

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING (RB)

Relationship Building is working to build or maintain ethical relationships or networks or contacts with people who are, or may be, potentially helpful in achieving work-related goals and establishing advantages. These people may include customers, clients, counterparts, colleagues, etc.

<i>This Means...</i>	<i>This Doesn't Mean...</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing a network of support with stakeholders to help attain organizational goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contacting stakeholders only when you need to solve a problem or gather information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cultivating useful contacts with a broad range of people in a variety of strategic positions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> networking without a purpose
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> serving on community committees whose membership includes influential people within your service area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> turning down invitations or not being involved in community groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> establishing a long-term relationship with internal and external stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> focusing on the short-term with a stakeholder to build immediate project support without considering the long-term implications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> seeking the ideas and concerns of colleagues for mutual benefit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ignoring the opinions and ideas of your colleagues and believing your ideas are always the right ones
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> building and nurturing relationships with people in other ministries that may have a direct impact on one's work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> keeping only internally focused

**Developmental
Activities**

Level 1 Activities

Look for opportunities to socially meet with individuals who have information of value to you or are in positions of influence.

- Consider becoming involved in local clubs, associations, charities, sports activities, etc., that these people are involved in.

If you enjoy athletic activities, take up a sport (for example golf, squash, hockey) where you can participate with others.

- Let others that you think could bring value to your department/organization know that you have an interest in the sport and ask them to participate with you.
- While “playing” strike up conversations about business topics of importance and interest to you.

Use “free information” when talking with others (e.g., information others volunteer about their interests, personal values, preferences, personal life).

- Actively listen to conversations and identify information that could be used as an entree to “small talk”.
- Use “free information” to prepare questions that will get the other person to expand on their interests, etc., (e.g., What was it like going to school in another country? How long have you been a runner?).
- Review your formal (work-related) and informal (non-work related) networks on a regular basis, and apply the techniques noted above to consciously solidify and expand your network.

Reflection Tip:

- * Be sure to note how this changes the dynamic of the meeting or interaction.

Generic Suggestions.

- Learn as much as you can about your clients'/stakeholders' businesses. (That knowledge will help you and your employees be seen as business partners).
- Know who the key decision makers are within your client/stakeholder (internal or external) organizations. Get to know them and the people who influence them within these organizations.
- Learn as much as you can about your contacts within specific client organizations. Interact with them professionally and socially as much as you can.
- Find ways to keep in regular contact with your client/stakeholder contacts.
- Find common interests that you can discuss and possibly engage in with your customers.

- Develop relationships that are “win-win”. Come to agreements that work for both your organization and the customer. Don’t sacrifice long-term success for short-term gain.
- Use existing contacts to make new contacts within client/stakeholder organizations. Gather business cards or write down names and titles so you can follow up with these new contacts.
- Nurture both old and new relationships within client/stakeholder organizations. Don’t pay attention to one at the expense of the other.
- Be your stakeholder’s voice in the public sector. Represent your stakeholder’s issues, concerns, and complaints within your own organization, and take rapid action to resolve them.
- See yourself as someone who can help your client/stakeholder run their businesses or operations better. Looking at your job this way will change your interactions from transactions to partnerships.
- Be a resource for your customers. Provide them with useful information and recommendations that help them understand what it all means for them.

Reflection Tip:

- * Try focusing on one or two of these at a time. Document your actions and the results.

Initiate informal contacts. Join an association or charitable group or become involved in a community activity.

- Initiate informal contacts outside of the office (e.g., home, out-door activities, clubs), with individuals from the department or other organizations on at least a monthly basis.
- Introduce yourself to at least one new person each time you meet.
- Set goals for yourself to establish good levels of trust and rapport, and at the same time, learn more about your own or other organizations.
- Keep a written record of what you learn.

Reflection Tip:

- * Keep track of the people you are meeting and information you are gathering. Reflect on what you bring to each relationship, as well as the reasons you might be interested in building a stronger relationship with this person.

Level 2-3 Activities

Improve your relationship with one or two co-workers.

- Set a goal to have at least one conversation each week with the person - not including business discussions.
- The conversation can include outside interests, family, sports, whatever interests you.
- Focus on learning more about the person, not their job.

Reflection Tip:

- * Be sure to find out what interests the individual, as well as what interests you have in common.

Take an inventory of the groups, associations, friends and business contacts that you have, and consider how frequently you contact them to keep informed about issues of mutual interest.

- Set up a schedule to maintain regular contact with those who are key influencers.
- Regularly attend networking luncheons, dinners, seminars, discussion forums, etc., at least once a quarter.
- Regularly ask yourself “who did I see today that gave me some useful information about what is going on in the organization?” Stay in touch with that person on a regular basis.
- Regularly meet with colleagues in other business units and identify opportunities or projects that will be of value for you both to work on together.

Expand your networks through existing contacts.

- Ask someone you know in a customer organization to identify and introduce you to other influential people within his or her organization.
- Plan to meet with these new people.
- Use these new relationships to further expand your networks.

Get to know the people you are working with.

- Get to know the people before working on a project together. Ask questions such as:
 - ⇒ Am I comfortable working with this partner?
 - ⇒ What different strengths do they bring to the project and how might I leverage those strengths?
 - ⇒ Is it the right fit?
- Communicate through phone, e-mail, or meetings to get to know your prospective partners.

- Screen out partners who are not a match or gather additional information about people you are unsure of or do not know about from other sources (internal or external) of the organization.

Develop a network.

