# THE LITTLE BOOK OF NETWORKING FOR TRANSLATORS

*A guide to effective online and offline networking*

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# THE LITTLE BOOK OF NETWORKING

# FOR TRANSLATORS

How to boost your translation business with targeted online
and offline networking

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*'The richest people in the world look for and build networks. Everyone else looks for work.'* Robert Kiyosaki

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## A Guide to effective online and offline networking

Thank you for picking up *The Little Book of Networking for Translators*. I imagine you did so for one of two reasons: either you are sceptical about networking and think you don't have the time or skills for it or you are engaging in networking activities already and wonder why you aren't seeing results. In either case, this book will introduce the objectives and etiquette of online and offline networking and help you to identify areas for improvement.
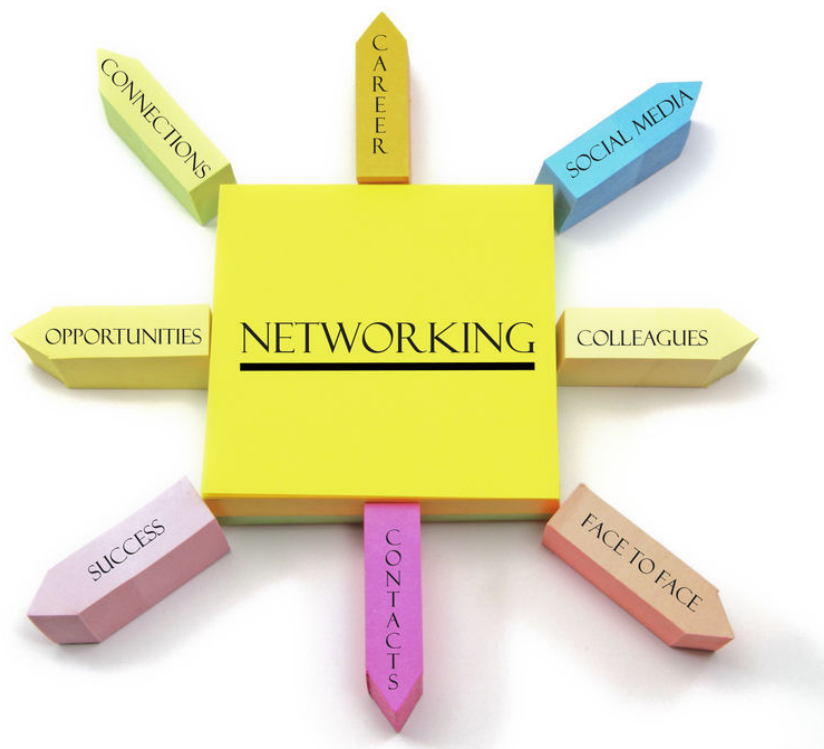
# CHAPTER 1: What is networking?

## Definition and aims

Networking is a buzzword that seems to be in everyone's mouth lately. Business networking groups are springing up everywhere, and networking has become a fixture in today's business world. But what exactly does the term networking mean?

First, networking serves to build relationships, support networks and trust. This is important because people buy from people. In the process, people, ideas and knowledge become connected, generating new ideas and opportunities.

Second, by networking you are making yourself visible to potential clients and your target markets. Consider networking as word-of-mouth marketing, which costs little or nothing and is still the most powerful way for most small business to generate revenue.

In my personal experience, I have received enquiries through Twitter and paid work through connections made on LinkedIn, Xing and Facebook, So I definitely consider the time spent networking a worthwhile investment in my business.

## Online and offline

You might say, 'Oh, I'm already active on several social media sites, and I network all the time'. However, while online networking is great and essential, it is not a substitute for face-to-face networking, nor is it sufficient if you do nothing else. In today's business world, small business owners need to build strong online and offline networks to lay the foundation for their success.

