



MODULE

COLLECTIVES AND NETWORKING COMPETENCE

Unit 3 | Activity 1 Optimising my network



15min



• Pen and blank paper

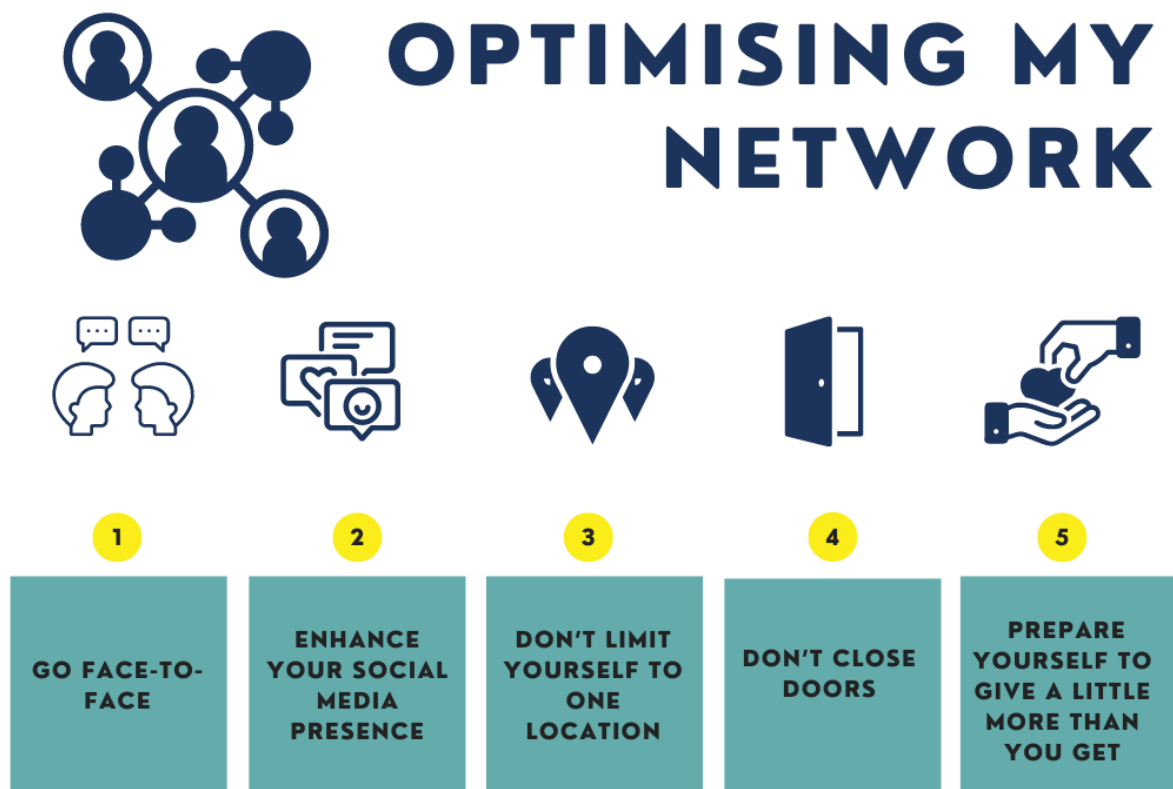
DESCRIPTION

This unit will take you through how to design a good networking Strategy in order to strengthen the sustainability of your business.

THE ACTIVITY

What will my strategy be? It takes time to build a larger business network. But it's time well spent! So, try to make a habit out of it. Stop closing the door on leads. Start participating with groups online and in real life. Go out beyond your usual habits with the intention of discovering who is out there, that you didn't think of yourself. Even if results don't come right away, you will inevitably build a larger network of people who know you—and think about you— very quickly.

Decide on which activities you can take part in, to grow your network. Here are some examples:



THE THEORY

“In the current political and ecological climate, there is mounting pressure on businesses to achieve greater levels of sustainability from a variety of stakeholders.

Not only do a massive 81% of consumers now prefer to buy from brands with a commitment to environmental sustainability, but it has also been shown that environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues are of increasing importance to the investment community, with more than half of global asset owners currently incorporating ESG considerations in their investment strategy.

However, the challenge is finding practical ways to work towards becoming a more sustainable organisation, that won't have a negative impact on the business as a whole. Many have come to associate the concept of sustainability with expense, but this doesn't have to be the case. In fact, studies from the likes of Deloitte and Harvard have found that companies that have embraced it are financially outperforming their competitors.

Fortunately, for businesses looking to reduce their environmental impact, there are a number of steps they can take that will also have a positive effect on profitability and productivity, helping to keep all stakeholders satisfied. One of these steps is ensuring that their end-to-end supply chain and logistics network is truly optimised.¹

Network optimisation can be part of the solution to help you achieve this.

Networking strategies can be compared to plans that help you meet and establish business related relationships. Networking relationships should be beneficial to both parties, as they provide opportunities to exchange advice, information, professional references and career advancement opportunities.

If you are effective at networking, you may be able to improve career-related skills and develop partnerships that help you achieve your career goals.

Some of the strategies can be:

- Join a networking group
- Utilise social media
- Grow a database of professional contacts
- Join industry groups
- Attend conventions and conferences
- Keep up to date on E-mail communication
- Set up informational interviews
- Offer assistance

#1: Go Face-to-Face

Phone calls, emails, social media interactions in business are very useful and practical, but they are not enough. You can't beat the face-to-face method of doing business. If anything, it's at a premium in the digital age, which makes these face-to-face connections more important than ever.

So, how do you get out of your bubble and meet people in the real world?

- Attend conferences/events.

¹ Source: <https://www.ceotodaymagazine.com/2019/08/network-optimisation-the-key-to-business-sustainability/>

- Find co-working spaces.
- Find MeetUp groups.

#2: Enhance Your Social Media Presence

Some have a negative view on social media and say it gets in the way of genuine human interaction. However, the reality is, that technology is there for you to find new connections. Here are some examples:

- LinkedIn. This is particularly useful for participating in groups of professional interest.
- Twitter. This can be useful if you have a business that needs people to engage with your content.
- Facebook. Launch a Facebook business presence and interact with customers—and don't forget to join Facebook groups,

#3: Don't Limit Yourself to One Location

Instant communication should be open to new networking opportunities, not limit them. If you can't get face-to-face interactions, be open to making connections even on a digital basis with other people like yourself. Should a potential client get in touch requesting a video conference, then don't shy away. Give it a chance, even if you'd prefer to do it over email. Explore opportunities. Which avenues are open to you?

#4: Don't Close Doors

Even if you don't see an immediate link to a potential network actor and what you do, don't be too quick to dismiss them. Keep your options open and keep them in your Customer Relationship Management software. Let them off nicely. Tell them that if they go in a different direction and it doesn't work out, you'd still be open to hearing from them.

#5: Prepare Yourself to Give a Little More Than You Get

Don't just focus on what you are getting. What value do you bring to your network actors? You'll see this principle plays itself out across a range of strategies for your business.

- You could aim to create content that's more than worth the price of admission, such as a free click to your website, where visitors have access to your best information, or give away goods.
- Spend time and energy on creating sustainability values so that when people you interact with don't feel like it was a waste of their time.
- you give something away. You do your potential to lead a favour. The need to reciprocate will help drive them to take further action with your company.
- Share your network with others! Be willing to introduce people to each other. If you're overloaded on client work or can't handle any more customers, refer a client in need to someone who can help them.
- In social media, think of what kind of profile you would want to follow. Would you follow you? If you don't have a large following already, the chances are that the answer is: probably not. Create genuine value with insightful links, relevant sources, and original thoughts.

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