



# Ultimate Guide to Networking for Small Businesses

PRESENTED BY LÚGH STUDIO

Networking for small businesses is an essential part of growth. Indeed, by connecting with other professionals and potential clients, there are a whole host of benefits most businesses in just about any industry can experience.

That's exactly what this guide is for: everything you need to know about networking for small businesses. In this guide, we will first discuss what exactly networking is. We'll then continue on with *why* it's important, as well as a list of our most actionable tips for doing it the right way. We will then finish with a list of resources that you might find helpful.

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Let's dive in.

## WHAT IS NETWORKING FOR SMALL BUSINESSES?

Networking is the act of making connections and building relationships with other professionals in your industry or related fields. This can include attending events, reaching out to others through social media or email, and generally making yourself visible to those who may be interested in what you have to offer.

Clearly, networking can take many forms: anything from attending industry conferences and meetups to connecting with other business owners in your local community. It is an ongoing process that requires effort, persistence, and a willingness to put yourself out there.

Something to remember is that networking is relevant to most organizations. Doesn't matter if you are part of a non-profit, a small business just starting out, or a giant corporation. Keep that in mind as you are reflecting on the information in our guide.

## WHY IS NETWORKING FOR SMALL BUSINESSES IMPORTANT?

Networking is essential for small businesses for several reasons. Here are just a few of the benefits you can expect to experience if you start taking it more seriously:

### Building relationships

New relationships with other people and businesses is perhaps the biggest benefit of all. Treat these as an end in themselves. [True relationships that last](#) develop from not immediately expecting some benefit from the other party.

That said, these relationships can have a long-lasting impact on your own business. You never know what they will lead to. Plus, they help build trust and credibility, which is the first step towards the rest of the benefits below.

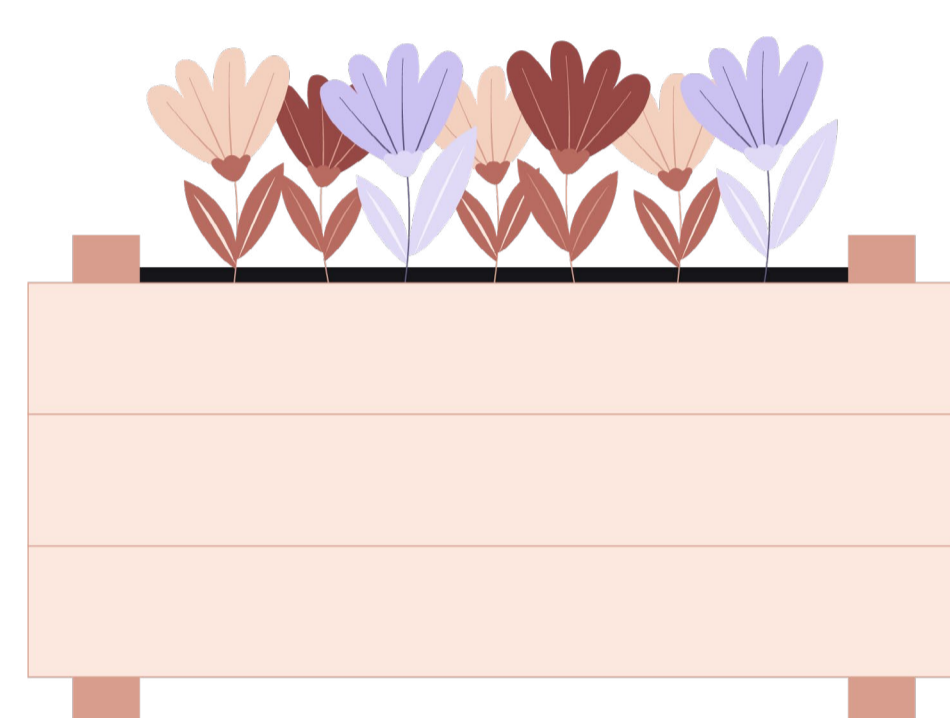
Firstly, it allows you to build relationships with other professionals who may be able to refer clients or provide valuable advice and insights

### Accessing more resources

Networking can provide small businesses with access to resources such as industry information, expert advice and funding opportunities.

All of this is information they might not otherwise be able to find, and it's information that can have a "game changing" impact on a business's development.

This is especially important for small businesses looking to expand. Even just one valuable insight applied over a long enough time frame can make a huge difference. Be sure to keep this one in mind when planning your networking efforts.



### Learning from others

Similar to the last one, networking can be a valuable learning experience. By connecting with others in your industry or community, you can gain insights and perspectives you might not otherwise have. This can help you improve your business practices and make better decisions.

Just about anybody can teach you something. This could either be businesses more successful than yours, or ones that are just starting out. Approach networking with a mind that's eager to learn, and you might surprise yourself with the valuable bits of knowledge you pick up along the way.

### Building your audience

One interesting benefit of networking is putting your brand in front of more people. Take your [content marketing strategy](#) as an example. If you network with another company, there is a decent chance that you collaborate on interesting content for either of your audiences.

