
9. STEPS

TO INCREASE YOUR

PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

By Jillian Vorce

JillianVorce.com

*Having a professional network of **authentic**, **productive** and **meaningful** relationships is perhaps the greatest asset we can possess. But we often find it is also one of the hardest things to build and maintain.*



Jillian Vorce
Chief Hand Shaker
The Jillian Group

For over two decades, Jillian has been helping professionals make connections and attain their business goals. An expert at networking and relationship development, she has the ability to open doors and create opportunities. Jillian's trustworthiness and highly positive energy have inspired senior-level executives and business owners around the world.

In 2003, she founded The Jillian Group, a strategic marketing and management consulting company. Her previous work includes her first book *20/20 Mind Sight: Refocus, Reignite & Reinvent Your Life From the Inside Out* and her TEDx Talk, *The Lens of Connectivity*. She is currently the co-host of the podcast, *Creative Collaboration: Conversations with Veronica & Jillian*.

Here's the scoop:

Over and over I am asked for insight, ideas or coaching in the area of professional network development. However, when people approach me about these topics, they rarely see them within the framework of "professional networking development." Instead, they usually voice questions in a more direct and specific way, with inquiries about ways they can find:

- Job opportunities
- More clients or customers
- More referrals
- More donors
- More employees
- More volunteers

Get the idea? See, most people would identify these as typical linear questions more than think of them as network building. I mean, who doesn't want more clients or donors or job offers? Most of us are accustomed to operating from a place of wanting.

Instead of focusing on the end result, it is far more productive and sustainable to build and cultivate actual relationships.

In other words, getting out of the dizzying cycle of transactional encounters will not only enable us to develop fulfilling and meaningful connections but also put us in the driver's seat.

In this day and age where we're all bombarded with information a la the "fire hose method." Those of us who actively build relationships will see our value and social capital rise.

Remember, people do business with those they...

KNOW ••• LIKE ••• TRUST

The primary focus of this ebook is to provide tangible tasks that can directly impact the strength of your professional relationships.

Now let's get on to building relationships, shall we? Before you roll your sleeves up and dig in:

Warning: Beware of your mental chatter telling you that you already know this step of that step.

Hint: It's NOT about what we know, it's about what we DO with what we know.



STEP 1 of 9

TO INCREASE YOUR PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

POSTURE
& BODY LANGUAGE

Posture

Our first step is all about posture. Yes, literally I mean physically how you carry yourself. Do you stand and sit up straight or do you slouch? Are your arms folded? Are you facing people you're in conversation with?

Be conscious of your body language today. Notice what your instincts are.



Extra credit : Notice the posture of those around you. What do you infer based on this observation?



Your Experience & Results

- What did you notice or learn about your own posture or that of others?
- Did you notice your tendency to slouch or to shift your body away from others, so as to subtly let them know that you were not interested or available to them?
- When is your posture best?
- Was this exercise helpful to you?

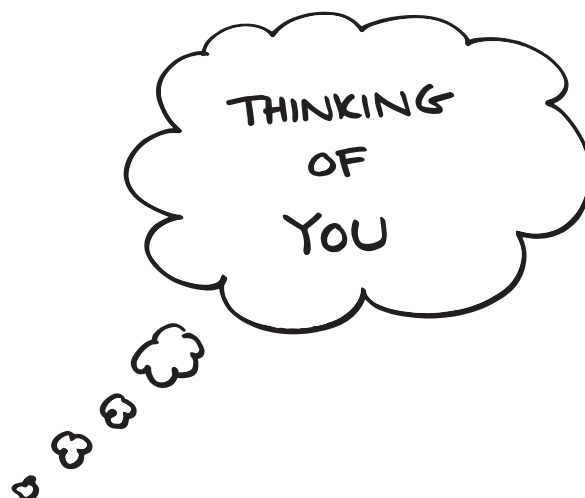
STEP 2 of 9

TO INCREASE YOUR PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

THINKING OF YOU

For this task, touch base with someone you met in the previous few weeks or months. Send a "thinking of you" email, text, card, whatever you prefer. Just send something to simply stay in touch with them. This does NOT mean sending along a link or brochure or anything pertaining to promoting yourself or your business.

