. The benefit may be tangible or intangible. People can use gratitude to form new social relations or to strengthen current ones

(Klerke, 2010).). It produces long lasting positivity. Showing appreciation to others will help a person maintain a professional image. Forgetting to say thank you can make a negative impression. Congratulate other's new achievements such as promotion or publication of a paper or book may strengthen relationships.

Make short- and long-term career plans when we are meeting people in networking events to get acquainted with influential people of a person's career field. When a person frequently attends professional and social events, he can make himself known to others. He can get his face known. Exposure is essential to succeed in career. People quickly become aware of others who have stronger capabilities to make them relevant. This will satisfy our need for social interaction. We can get noticed among the crowd of many talented professionals through networking. Being visible is not about showing up at every event, it is about showing that we are a reliable and supportive member of our profession.

Accept and welcome constructive criticism. Constructive criticism is far better than flattery. It provides scope for further development. We must identify our weaknesses and flaws and take measures the areas of improvement. Constructive feedback clarifies expectations.

Be active in social media platform. Social media is a powerful tool if we can use it judiciously. Engaging in social media (Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn.) to follow up new contacts. Make the best use of digital technology because digital competency can contribute to networking skills (Lee and Chan, 2017. Generation Y, also known as millennials, are people, who are comfortable with technology and online networking as an integrated part of their lives from a young age (Korzynski,2013). They are habituated with the internet and other sophisticated communication technology to get connected with others. They are highly motivated to use modern communication technology. The traditional office is becoming less important to them. Today's workplace is a combination of online and offline environment, characterized by networking and collaboration among employees, who can perform activities anytime and anywhere (Kabral, 2010)Connecting with people on social media allows an employee to communicate with other people in his or her industry, which helps him build a strong network with meaningful, beneficial connections.

Networking is an ongoing process. It requires persistence, goodwill, sincerity, and attention, when a person networks to meet his need for a new



job or something else, his chance of success will be the least. Keep the relationships active. It takes time to build a real and authentic relationship. People will help those who are already known to them.

Stay positive. Invest time and resources to create a positive image. A positive attitude is an extremely critical networking skill (Porat, 2020). Positivity and confidence go hand in hand. Positivity may develop a powerful relationship with others quickly and help a person to be more likable and memorable. When we extensively use negative words and phrases, people will think of us as a negative, possibly even pessimistic person. On the other hand, if we use positive language, others will see us as positive persons, always ready to tackle new challenges.

Making networking is a two-way process of giving and taking to build a long last relationship it is not just about meeting people. It is not a way -street. Be purposeful when networking. Forming relationships that are mutually beneficial to both parties. There are people who like to take advantage and give us nothing in return. They are in every profession.

Keep the promises we make to other persons in our network, otherwise our relationships will be damaged and broken. Stay away from people who make over promise but under deliver ( De Man, 2004; Misner, 2000) . We should set realistic expectations and try our best to meet them. Commitment and credibility make a person popular. Many political leaders make commitments which they do not believe in.

Building connections that are truthful, honest, and of worth to both parties. Trust is a necessary condition to build a long-lasting relationship. Trust plays a big role in building effective networking (Baker, 2000). Sufficient trust and mutual respect are required to build a strong relationship. It takes time to develop trust as individuals have positive interactions and support one another. Shows sincerity and builds trust because it actively shows an interest in someone else's opinions and thoughts (Wolfe, 2019).

Networking is building about relationships, not just selling oneself. It is not a selfish game. Follow the give and take policy. Do not be self-centered or selfish. It is built not to fulfill one's own needs only. Give first and receive later. We should help people without expecting any immediate returns. But the reality is that helping others will often come back to us many folds.

Be empathetic and considerate. Empathy permits people to develop social relationships with others. Employees can react or answer correctly and properly in social situations when they understand others' opinion,

emotions, and feelings. A person must have the ability to feel what another person is feeling. Make others feel that they are worthwhile, and important. We must honor their emotions and sentiments. Empathy decreases stress and fosters strength, trust, healing, personal growth, creativity, learning and builds connection ( Zaki,2019).

