



the art of

CONNECTION

BY LARRY BENET

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How Can I Help You?

Many of you out there are familiar with networking. You attend seminars, pass out cards, record company names, and make a list of who does what. You become familiar with the names and faces of the people you encounter. Yes, we all have had the significance of networking ingrained within us. And I am here to tell you something: networking is not enough. Networking is surface level. It is the beginning of a connection but that alone is not what you need to accomplish when seeking out relationships that grow your reach or wealth.

"It is not what you know. It is who you know."

Allow me to rephrase this common statement that we all have heard.

"It is not what you know. It is who you **KNOW**."

Knowing someone means so much more than having your business card in a Rolodex – a

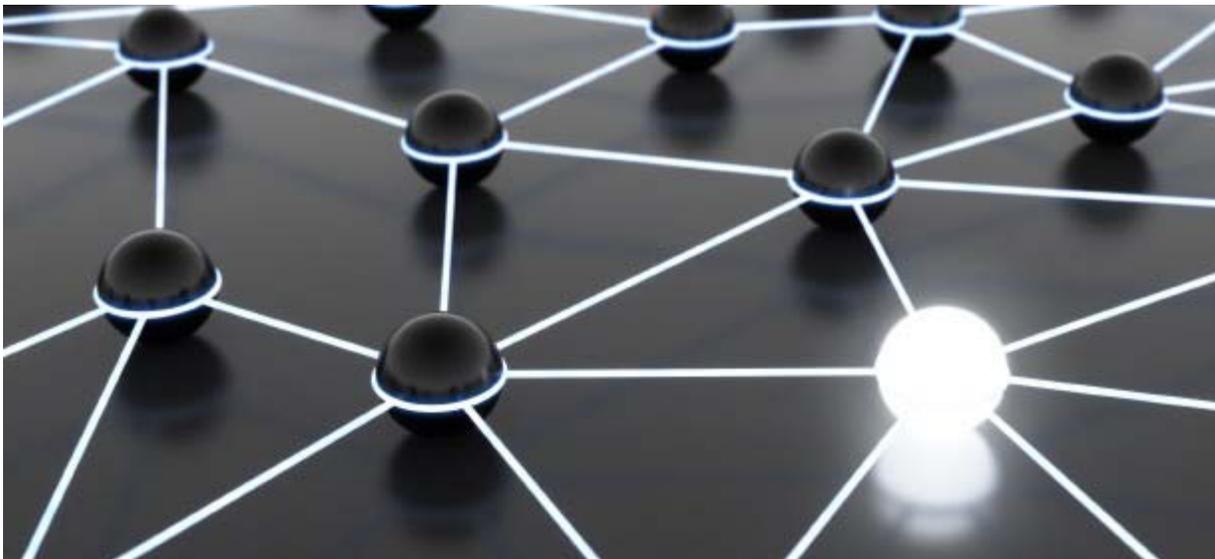


card in a pile of cards. *Knowing* someone includes a familiarity with who they are as a person, what they seek to accomplish, and what is important to them right this very moment. Connection is the difference between meeting someone and getting to know someone. It is for this reason that connection is so much more powerful than the networking you have been taught.

I am known as The Connector for a reason. I do more than introduce people to each other: I bring people together when their interests and projects allow them to form

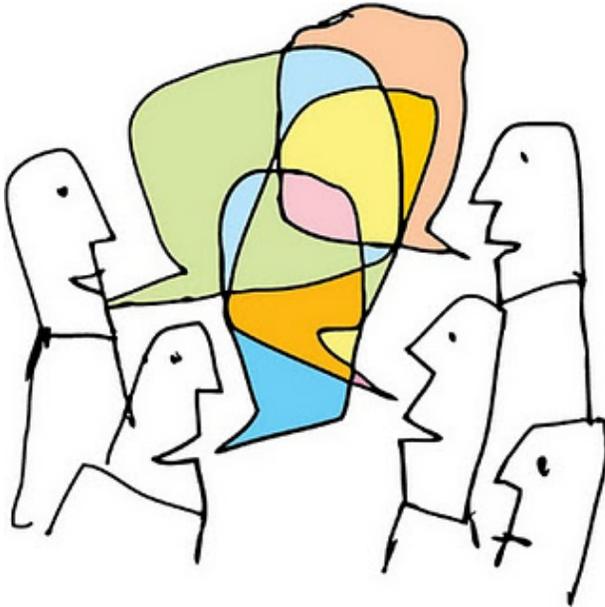
synergistic relationships with each other. It is more than an introduction – it is an invitation to form a relationship, something that will be mutually beneficial to both parties and allow them to enhance each other.

Forming relationships among the members of your network is a lot more intricate than simply making introductions. I say that connection is an art because it requires you to develop a skill set that allows you to delicately extract valuable information about who people really are and what they desire from their lives. This is done in order to add value to them. And THAT, my friends, is the most important aspect to connection and to forming deeper relationships – the ability to add value.