The purpose is to move the needle just a bit in the development of this relationship.



You might notice that often times people are taken aback when we just write or reach out without an "agenda." Simply saying hello & following-up for the sake of building a relationship is incredibly fundamental but is also overlooked and not done with regularity by most folks.

This means there's opportunity here because by doing so you can set yourself apart from the masses since most don't do it.

STEP 3 of 9

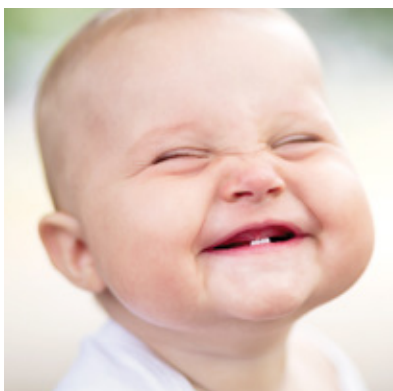
TO INCREASE YOUR PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

***THE SMILE
CHALLENGE***

This is the secret weapon step....a SMILE!

For this step, notice how many people you see smiling throughout your day. It might seem trite, simplistic and even elementary however, I welcome you to try this out. You might be amazed with what you discover.

You will likely see that simply by smiling you can stand out from the crowd, meet new people and begin to increase your network. Yes, simply by smiling.



TIP: Be one of those people!



Your Experience & Results

- What did you notice?
- Were you surprised by the number of people you observed smiling?
- Might this step be one that stays with you?

Extra credit: Did you have the experience of “connecting” with someone simply by sharing a smile and eye contact with them?

STEP 4 of 9

TO INCREASE YOUR PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

***TAKE INTEREST
IN OTHERS***

While you're out and about, introduce yourself to someone you see daily or regularly and learn their name. Make sure when they say their name that you repeat it by using it to address them while chatting with them, this will help you to remember the new name and also make them feel a stronger connection to you.

The purpose here is to engage with people who are often in our surroundings that we might not have ever stopped to acknowledge or engage in conversation with before.



Your Experience & Results

- Who was the person you introduced yourself to and learned about today?
- Was it someone you're often in line with at Starbucks or that you often see on the train?
- How did they respond?
- How did the conversation go?
- Did you learn anything fascinating?
- Discover any areas of mutual interest?

STEP 5 of 9

TO INCREASE YOUR PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

COMPLIMENTING

Pay somebody a compliment. Strive to make this a person you have never complimented before or someone you don't often share compliments with.

The practice is to build up those around you. Identify someone unsuspecting whom you think deserves acknowledgement for the work they do, something they did or anything else you feel is compliment worthy.

Extra credit : Can you compliment more than one person today in a thoughtful AND authentic way?



Your Experience & Results

- How did it feel to compliment somebody you wouldn't typically compliment?
- What was their reaction?

STEP 6 of 9

TO INCREASE YOUR PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

***SHARING
IS CARING***

This task is to share some relevant information with someone in your network.

As an example, spend a few minutes scanning your favorite news website, Facebook timeline, Twitter feed or whatever other online destination you typically consume information from. This should only take about 5 minutes. See if you can identify an article, meme or story that makes you think of a colleague or even someone you recently met.

Send this person you have in mind the link and a short little note letting her/him know that you saw the article and thought it might be of interest or value to them.

Extra credit: Send a link and short note to more than one person.



Your Experience & Results

- What did you share?
- Is the person you shared info with a colleague, client, neighbor, coach?

STEP 7 of 9

TO INCREASE YOUR PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

***KICKING IT
OLD-SCHOOL***

It's time to go "old-school." This step is what really starts to cultivate and cement the relationships we've been developing.

Mail a card to someone today. Yes, I said MAIL...a card. Maybe it's for their birthday, congratulating them on a promotion or new position, for buying their first car or home or even a "just because" card (which is my favorite).

