

5 things great networkers do

[Networking](#) is important for your career, and can lead to all types of [opportunities](#), from new jobs to new careers and even business ventures.

It comes easily to some, but for many of us, it can feel like an elusive skill. The good news is there's no special gene or top-secret skill you need to have to be a great networker, but rather five habits that can be developed over time.

With the advice of Louisa Dahl, author of new book *The Deliberate Digital Marketer*, founder and CEO of Interactive Minds and all-round networking expert, we'll share the top five habits of highly effective networkers and how to adopt them so that you too can become a [networking pro](#).

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1. **They are helpful.** Networking is all about sharing information, advice and contacts – in other words, being helpful – so one of the most important things you can do is help your contacts. Great networkers will help without being asked, as they understand that when they eventually need something others will do the same for them.

For advice on how to start being helpful to your network, Dahl recommends thinking about how you can add value to someone else, “whether that be through sharing a contact, your experiences, a process that has helped you, or a resource.

If you're not sure what you have to offer others, start by making a list of information, connections, experiences and assets that you have access to that other people might find valuable.” Just make sure these things are either yours to share or are publicly available.

2. **They are reliable.** Just as with friends or colleagues, it's crucial to be reliable

with your network. This means delivering on promises, being honest and responsive, and staying consistent with your work and communication.

“Set the tone for your networking relationships and be genuine and real,” Dahl advises. “The way you treat new connections will show them who you are and how you operate, so always keep this top of mind. Make sure you get back to people in a timely way and keep your **communication** in a tone that’s appropriate for your industry.”

3. **They are active listeners.** **Active listening** is when you’re genuinely interested in and fully concentrating on the conversation, and striving to understand and respond to the person’s needs. Dahl says it’s important for networking as it can “give you great insights into the person you’re speaking to, help you to understand what’s important to them and what value you can offer them.”

When you try it yourself, Dahl says to “resist the urge to relate everything they say back to your experience. Try to get the delicate balance of listening and adding value to the conversation, as opposed to taking control of the conversation. They will be sure to appreciate it.”

4. **They provide good referrals.** **Referrals** are a significant part of networking, and as Dahl explains, “many people turn to their networks first when they are looking for other people to work with. You may be asked for introductions or suggestions for suitable candidates and if you know someone, a personal introduction is a good way to do it.” This is often done by email.

“If you’re actually endorsing someone for a role, it’s best to have had working experience with this person to truly understand their strengths and capabilities for the desired experience before recommending them.”

5. **They follow up.** “Following up is possibly the most important aspect of networking, as transferring that connection from a single meeting to ongoing communications is what will build a relationship,” Dahl says. So, after you meet a new contact, make sure you send them an email to let them know you enjoyed meeting them.

“The first email is a great opportunity to deliver on some initial value, whether it be sending them a link to something you were discussing or sharing a report, a contact or insight. If this is a relationship you want to continue developing, try to find another reason in the first month to contact them again.” You could even set reminders in your calendar to catch up with particularly valuable contacts.

Networking can lead to amazing opportunities. Adopt these five simple habits and your efforts will be supercharged!