Adding value is what you should seek to do each and every day of your life. We are all here to make this world a better place. I, personally, am committed to serving the needs of the homeless and attacking the root causes of homelessness in our society. It pains me every day knowing that there are people in our country who have nowhere to go. I leverage my skills and network in service to this cause. It's important to me. Anyone who KNOWS me knows that solving this plague is extremely important to me. If you want to add value to me and you know that this is what I am passionate about, then you know we can connect on this point.

So the question remains: How do you apply the art of connection to your daily life? Let me start by saying that connection requires tact, finesse, and delicacy. If you were to walk up to a person at an event and say, "Tell me everything about you," chances are you are not going to get an authentic answer. No – you must ease into it.



People are generally guarded, particularly at events and large gatherings. They are in a routine – a polite exchange of common questions and answers. I am going to show you how to take those polite exchanges and turn them into meaningful conversations. It's about asking the right questions at the right time but also with the right intention. And that intention is to add value. If you approach new and old

relationships with this purpose and perspective, you will deepen your relationships and enhance the strength of your interpersonal connections.

Where do you begin your study of this art? Well, you start by understanding the information that is necessary for you to add value to others. In order to help others, you must know what they need. This e-book is dedicated to taking you through that crucial first step of understanding the data you need to gather. As you become familiar with the assessment exercise, you will subconsciously get better at asking the right questions and finding a way to keep track of the answers you receive. Don't worry if you forget the information initially. It will become natural to you over time as you develop your skill set. If you forget in the beginning, simply remember the number one question that will never fail you:

How can I help you?

This question alone has brought me more connections and more profits than any other question I have ever asked. It is more than a question; it is a way of being. It is a lifestyle. Ask first how you can help others and whatever you need will come to you.



This question is what connected me with Larry King of CNN and had him inviting me to breakfast in less than 60 seconds. This question is what connected me with Richard Branson, who shared his private e-mail address with me after 20 seconds of conversation. It is the most important question you will ever ask so listen and pay attention to the answer!

One Connection Away

I want you to imagine for a moment the “perfect” connection for your business or personal life.

- What if your aunt was a venture capitalist?
- What if your best friend from childhood grew up to become a Hollywood superstar?
- What if your father was the U.S. ambassador to China?

Can you imagine the doors these sorts of connections could open up for you?

Now stop for a moment and realize that there are two aspects to these powerful connections as I’ve described them. The first is obviously the stature of their occupations. The second is the *closeness* of the connection that is implied in these relationships – aunt, best friend, father. These are some of the strongest connections we have. So when you start thinking about being one connection away, you have to think of it in terms of who can open what doors for you and how willing will they be to doing that for you.



1. Are you able to open that door?
2. Will the handle turn easily for you when you go to open it?

Think about the most powerful and successful business people today and throughout history. Henry Ford, for instance, had no idea how to physically make an automobile. His marketing savvy was not much better and included such remarks as,

“If I asked the customer what kind of transportation they had wanted, they’d have asked me for a faster horse”

and

“You can have your car in any color you’d like, as long as it’s black.”

Yet, without the ironworking skills needed to make a car or even the marketing savvy to sell a car, Henry Ford is one of the great industrialists of his time. He is not only the creator of the first mass-produced automobile - he created the entire mass production process! Do you think Henry Ford spent his time on the assembly line, attaching a bumper to a shiny new Model T? Of course not!

Ford's skill was connecting. He worked through problems by connecting with people who could get him what he needed, not by doing everything himself. In most instances, those people were happy to oblige. They assisted him, not only because they were friends or business associates, but because they wanted something in return.

Remember, connecting with people is about understanding motivations. We all have an altruistic streak but we cannot simply "give" endlessly. We have to build our lives around relationships where we can reciprocate. Of course, a major part of this book is realizing all the powerful ways you can offer value to the people you interact with. But let's return to our imagination for a moment.

Imagine what a single connection could do for you.