## Within and outside your industry

When developing your networking strategy (and you do need a strategy!), you also need to decide whether to engage in networking within or outside your industry. Both approaches have benefits, which we'll examine in more detail in chapters 5 and 6.
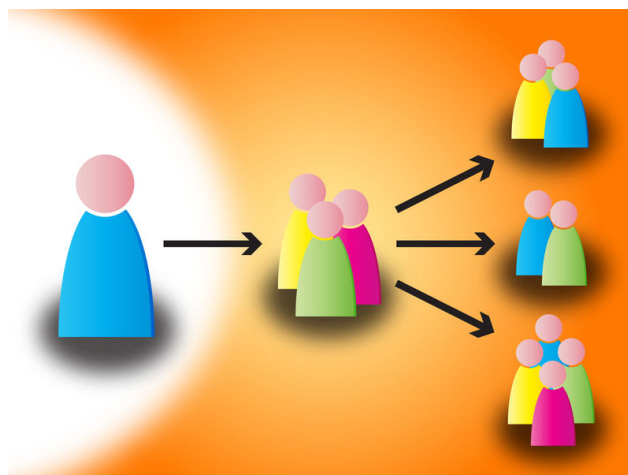
# CHAPTER 2: Offline networking

## Objectives

The first step in offline networking is defining your goal. What do you want to achieve? With whom do you want to connect? Your objective might be to uncover new business opportunities, make more money, raise your profile or build a referral network. You need to clarify your exact goals in your mind, because the worst thing you can do is to waste precious time with untargeted networking, which will only leave you frustrated and doubting the entire concept of networking.

## Find events

Once you have identified your top networking objectives and at least three groups of people you would like to have in your network (e.g. prospective clients in the advertising industry, colleagues working in your language pair, or potential suppliers to whom you can outsource work), the next step is to identify suitable networking events.

To find out where you should go, your first task is to find out which events your clients attend. Consult trade magazines in your industries of interest, check with professional associations, and, most of all, use the Internet to find local business groups, workshops and networking events.

The best types of networking events for small business owners are:

- Professional associations (e.g. AUSIT, ATA, CIOL) > *within your industry*

- Local Chamber of Commerce events > *outside your industry*

- Business networks > *within and outside your industry*

- Special interest and volunteer groups > *outside your industry*

- Toastmasters (to enhance your public speaking skills while boosting your confidence) > *outside your industry*

- Charity events, fundraisers and community events > *outside your industry*

- Universities (language and translation departments) > *within your industry*

It is advisable to attend a good mix of events both within and outside your industry. As a solopreneur, always be sure to carry a set of business cards with you wherever you go, as you never know when you'll meet a potential client or someone who knows your next client.

## Work the room

You've identified a suitable event, packed your business cards and arrived at the venue – now what?

It is important to make a great first impression, as people will decide whether or not they like you within a matter of seconds. Although you may prefer to work in your pyjamas all day, make sure you have some proper business attire ready for professional networking events. As a general rule, you should try to dress just that little bit better than the people you want to attract. The last thing you want to do is come across as a haphazard freelancer; you are a business owner and want to be treated as such, so dress and act accordingly!

Being nervous is completely normal, but don't use your anxiety as an excuse to keep getting refills from the buffet or to send (or pretend to send) text messages on your phone all night, as doing so would defeat the entire purpose of being there. Relax, get in there and work the room. After all, everyone shares the same goal and is there to network.

Try to talk to as many people as possible rather than clinging to those you already know. Smile and make eye contact in order to make a great first impression. Make sure you've prepared an effective elevator speech to raise the other person's interest. When someone asks what you do, you need to be able to respond with short phrases that will get you noticed and remembered in less than ten seconds. What you say should make the listener want to ask questions to find out more about you and your business.

If you've identified someone important you really want to speak to, don't be afraid to ask the host to introduce you. After all, connecting with the right people is your main objective in attending the event.

When engaging with someone, try to listen carefully and demonstrate genuine interest while finding out more about their business. Everyone likes to talk about themselves, so people will remember you for being a good listener and will feel flattered that someone is interested in them and their business.