- Build a large network to develop your expertise and the visibility of your organization.
- Identify individuals whose expertise you can use to develop your own area or that of the government as a whole.
- Exchange ideas and expertise on a regular basis to keep up to date on industry trends, patterns and changes related to your service area.
- Proceed with caution when commencing a partnership where committing to funding is involved.

Ensure benefits are clearly understood.

- Make sure the benefits of the relationship are clearly stated and mutually understood.
- Communicate the goals and objectives of the relationship and how you see the partnership developing.
- Ask for input and listen to the other party to clarify their expectations and address any concerns.
- Develop a plan to do what is necessary to ensure the support you need from each key person.

Serve as an ongoing resource for your customers/stakeholders.

- Every time you read an article or book, or come into contact with information you find interesting or useful, ask yourself if any of your customers might be interested in the same information.
- Make copies of the information and pass it along with a short note to those who might be interested.
- Use following up on the information as an excuse to chat with these customers and get information about what's going on with them.

Know your main customers' business.

- Talk to your customers about their business, not just your services.
- Keep up-to-date with what's happening in the industry by talking to your customers regularly, reading business magazines and publications, talking to your reps and other colleagues, and talking to your customers about the critical short and long-term issues facing them.
- Summarize and share this information with your customers; act as a sounding board for your customers.

Improve the quality and depth of the relationships you have with your clients. The skills you will gain in this exercise will also help to build your personal and working relationships.

- List the clients with whom you have regular contact.
- Use the scale below to evaluate the quality of your relationship with each client on the list:
 - ⇒ 1 = Poor relationship (i.e., there is a current serious problem which has not been resolved)
 - ⇒ 2 = Adequate relationship (i.e., strictly business/transaction oriented)
 - ⇒ 3 = Reasonably good relationship (some successes but room for improvement)
 - ⇒ 4 = Extremely good relationship (many successes, some social contact)
- Identify any barriers that get in the way of your client relationships and identify specific actions you can take to remove the barriers.
- Set a date for improving the relationship with each individual on your list that falls into category 1 or 2. Do any of the barriers that you've just identified apply?
- Monitor your progress against your goals.
- Define a plan for nurturing the relations that fall into category 3.
- Keep doing what you are already doing with the relationships that fall into category 4!

Reflection Tip:

- * When evaluating which relationships to put the most energy into in order to develop, consider the business benefits to both yourself and the individual

Take a planful approach to interacting with co-workers.

- In conversations with co-workers or customers, try to include one personal disclosure in each conversation. This could include things such as your opinion on a specific topic, or your feelings about an issue or current event, or something about yourself or your background that the person does not already know.
- Keep notes in your journal of how the individual responds and of new things you learn about them in the process.

Level 4-5 Activities

List all the individuals who currently exist in your work related network - people you interact with on a regular basis.

- Identify the kind of role each person occupies in your network. For example, information sources, coach or mentor, expert advisor, supporter, and performance feedback advisor.

- Ask yourself if there are any roles you would like to see expanded or added to your network.
- Make a conscious effort to identify and get to know people who can fill those roles.
- Try to approach these people in a social or non-threatening situation.
- Ask their opinion about the kind of work you do and if they could help you achieve some of your job-related objectives.
- Try to return the favour by offering your assistance or identifying areas where you may help the individual achieve some of his/her goals.
- Review your formal (work-related) networks on a regular basis, and apply the techniques noted above to consciously solidify and expand your network.

Reflection Tip:

- * Monitor the goals and objectives of the relationship over time. Each of you should be benefiting in some manner in order for the relationship to be a success.

Offer a broader perspective.

- Give your customer the benefit of your knowledge, and your experience with a broad range of customers, to help them sort out what's happening in the industry.
- Be an informal source of benchmark information for your customers.
- Let them know about trends in the industry or district without betraying any confidential information.
- Offer to do a presentation to a selected group of individuals within the customer organization on trends in the industry sector.

Reflection Tip:

- * Do you look beyond traditional knowledge sources for information?

Initiate and support relationships.

- Bring colleagues (internal or external to the organization) together to generate ideas aimed at supporting strategic alliances, (e.g., funding for a new project, a new technology, etc.).
- Look to relationship as permitting you to exceed the value of individual effort because of combined efforts.
- Evaluate the probability of success or feasibility of each alternative as a group rather than on your own.
- Determine an action plan that will help incorporate the best approach and ideas to achieve your organization's business goals.

When implementing a new strategy or major initiative, consider the impact on all those involved.

- Identify the individuals or groups impacted in a new strategy or initiative and keep them informed about the process.
- Whenever possible, make a personal visit to relevant partners.
- Talk to them about what is going on, tell them about the strategy and assess the impact of major initiatives.
- Actively solicit the advice and commitment of partners before implementing the new strategy or initiative.
- Develop a plan to do what is necessary to ensure the support you need from each key person.

Keep regular contacts.

- Make sure you keep up with the people you have met through conferences, meetings, and visits.
- Meet regularly to find out what is going on within your community sector, as well as any social, economic or political forces that will impact the government.
- Discuss new opportunities, initiatives, and approaches to science management.
- Review your achievements and challenges.

Reflection Tip:

- * Keep your network "live".

Develop informal partnerships.

- Work with others on a project-by-project basis to enhance the quality of your work.
- Develop relationships with external sources, (e.g., universities, other ministries in the public sector), and access those sources when you need to pursue funding, or need access to a specialized field.
- Combine resources so that both parties achieve a win-win outcome.
- Jointly plan future activities and provide guidance and support when needed.

Reflection Tip:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Maintain regular contacts with your informal partners. |
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