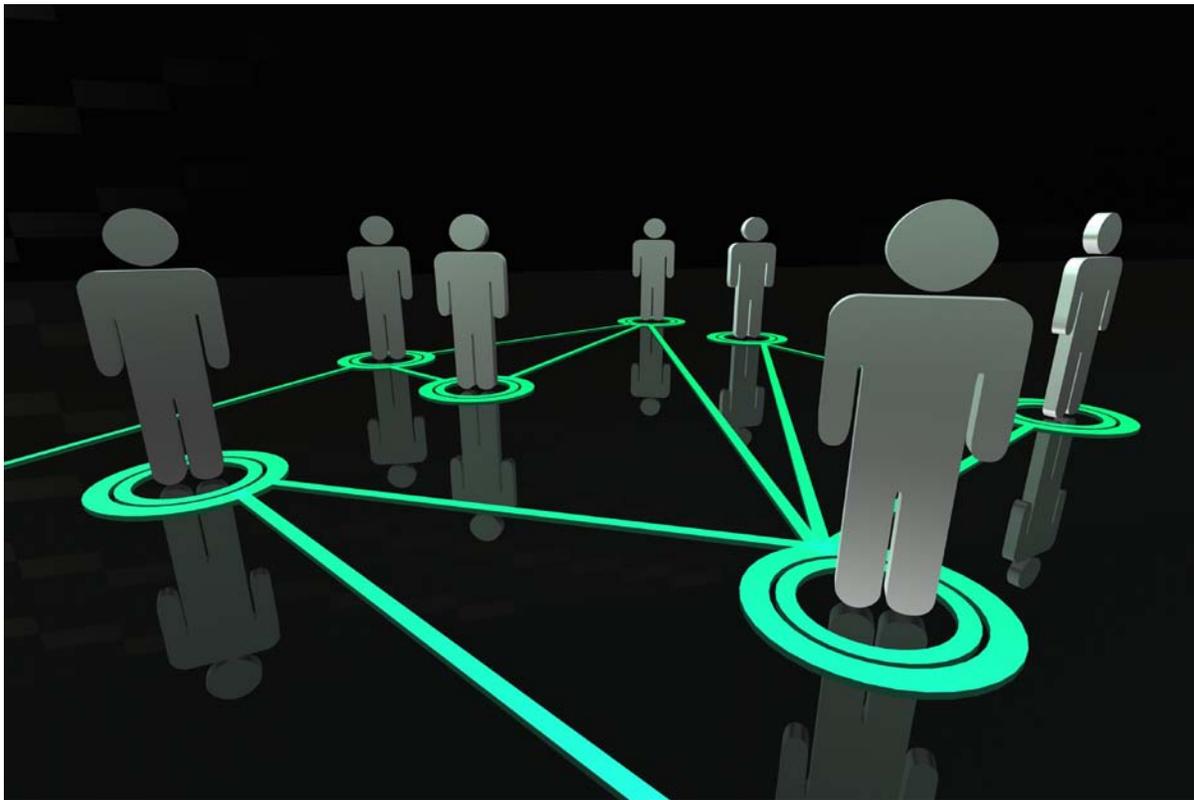
Let's say you're a real estate prospector seeking out deals. Sure, you need connections to find deals, bring together buyers and sellers, etc. Wouldn't it be amazing if you had a person on your speed dial that you absolutely - without a doubt - knew would respond with, "You got it, I'll wire it right now" when you say, "I need \$40,000 to fund a deal I just found."

What if you're an aspiring screenwriter? Wouldn't it be incredible to have a studio executive on your speed dial, ready to read your latest script, regardless of the other twenty projects sitting on his desk?

What if you're about to launch a new line of cosmetics for women? Imagine if you could make one phone call and have your product mentioned by Oprah during a fashion show.

Hopefully now you are starting to grasp the concept of high-level connections and the idea of potentially being one connection away from achieving your goals.

So often we hear about “networking” opportunities. But what does “networking” really mean? Sure, having a lot of connections might make it easier to name drop or find people to bounce ideas off of. However, in reality, most of us are looking for deep connections: people we can trust implicitly, who we can rely on, and who sincerely appreciate us for who we are. For us to truly embrace the concept of being “one connection away” from what we want to achieve, the first thing we have to do is re-evaluate our relationship with “networking.”



Building a Network vs. Creating a Connection



As we've discussed, there is a distinct difference between networking and connecting. Both are important but both do different things in our lives. Networking is basically a numbers game – you're assembling a roster of people who may or may not be able to help you and who you may or may not be able to help. Nobody's really sure who fits best with who. That's part of why we all do it to one degree or another – you can't connect with people unless you're networking with people. So step number one is to put a ton of networked acquaintances into the hopper and see what you come up with.

But when you move beyond the networking stage, what you really want are a handful of great individual *connections*. For instance, how many dentists do you really need? Twenty? No, you need *one*. It might take trips to five or ten different dentist offices before you find the one you want, but in the end, you only need one. Ask nearly anyone who's lived in a community for more than a couple of years and most people will adamantly recommend their individual dentist.

The same thing goes for nearly any profession. We start with a big pool of candidates and over time we develop relationships with the one who truly fits our bill for "best." The funny part is the "best" isn't necessarily the most experienced, the most proficient, or the most highly trained. "Best" can be completely subjective to individual tastes and preferences, which means that the *obvious* choice isn't always the one that people ultimately choose.

Look at a company like JetBlue Airways. Many travelers, after experiencing a JetBlue flight, start to look at traditional domestic carriers in a whole new light. Only after experiencing personalized in-flight television, quieter planes, and friendlier staff with JetBlue did a flyer's former airline become less desirable. We do that with our connections as well, which is why networking plays such an important role, even as we emphasize finding those one or two critical, must-have connections. We expand and maintain strong networks because it is from those networks that we can create lasting and worthwhile connections.