Being polite is a strong networking behavior that contributes to successful networking efforts. It is important to be always polite when networking (Kay, 2004). A punctual person does not make excuses for being late (for example, traffic jams).

Be an active and good listener. Listening and hearing are the same. It is more than hearing. Hearing is an inactive action that occurs spontaneously, but listening is a distinct skill that needs to be learned over time with practice. Listening is hearing something with full attention. A good listener needs to receive, understand, evaluate, remember, and respond appropriately (Newstrom and Davis, 2016).Most of the people do not like to listen, rather they enjoy talking. As human beings, we are endowed with two ears and one mouth, so we should listen twice as much as we talk. Listening means we are valuing and respecting others. Networking deals with both receiving and giving information. Active listening increases our understanding of the needs of others, as a result, we can ask the correct questions to keep a conversation moving forward. Talkative people are considered impolite, rude, and dominating. They are the least reciprocal. Talking more is boring. It is essential to make a balance in the conversation. Try to avoid the conversation one does not agree on.

Asking thoughtful and insightful questions. Ask questions only to ensure understanding. Asking irrelevant questions is a sign of immaturity. Do not ask about political and personal issues. Keep the conversation short and meaningful. The irrelevant conversation is a barrier to networking. Do not waste others 'valuable time. Do not take too much time in conversation. Make judgments wisely and consciously. Respond appropriately.

The tips and tactics mentioned above will certainly make employees think differently about managing their careers. These measures help a person avoid career derailment by becoming more self-aware, more agile, and effective. These strategies and tactics help people shift change their mindset from prevention to promotion so that they can see networking as an opportunity for discovery and learning rather than a difficult task. It is no more inauthentic and exploitative. These valuable insights are crucial for both individual career development and organizational effectiveness.

These tips help a person to build long-term relationships as well as a good reputation over time. These tips and strategies might be helpful even for a shy, nervous, and introverted person.

## **Conclusion**

A strong professional network exerts tremendous influence over the career success of an individual. Employees' personal success ultimately can contribute to organizational success (Judges and Higgins, 1999). Experts are of the opinion that the most connected people are usually the most successful. Strong networking makes a big difference between a mediocre career and a phenomenal career. The best networks help build the best career (Klerke, 2010). Great connections can offer employees and graduates learning and promotional and new job opportunities. The alternative to networking is to fail. Our experience suggests that people with poor networking skills will lag in today's competitive and global environment. Prevention-focused people consider networking a necessary evil and inauthentic. They view networking as a challenging and often distasteful task, as a result, they try to avoid it and their performance is not satisfactory (Lee and Chen, 2017). They are ambivalent about networking. Students must be aware of the importance and skills of networking. Cast (2018) explains that in today's workforce, the burden is on an employee to take control of his or her career development. The responsibility to manage and promote a career lies with the individual employee. Hence the importance of networking for career development cannot be undermined. Talent, skill, performance and drive might not be good enough to stop a person's career from spoiling or ruining (Klerke, 2010). An employee with strong networking skill can unearth or uncover opportunities to connect with different types of mentors and advisors. It may increase his familiarity with senior management, and develop his areas of expertise, and improve his soft skills. Networking helps a person to become a good team player. Networking is a specific career competency critical in the era of boundaryless careers. Fortunately, these skills can be acquired through learning and practice. Networking takes conscious effort. One must invest time and resources to develop and sustain relationships. Despite the importance of networking, it has not received emphasis in the education and training systems up to now. Davis and Warfield (2011) suggest that networking skills can be taught and nurtured within academia. Janasz and Forret (2008) showed that teachers can enhance the networking skill of their students by encouraging them to engage in group discussion and participation in the classroom. Mutual trust, empathy and generosity are crucial to develop and sustain genuine relationships. (Baker, 2000). Good

networking has a basis of trust and support and can mean the difference between an average career and a great career. It is about creating trust and assisting one another toward goals. Social capital is created when employees can participate in “real work” with one another that results in their cultivating trusting relationships (Cohen & Prusak, 2001). Frequent interactions with others can build trusting relationships. Employees at all levels of an organization will need to modify their attitudes and mindsets about the authenticity and necessity of networking.

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