## CHAPTER 3: Online networking

### Objectives

Many people approach online networking as a popularity contest, collecting connections like they're going out of fashion. But accumulating hundreds or thousands of connections is definitely not what online networking should be all about.

Your main objective in online networking should be to identify a handful of influential contacts with a large network that you would like to join in order to be introduced and referred to potential clients. On Twitter, for example, you can identify these influencers by searching for them by hashtags. It also pays to use tools such as Klout in order to pinpoint who is influential and worth connecting with in your target industries. Don't shy away from using the available tools to identify influencers (e.g. Klout, Kreed, Twitonomy or commun.it).

### Cut through the noise

Visiting online networking sites for the first time can be overwhelming. I vividly remember logging into Twitter for the first time and thinking I'd arrived on a different planet. There is no doubt that there is a lot of noise on social networks and other networking sites. It's almost like one huge room in which everyone is shouting at the same time, trying to be heard. The conventional approach of adding as many people as possible or just following everyone who follows you won't get you very far.

Remember that your goal should be targeted networking: identify potential clients or key persons of influence with whom you would like to connect and engage with them specifically. By the same token, don't feel pressured to follow or add people just because they are following you. You have the right to be selective and only network with people in your identified target groups.

On LinkedIn, browse the Groups section and join those where you will find potential clients or people you want to notice you. On Twitter, use hashtags when you post to increase your chances of being found and seen as an expert in your chosen topic.

Also, resist the temptation to follow celebrities! No matter how much you loved Baywatch in your youth, having Pamela Anderson or David Hasselhoff in the list of people you follow will not make a professional impression on peers or potential clients.

## Engage, communicate, give

Networking is all about engaging, and this is especially true of online networking. Simply setting up a profile on a networking site and then sitting back and waiting is not networking. This could be compared to attending an offline networking event only to quietly sit in the corner all evening without talking to anyone.

Even if you are an introvert, try to put yourself out there and ask questions. Engaging with others can be as simple as a comment on the weather or asking if they have any exciting plans for the weekend. Another way of engaging with people is to like and share their content. This will both draw their attention to you and help you to establish yourself as an expert in your chosen area of specialisation if you choose wisely what content you curate. Also, if someone asks a question to which you know the answer on a network, don't hesitate to reply. You will get noticed for your expertise, and the asker may become your next client.

# CHAPTER 4: Networking etiquette

**Top 5 offline networking Do's**

**1)** *DO have your elevator speech ready:*

Kick-start an interesting conversation with a killer elevator speech!

**2)** *DO use positive body language:*

Try to come across as positive and open. Study and rehearse the basics of body language to prepare for the event.

**3)** *DO end a conversation politely if necessary and move on to the next person:*

Doing this gives everyone (including yourself) the chance to speak to more people.

**4)** *DO exchange business cards:*

Study the other person's business card with interest for a few moments rather than just throwing it into your bag.

**5)** *DO follow up:*

Most people don't follow up after meeting someone at an event. Make yourself stand out with an unobtrusive follow-up call or email. You might offer a book recommendation or other piece of useful information to your new contact.

**Top 5 offline networking Don'ts**

**1)** *DON'T stay in your comfort zone:*

Don't just network with people you already know.

**2)** *DON'T sell, brag or talk too much:*

It's not all about you! Listen to others to learn about their business instead of continually telling people how great you are and try to trump every story with a better one about yourself.

**3)** *DON'T display bad manners:*

Eat properly (avoiding messy foods and alcohol) and don't interrupt people when they are speaking.

**4)** *DON'T be forgetful:*

Try to make a lasting impression by telling something memorable or funny about yourself or your business. People tend to remember specific details and entertaining anecdotes.

**5)** *DON'T sit down too soon:*

Stay on your feet and keep moving around in order to speak to as many people as possible.

## Top 5 online networking Do's

**1)** *DO identify potential clients:*

Look for your (potential) clients and key persons of influence in your areas of specialisation and start engaging to build relationships.