Creating Connections That Matter

As you progress from networking to *connecting*, you want to think strategically about what you're looking for in the connections that you're making. The best connectors on the planet are constantly thinking about the gaps in their capabilities and looking for great people to fill those gaps. In turn, you should also spend a considerable amount of time thinking about what kind of value you can add to your connections. It's a constant process.

Appraising Your Network

One thing that is important to building high quality relationships is to actually sit down and think about what those relationships mean to you and the people you're connecting with. You may approach this process with some apprehension. After all, who wants to think about people in a technical way? Friendship shouldn't be analyzed in a spreadsheet, right? In fact, the most successful networkers and connectors know that finding the best ways to help the people we want to create value for (and with) sometimes requires stepping back and taking a more analytical approach.

The classic example of appraisal is quite common when you think about it. We often write down people's birthdays in our day planner as a reminder of when to stay in touch with someone. At a tradeshow or networking event, you'll commonly see people jot down quick notes on the back of business cards they just received. That's another example of making sure an opportunity doesn't get missed in the relationship.

Appraisal doesn't mean *judging*.

Appraisal isn't a process to say one person is "better" than others; it just means that you need to take a step back and evaluate where everyone fits within your network so you can figure out how to increase value for everyone.

So with that in mind, realize that when I say *appraise*, I really mean you need to organize and plan how to make the best use of your time, as well as your partners' time, your friends' time, your clients' time, your family's time, etc. The one challenge that everyone faces in life is that we're all limited to a mere 24 hours every day. If we had more time, perhaps we could build more lasting relationships and deeper connections with people. But the truth is that we must make the most with the limited time we have so organizing and appraising your connections is absolutely worthwhile.

Ways to Organize Your Relationships

First, we'll cover the fundamental information you must gather as you begin to organize your network. Let's take a moment to think about some basic questions that you should know the answer to regarding the people you connect with. Though I say this is fundamental, please know that I understand you may not have most of this information handy right now. Since you are learning from me how to form true connections with the people in your life, you are only now starting to gain a deeper understanding of what it is you need to gather in order to build connections.

At the end of this section, you will take some time to complete a form for each of your ten closest business contacts. (I want you to eventually have your top 100 handy, but we must walk before we can run so we'll start with ten.) Once this data gathering becomes a habit for you, you will see that obtaining this information, noting it, and accessing it quickly will come quite naturally.

With that in mind, let us get right to the fundamental data you need to gather.

- **Name:** Note the nickname that they prefer to use. It is important that you address your connections the way they wish to be addressed. Hopefully, they do not change their preferences as frequently as Sean Combs/Puff Daddy/P-Diddy. (I dare say that few people change their names as frequently as he does.) Know what they prefer to be called by you and keep that in your notes.
- **Title:** What exactly do they do? What position do they hold? Start thinking about who they have influence over, given the current position they are in.
- **Company:** Do they operate their own business or work for a corporation? Start thinking about connections they may need and/or other people that you might know within their existing organizations.
- **Specialty:** What skills do they possess that they are currently marketing? What areas are they experts in? What is it that makes them special? If you know this, you will be much more agile when finding proper connection pairings for them.

Know what it is that they do well and let other people in your network know it, too.

- **Important Goals/Projects:** What is important to them? What are the three most important things they need to accomplish in the next year to get them where they want to be? This information will help you determine who in your network is the best fit for them. Knowing what is important to them will make it easier to identify who you know can assist them. You will be able to identify connection synergies.
- **Favorite Charity/Cause:** What cause calls them to action? What groups do they seek to assist? Few things are more compelling to a person's purpose than the causes and charities they support. Understanding who they want to serve will offer you valuable insight into who they are and what drives them. Charity work is a choice and it is unlike other choices that a person makes, such as where to be employed or what business partner to work with. Choosing a charity is choosing who they seek to give their heart to. It is time spent without direct financial or material benefit to them. Hence, charity work is one of the clearest windows you have into who a person is and what is truly important to them.
- **Family/Personal Information:** Are they married? What is their spouse's name? Do they have children? How old are they? These are personal touches that you need to note.
- **Contact Information:** When you want to reach them, what is the best way to communicate with them? Some people prefer e-mail, others text messages. Some simply prefer an old-fashioned phone call. When gathering this information, it is important that you not only find out how to contact them, but also what method of communication they prefer the most.



Now that we've covered the basics, let's move on to other areas that require you to synthesize the fundamentals you gathered from your connections. Oftentimes, these

items are ones you must derive. The answers are there, and there is never an issue with asking a direct question, but you may have some deductive work on your hands. Be ready to analyze.