What matters as much or more than the card itself is what you write inside. Take a moment to write something thoughtful and specific to them. It doesn't need to be several paragraphs, just a sentence or two is perfect.



Tool Tip: There are websites that also allow you to customize and send a physical card. A few examples are:

- CardStore.com
- Zazzle.com
- GreetingCards.co.uk (UK)
- YourSurprise.eu (Europe)
- Touchnote App (Worldwide)



Your Experience & Results

What was it like? People often draw the analogy between writing and mailing a card to going into a library. It's something we used to do but haven't done in what feels like ages. It's almost nostalgic...and that's just the point.

When your recipient receives a note card in the mail from you, he or she will realize that you took the extra time to do so. Sending electronic messages is customary these days but there's nothing like receiving a physical expression of thought in the mail. Cards are gems.



STEP 8 of 9

TO INCREASE YOUR PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

***PROMOTE
SOMEONE***

This is one of my favorites.

Promote someone online. Look on on the social media platform of your choice for someone who has shared or posted something that they are proud of and that catches your eye as being of interest or value, then share it.

You can "like" it, retweet it, comment on it, anything to let them know you appreciate or enjoy it and also share it.



Think about how great it feels when other people share your content or promote you, this step is about doing it for others.



Your Experience & Results

- Would love to see and learn about the person or content that you chose to share.
- Please consider sharing it with me as it can also help others by giving them more ideas and examples to guide them.

STEP 9 of 9

TO INCREASE YOUR PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

***INTRODUCE
2 PEOPLE***

This is a big task, hope you're ready!

Connect or introduce two people you know who might benefit from knowing each other. They might share professional synergies or even share a passion for bicycling, adventure, music, charitable work, etc. This means it may be for personal or professional mutual interests.

Send an email to them both (via cc) and add a short but generous blurb about each of them and be sure to include a link to their LinkedIn. Suggest that they connect and if possible, schedule a coffee or lunch meeting with the three of you.

Bonus Tip: Here is the exact verbiage I have used to successfully make introductions:

- “Worth noting as a reminder, I do not make introductions unless I believe they will be mutually beneficial. That being said, please let me know if I can do anything to further support this introduction.”
- “I have the sense you two should at a minimum know each other and perhaps there is potential for some business synergy too. Worth a convo I think. You both know how I roll, that I make intros only when I believe they are worthwhile. Hope you find this to be the case.”
- “In a nutshell--- you're from the same geographic area and work in technology-related positions. Aaaaannnd, you're good people and I believe good people ought to know other good people! Will let you guys take it from here & connect with each other as you wish & feel appropriate.”

Extra Credit: Schedule two separate gatherings or invite a third or fourth person. The more regularly you do this and/or the more people you fold into gatherings like this, the more you will grow your network and become known as a valuable resource.



Share Your Experience & Results

- Did you receive any feedback from either of the parties?
- Did you end up meeting as a group? How did it go?
- What was your gathering like?
- Did you organize a lunch or coffee?
- How was the energy level with your guests?
- How did you feel being the one to introduce the others to each other?
- Is this something you can see yourself implementing on a regular basis

9

AFTER THE
STEPS
BONUS

Remember, it's not about what we know, it's about what we do. It's all about execution. Continue to practice each of these 9-steps and you will see your network expand and feel deeper connections develop.

Quite literally, this ebook was created to help folks like you take action and get results. Because many people have asked for additional support, accountability or "friendly reminders," a follow-up 21-day series was created. There is no charge, I just ask that if you do take action and achieve results, I'd love to hear about it!

**Now it's your turn to share.
I want to hear your results, thoughts
and feedback.**



- How was the experience of taking deliberate action on each of the 9 steps?
- Which one stands out to you as being the most eye-opening or helpful?
- What did you find to be the most challenging?

I'm committed to and highly motivated by helping other people create a robust, fulfilling and productive professional network. In addition to my own experiences and research, I rely upon feedback and the experiences of others and I really would love to hear from you.

Please Click to Share Your Feedback

and use **#9NetworkingSteps**



/JillianVorce



/TheJillianGroup



@JillianVorce