**2)** *DO communicate and help:*

Share your expertise freely, because givers get! Give recommendations, support others and share information wherever possible.

**3)** *DO offer a freebie:*

This could be a downloadable white paper or report or a free e-book on a topic of interest to your potential clients.

**4)** *DO be authentic:*

Always be yourself. There's no need to copy others; you are your own brand, and you need to build on your personal strengths to connect with people.

**5)** *DO develop trust:*

Make people comfortable and build relationships over time. Remember that people don't buy from people they don't trust.

## Top 5 online networking Don'ts

**1) *DON'T self-promote:***

Try to follow the 80/20 rule: talk about yourself 20% of the time and about others 80% of the time. Constant self-promotion is sure to put people off.

**2) *DON'T seek quantity over quality in contacts:***

Network with the right people, and don't feel pressured to play the numbers game.

**3) *DON'T get distracted by the noise and time-wasters:***

Unfollow everyone who never talks to you, and never follow celebrities.

**4) *DON'T voice strong opinions:***

Don't make any political or religious statements, and don't badmouth clients for any reason, ever.

**5) *DON'T mix personal and business:***

Use the available tools to keep your personal and business profiles strictly separate, and don't blur the line. Keep your business professional at all times.

## CHAPTER 5: Networking within your industry

Networking within the translation industry has many benefits. By connecting with other translators, you can stay up to date on what's happening in your industry, both locally and around the world. You will also be able to share information and knowledge with your peers for the benefit of everyone involved.

A positive side effect of building relationships within the translation industry is that doing so will open up new avenues for collaboration. For example, you may find a colleague with whom you can team up for certain projects that require two different areas of expertise, or you may find a reliable supplier who can lighten your workload in busy periods.

Probably the most important advantage of networking within your own industry is that you will build your reputation and become a well-connected and well-known figure in the translation industry. Thanks to the Internet, a small investment in online networking can make you a worldwide household name in no time. You may be invited to present training sessions, hold workshops, present webinars or speak at conferences. This will undoubtedly raise your profile, and you may even get direct referrals from colleagues.

Despite all these benefits, it is important not to limit yourself to networking only in your own industry. Between one third and one half of all networking events you attend should be outside the translation industry. This type of networking will be discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 6: Networking outside your industry

When networking at events outside your own industry, you will naturally see your business from a different perspective. You will have to present yourself as and start thinking like a business owner. Although many freelance translators don't see themselves as entrepreneurs, networking with other professionals is the perfect opportunity to reflect on what you do and how you want to be seen and treated.

What's more, by presenting yourself well when networking outside your industry, you will also be promoting translation as a profession and raising the profile of translators in other industries.

To network outside your own industry, start by identifying where your potential clients go and then attending the same meetings. If you are a marketing translator, for example, find out where the local marketing association meets and whether they have any upcoming events that you could attend. By doing so, you will also automatically enhance your expertise in areas of specialisation. Once again, this will contribute to your being seen as an expert in your field and may get you hired by a new client.

Two major sources of business generation for freelance translation professionals are undoubtedly word of mouth and referrals. When you mingle with clients at networking events, there is a good chance that you may get introduced and recommended to other potential clients in the same industry. This is probably the most important aspect of networking outside of your industry.

Furthermore, don't be afraid to tactfully ask for introductions to potential clients in your contacts' networks. If you do this respectfully, without being pushy, your contacts will likely be glad to help you make those connections. Of course, you should always try to return the favour in some way.