Now there is a wide range of factors that you must consider when organizing your network. In no particular order, here are the additional components you need to think about when organizing your relationships:

- **Needs:** In the most basic sense, what does this person *need*? Obviously, for the sake of this lesson, we're not talking about air or water or the things people need to survive. Needs may be anything from new customers for their café to a better way to manage their e-mail to a fulfillment company that can produce their T-shirts for a decent price.
- **Wants:** Unlike needs, wants aren't as vital and they often come with less pain attached if they go unfulfilled. That doesn't mean they're unimportant and, in the world of networking, you'll probably have to consider wants more than raw needs. Wants can include things like season tickets to the L.A. Lakers, a new designer who does killer web graphics, or an easier way to organize customers in their CRM system. Think of wants as lying more towards the pleasure end of the pain-pleasure scale and think about how you can fulfill them.
- **Likes:** A good way to organize connections is to think about what those individuals like. For instance, if you know that three of your best customers are all fans of the Indianapolis Colts, jot that down somewhere! When the opportunity presents itself, you can align yourself with their likes and preferences or you can connect them with people who share their interests. Common interests are one of the most powerful ways that we interconnect with people.
- **Dislikes:** Knowing what someone dislikes can be just as important as knowing what someone likes. Imagine you're planning a dinner event for your top 25 prospects – wouldn't it be great to know what foods to avoid serving? To some extent, dislikes can be a source of common interest, though, outside of politics, you probably don't want to attach yourself to people based solely on a common dislike for something. Dislikes worth noting include who to avoid discussing within certain circles (a sign of a past business deal gone wrong, perhaps?), what foods/music/styles they don't like, and just about anything requiring a personal preference. Two dislikes that are really good to remember are communication

times and preferred methods of communication. Some people are really irked by a phone call in the evening; others prefer not to receive messages via e-mail or text. Respond to these preferences and avoid doing things in a manner they dislike. And remember, you don't have to point out someone's dislikes to them; you simply should note what it is they like and don't like.

- **Accomplishments:** While you don't have to have a complete biography about all your contacts and relationships, knowing some of their notable accomplishments can give you a strong anchor for current and future conversations with them. Accomplishments can be wide ranging, but a few examples include: Have they won notable awards in their industry? Have they started businesses or organizations? What about college degrees, achievements in sports, or recognition for their hobbies or public service? Take note of important accomplishments as you learn about them. They can help you paint a complete picture of who your connections are and what they've built in their lives. This can be a great lead-in during casual conversation and it can also give you something you can use to connect them to similarly accomplished people in your network.



- **Goals:** While accomplishments look to the past, goals look to the future and they are perhaps the most powerful force that we all carry. For most people, goals are something to look forward to and they can be powerful, motivating forces in our lives. Most people carry a varied range of goals throughout their lives, for each dimension and for many time frames. Some examples of goals that are worth noting include: Do they have specific retirement plans, such as a round-the-world trip or a cabin in the woods? Are they trying to reach a sales milestone or growth objective for their firm? Do they want to give their children the resources and skills to get into Harvard? Do they want to contribute their time or a portion of their income to an important cause or social program? Goals may exist in super-short intervals, sometimes lasting only a few days, or they can stretch for years or decades. But by knowing as many of these goals as possible - and remembering them for future conversations - you'll be able to converse with and relate to people better and then you can keep your eyes open for opportunities to help them

achieve their goals. We all respond to the person who brings us closer to our goals – don't you want to be that person?

- **Networks:** Just as you're involved in a variety of networks, both formal and informal, so too are *your connections*. These social networks include clubs, businesses, alumni groups, shared social causes, fraternities/sororities, etc. In most cases, it is easier to access a network through someone who is already in it than to take the trouble of breaking into it fresh on your own. It's not just smart business to learn what networks your connections are involved in; networks make great topics for conversation as well. Examples of networks that you may want to learn about include: What college did your connections attend and do they stay active as alumni? What about professional networking or social groups, such as business clubs or the chamber of commerce? Are they a member of any trade associations? Our networks can define us greatly so recognize and learn about the ones your connections are involved with. Networks are powerful things to organize your connections upon because oftentimes you will run into people with similar backgrounds who are in the same networks. They provide not only a common element for conversation but also a way to interconnect the people you already associate with.
- **Background:** As you develop a relationship with someone, you frequently learn about his or her general background in the process. This can include things like their hometown, basic details about family or friends, and life experiences that may not fit neatly into any other categories. A person's background is not only useful to know for general conversation but can also be very interesting to hear! Especially when talking to people with a dramatically different background from your own, take the time to learn as much as you can – things like travel, family, cultural differences, and personal history are well worth the time to hear, enjoy, and learn about.

As you organize your people, keep these eight factors in mind. If you are big on organization, jot down notes when you can. It doesn't have to be deep, but sometimes a few notes are worthwhile. Here's an example of contact notes in these eight dimensions:

Prospect card: Tom Smith		<i>Updated: 9/15/2011</i>	
<u>Needs:</u> -New customer service rep -Trade credit from XYZ manufacturer	<u>Wants:</u> -Take kids to Disneyland this summer -An iPad	<u>Likes:</u> -New Orleans jazz music -Acura cars -Virgin America airline	<u>Dislikes:</u> -Not a fan of sushi or Thai food -Do not call after 8 PM!
<u>Accomplishments:</u> -Graduated from Georgetown -Rec'd distributor of the year in 2008	<u>Goals:</u> -Wants to donate more to Habitat for Humanity -Wants to ship widgets to Brazil next quarter	<u>Networks:</u> -Member of Louisiana Business Council -On the board of advisors for ABC Associates	<u>Background:</u> -Raised in Hawaii, father was in Navy -Spent 3 years after college as a bartender in Baltimore

As you can see, it's not too painful to jot down a few notes about someone, especially if you've had several interactions with them and know some useful details. You don't have to spend ages writing every specific detail – just write yourself enough notes so that you can refer to them later if you need them. This is actually *more* important for those connections you may not interact with frequently. The people we interact with constantly are part of our active network. Therefore, we tend to keep their details fresher in our minds. For people we don't see on a regular basis, these connection notes can prove to be invaluable in the long run.

Now imagine you had these details for all your hundreds of contacts. Do you think, from those details, you might be able to discover commonalities, patterns, or groupings? Of course! That's why getting started on organizing your networks and relationships is

crucial. From the example above, let's see if we can figure out a few ways to utilize what we know about Tom.

- He's looking for a new customer service representative. Do you happen to know anyone looking for a job in that field?
- He likes New Orleans-style jazz music. Can you pick up a CD that he might like and send it to him in the next few weeks? It's an affordable way to prompt another conversation together in the near future and he might enjoy the gift.
- He's a member of the Louisiana Business Council. Do they have an event coming up that you can attend? His introduction might go a long way towards landing other clients in the same group.
- He wants to ship his widgets to Brazil. Do you know anyone in your network that is familiar with the logistics of distributing goods in South America?

As you can see, from just a few casual notes, there are many opportunities to create new value in your relationship with Tom. As a full-time "connector," you can tap into the rest of your network and connect the dots to help and support Tom, other people you know, and yourself. The beauty of connections and relationship building is that every time you form a new relationship, you are able to bring them into your entire network. Tom and his network have the potential to help you or a member of your own network. It's just a matter of finding the right connection.

Don't Just Take Notes – Use Them!

The reality is most of you reading this will probably try to note down a few things about a couple of people. But if you're really serious about building your connections and developing your relationship networks, you must make this a habit! You should set aside a few minutes each day and organize your notes about the people you interact with.

You must also make your notes easily accessible. It does not do you any good if you have all your notes carefully written down in a notebook sitting on your desk if you're out at a tradeshow or across the country at a company meeting. In this regard, today's advanced technology is a great tool to use.

For instance, in my cell phone, I've taken one simple step toward categorizing certain people that I'm connected with. If I speak with someone and realize that they can specifically support my business activities, I add a quick amendment to their contact name: "SP" for "Strategic Partnership opportunity." That means that whenever I want to reach out for the purpose of growing my business, I can just look through my phone for anyone marked "SP." This doesn't mean that people who don't have the mark aren't important or relevant to my business, but this handful of strategic partners can be invaluable when trying to solve a problem or grow a new opportunity.

With modern cell phones and organizers, you can add many more details about the people you are connected with – and have that information in the palm of your hand. In addition, social networking and online technologies have made it quicker and easier than ever to organize your professional, marketing, and personal relationships.

An Important Note about Appraisals



I want to leave you with one more important thought, something very similar to what your mother told you many years ago. If you can't say something nice about someone, don't say anything at all. Every now and then we encounter people who we don't want to interact with or don't get along with for one reason or another. When you're organizing your networking notes and jotting them down, realize that whatever you write could be viewed by someone other than you. You might leave your notebook out in the open or walk away from your computer with your contact notes open. Keep your notes honest, but do yourself a favor: keep them positive.