# CHAPTER 7: The Top 50 Networking Tips

**Offline events**

| | |
|---|---|
| **1)** Source suitable events to attend<br><br>**2)** Schedule networking time in your diary<br><br>**3)** Define your networking goals<br><br>**4)** Prepare your business cards<br><br>**5)** Prepare and practice your elevator speech | *Prepare* |
| **6)** Arrive as early as possible<br><br>**7)** Identify key persons of interest and work the room<br><br>**8)** Ask to be introduced if necessary<br><br>**9)** Make eye contact and smile<br><br>**10)** Use positive body language | *Conduct at events* |
| **11)** Use an interesting elevator speech<br><br>**12)** Share a funny or memorable anecdote or fact about yourself<br><br>**13)** Share expertise freely<br><br>**14)** Don't boast or try too hard to impress<br><br>**15**) Be yourself and relax | *Be engaging* |

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|---|---|
| **16)** Demonstrate genuine interest in the other person<br><br>**17)** Ask relevant questions<br><br>**18)** Remember and use the other person's name<br><br>**19)** Repeat back key phrases to show you've understood them<br><br>**20)** Give verbal and physical signs that you are listening (e.g. nod your head, 'Yes, I see.') | *Listen* |
| **21)** Exchange business cards at the event to ensure you can follow up<br><br>**22)** Connect on LinkedIn<br><br>**23)** Send a brief and relevant email two days after the event<br><br>**24)** Recommend a book or other product that may interest the other person<br><br>**25)** Make the follow-up about them and their interests | *Follow up* |

## Online events

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|---|---|
| **26)** Use a targeted approach<br><br>**27)** Choose a niche and establish yourself within it<br><br>**28)** Use word of mouth and referrals to create buzz around your business<br><br>**29)** Avoid hard selling<br><br>**30)** Invite your offline contacts to join you online | *Marketing* |
| **31)** Thank others for sharing your content<br><br>**32)** Engage in conversations<br><br>**33)** Show the real person behind your logo or company name<br><br>**34)** Introduce others to one another<br><br>**35)** Be patient; it will take time before you see results | *Relationship building* |
| **36)** Build a brand and create a following<br><br>**37)** Be prolific; show your presence everywhere that matters<br><br>**38)** Maintain your own website<br><br>**39)** Offer value, such as free advice or downloadable products<br><br>**40)** Keep honing your profile | *Reputation building* |

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|---|---|
| 41) Track your online activities | *Efficiency* |
| 42) Schedule time for online networking | |
| 43) Choose networks wisely; quality beats quantity | |
| 44) Use technological tools to make online networking easier | |
| 45) Measure your results | |
| 46) Choose a blend of networks in which to engage | *Strategy* |
| 47) Share freely and help others; remember that givers get | |
| 48) Post regularly and stick with your posting schedule | |
| 49) Follow up with leads and referrals | |
| 50) Revisit your objectives and achievements on a regular basis | |

# CHAPTER 8: Get started!

Now that you've reached the end of *The Little Book of Networking for Translators*, I hope you are excited about generating some additional business through online and offline networking. Consider the time spent on networking as an investment in your business. If you have any questions or other feedback, please email me at info@nyacommunications.com. Good luck with your networking efforts!

## Links:

**Toastmasters International:** http://www.toastmasters.org/
A non-profit organisation for developing public speaking and leadership skills through practice and feedback in local clubs around the world.

**Twitter:** https://twitter.com/signup
The world's largest micro-blogging platform. Signing up is a must!

**Klout:** http://www.klout.com
See who is influential and worth connecting with.

**Commun.it:** http://commun.it/
Monitor engagement and discover new leads on Twitter.

**Twitonomy:** www.twitonomy.com/
Get insights on the people you follow and those who follow you.

**Watercooler Network:**
https://www.facebook.com/groups/Watercoolernetwork/
A Facebook networking group for translators.

**LinkedIn Groups:** http://www.linkedin.com/directory/groups/
The LinkedIn Groups directory.

**Translators - Interpreters Network:**
http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Translators-Interpreters-network-112247/about
A LinkedIn networking group for translators.

## About the author:

Nicole Y. Adams is a certified German<>English translator, editor and public relations consultant with a Masters Degree in Contemporary English Language and Linguistics. She has been self-employed since 2003 and specialises in PR, marketing and corporate communications. As a qualified business coach and mentor, Nicole also helps and inspires newly established freelancers to develop their businesses.

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