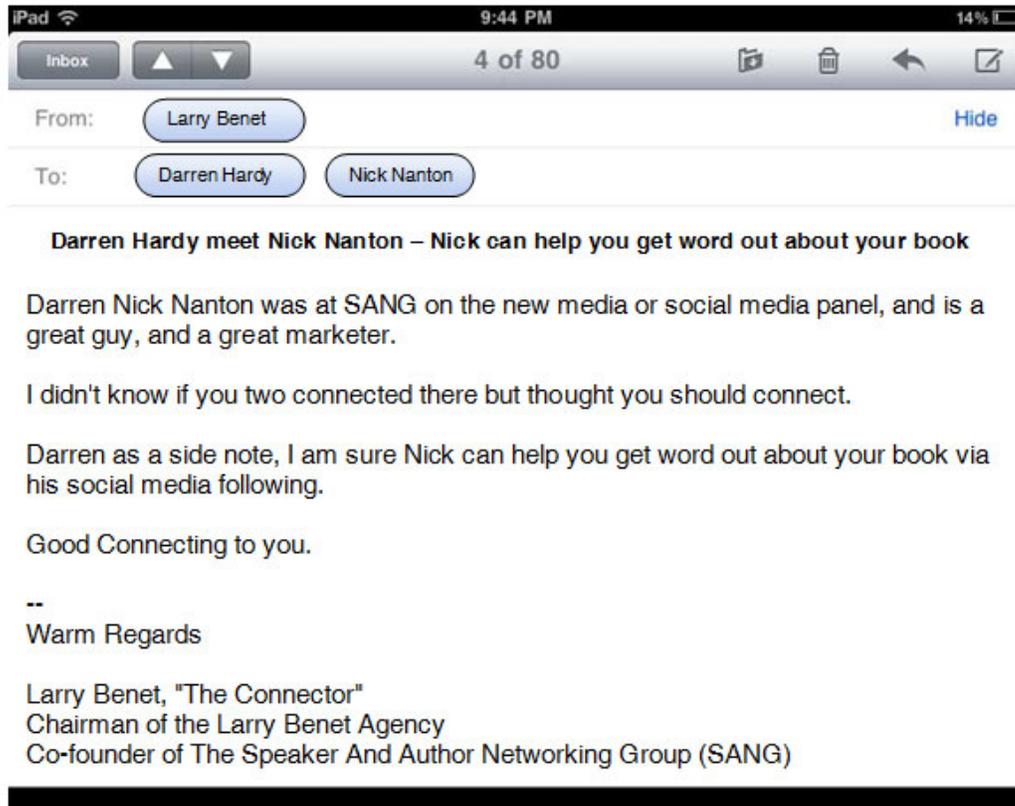
Finding People Who Take Action

Remember the classic saying, “Ideas are a dime a dozen”? It’s as true today as it was when the dime was brand new! Ideas are important but they’re only the first step on the long road to success and prosperity. Surround yourself not only with people who have great ideas and like to think big, but also people who are willing to take action and try to accomplish things. We all know people who are “stuck,” for one reason or another. They keep themselves from achieving many of the things that they could do if they just set their mind to it. You may even be one of them! If you are, stop stalling and take action! And if you know people who aren’t willing to take action, don’t spend too much time harvesting those relationships. You want to surround yourself with people who are interested in doing great things AND are willing to take the steps to get there.

This is especially true when cross-connecting people from your social circles. When you refer someone you’ve met to someone else in your network, you’re not just bringing the two of them together. You’re attaching your reputation and personality to every contact you pass along to another. With this in mind, do you want to be responsible for a *bad relationship*? Of course not! You want to find people who are interested in mixing, mingling, and networking, as well as taking action in order to better themselves and those around them. Look for people who take action and align yourself with them. When you cross-connect those people, there is virtually no limit to what can be accomplished.

Connection E-mails

Here is an example of a quick and easy way to connect two people who are mutually beneficial to each other via e-mail. It doesn't take much at all.



Work Your Way Up Strategy



I once had a student whose goal was to obtain promotional time from some of the biggest Internet educators out there. At the time, he did not have any direct connections to these business owners. We developed an outreach plan that had him cultivating and nurturing relationships with some of the lower-level management teams at these companies. He contacted these people and provided them with a service of his own that added value to THEIR lives: time management and project management coaching for their support staff.

Over time, my student worked his way up to the owners of those companies. By the time he met with them, he was lauded as a valuable coaching provider to their companies. He successfully influenced the Influencers! It's a very powerful strategy. Did he wind up obtaining the exposure to the people that he wanted? Absolutely. Better yet, he didn't have to ask. Instead of having to prove himself, the company owners were thanking him. They wanted to be of service to him, just as he had sought to serve their staff.

Send Cards On the Other Holidays

Here is another example of something I do. Many people send holiday cards during the traditional holiday season. What I recommend is *don't* send holiday cards. Send Thanksgiving cards. Why? Ask yourself how many Christmas cards you received last year. Then ask yourself how many cards you received for Thanksgiving. Which is the smaller of the two? Stand out! Be different, be unique, grab people's attention.

This strategy works for any holiday that is not a traditional card-sending holiday. Send 4th of July cards next year and see the amazing responses you'll get!



Get Involved at the Local Level

Sometimes your ultimate goal is to reach the top executives in a mega-corporation, but you don't even have a relationship that can get you through to a secretary there. How do you approach this? You start with those who are in your industry in your local area. Identify your market radius within, say, 30 minutes of you. Who are the most influential people within that radius? What are you going to do to build relationships with them?

I want you to figure out everything you can about the influential people in your industry in your local area. I want you to understand everything about them. I want you to know what charities they support. I want you to support those charities. I want you to become one of them. When they have their group meetings, I want you to go. I want you to volunteer for the board of any organization that they participate in. I want you to get involved. I want you to add value to the things they care about. I want you to find people in your network who can connect to them and help improve their businesses.

Is it going to be a little uncomfortable calling and reaching out to people you don't know? Initially. You know, it wasn't easy for me to go up to Larry King at the dais next to Jane Fonda and Ted Turner, but I did it anyway. And I want you guys to step up so you can transform your businesses. It's not that hard to do. It just takes a little courage to walk through the gate the first time and introduce yourself to the people who are playing at a higher level. Think about this: If you're an architect and you were told you could have Donald Trump as a client, would that be game changing for you? Absolutely, because Donald Trump is putting up buildings all over the world. What if you had to call him up and introduce yourself? Would you let the thought of that scare you off and prevent you from making that call? Of course not!

Connecting to High-Profile Executives

If it's the CEO of a major corporation that you must meet, you do have a huge advantage before you get that first meeting with him or her. The advantage is that there is a TON of public information out there in:

- Magazine articles
- Their blog posts
- Their Twitter feeds
- Their quarterly earnings calls
- Newspaper interviews
- And many more! Just do a search on their name!

So when you do have that opportunity to meet them, be prepared. Make use of the information that is available to the public. Don't forget, too, that today's social media means that you can be communicating with these people well before you really meet them. Once you find that mutual connection between your network and theirs, you'll be ready for an interaction where you immediately add value and begin to form a true relationship.

Don't Stop Calling

The Art of Connection means that you also have to be consistent in your follow up with those that you are seeking to connect to. Sometimes this will mean trying to get in touch with people who are really, really busy. Realize that most sales are closed after seven to nine contact points, which is where most sales happen. And getting someone to form a relationship with you *is* a sale. You are selling you, in addition to the value that you can bring to the relationship. You are asking for something that is very valuable: their time and attention. Realize that people are busy and do not take it personally when you are unable to make contact right away. Keep at it.

When a high-profile promoter didn't return my first or seventh call, I stayed on her. I sent her cards. I sent her candy. I e-mailed her. I left her voice messages: "Hey, Gail, I know you're busy, just let me know how I can help. If there is ever anything I can do, please let me know."

Did I get a response? Nope! Then, one day, I bumped into her at an event and we ended up having lunch. I started the process all over again. I sent her a thank you card asking what I could do to help her.

She actually needed something from a connection of mine, Mark Victor Hansen. She also needed another promoter who was important to her. And she needed event e-mails sent out. So I got her what she needed from Mark and I spent 20 minutes a day for a week sending out e-mails to promote her event.

Fast forward nine months later. I got a call from her asking me to speak at a very large event that was on my list of stages I wanted to be on for that year. It took me a whole year, but the relationship investment was well worth it. We gained value from each other and both of our businesses benefitted from the relationship as well.

So don't give up! Keep on going even when it seems like you aren't getting through.

The Connectivity Worksheet

Now that we have reviewed the information you need in order to turn your relationships into connections, our next step will be taking the time to evaluate your top ten relationships. Appendix 1 contains eleven blank connectivity worksheets. Why eleven? Well, the first 10 are ones that you are going to complete right now. The last one is for you to make copies. Over the next 30 days, increase the number of relationships you evaluate through this exercise to 25. You will see immediately that your ability to connect has been right in front of you the whole time.

Note that you may not be able to complete all of the sections, even for your closest ten connections. This is not important at the moment since you are just beginning to unlock your connection mastery prowess. What is important is that you learn what information you are missing so you can focus on gathering it from your top ten and then, your top 25.

General Information

Name	Company
Title	Specialty

Important Goals / Projects

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Favorite Charity / Causes

--

Family / Personal Information

Birthday	Spouse's Name
Children's Names	Anniversary

Contact Details

Home Phone	Office Phone
Cell Phone	Skype / IM
Personal E-mail	Work E-mail
Home Address	Work Address

Contact Preferences E-mail Preferred Text Message Preferred Home Phone Work
 Best Time to Contact AM PM | Time Zone EST CST MST PST

Social Networks

<input type="checkbox"/> Facebook	<input type="checkbox"/> LinkedIn	<input type="checkbox"/> Twitter	<input type="checkbox"/> YouTube
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Appraisal

Needs	Wants	Likes	Dislikes
Accomplishments	Goals	Networks	Background

Top Ideas For Adding Value

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About Larry Benet



Larry Benet is the CEO of Larry Benet Productions and the Speakers and Authors Networking Group (SANG). SANG is connected with the most successful speakers and authors in the world; Tony Robbins, Les Brown, Peter Guber, Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, Harvey Mackay, Guy Kawasaki, Zappos CEO Tony Hsieh, and Paula Abdul have all participated at SANG.

Larry is a great connector of people and, according to Google, one of the most connected people on the planet. Larry is nationally known for his ability to bring together power brokers in the international thought leader arena.

His goal is to raise a billion dollars over his lifetime through his connections, ideas, and money. One of his goals is to eradicate homelessness in the United States. He is the past Chairman of the Tsunami Disaster Relief Project, which brought top business leaders together to raise money for the victims of the Indonesian tsunami.

He has also supported the Larry King Cardiac Foundation and served on the advisory board of the Wyland Foundation and Soul of Africa. He feels privileged to have assisted in the fundraising efforts of Richard Branson's charity, Virgin Unite.

When Larry isn't working, he enjoys going to live concerts, sporting events, and national award shows, like the Grammys. But his favorite activity is spending time with his four little nieces.