In modern-day marketing, this can have a ton of positive effects. More brand awareness and positioning your company as an industry expert are just two. Of course, it's important to treat content marketing with a long-term view. Often, the benefits of content marketing don't happen immediately and take time to nurture, so just be sure to keep this in mind!

By attending industry events, speaking at conferences, or writing articles for industry publications, you can raise your profile and make a name for yourself.

### Adding new customers

Finally, the most directly beneficial effect of all: more customers. What you see with networking for small businesses is that there is quite often a direct positive effect on how many people you are able to reach. Naturally, this can result in more paying customers for your own business.

Still, as we've mentioned before, don't approach networking with other companies as a way to get a quick dollar. The most effective networking is one which treats new relationships as ends in themselves. Keep this in mind no matter what you do.

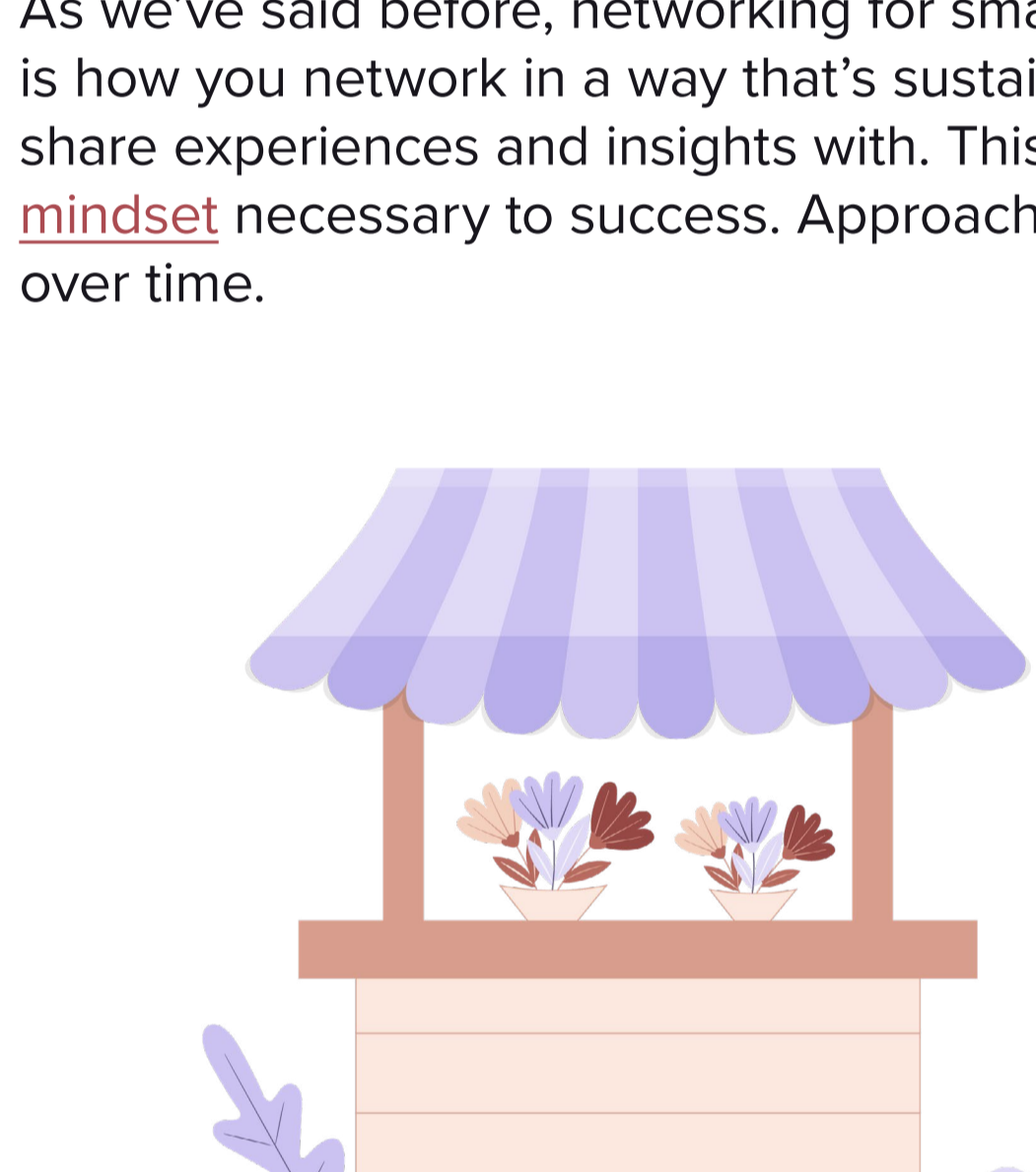
By connecting with potential clients, you can increase your chances of winning new business and growing your company.

## TIPS FOR NETWORKING FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

While "networking" can take many shapes and sizes (virtual events vs. in person, giant conferences vs. one-on-one meetings), there are a few best practices you should keep in mind. Follow at least a few of them for the best possible networking success.

### Invest in it for the long term

As we've said before, networking for small businesses should focus first and foremost on relationship-building. This is how you network in a way that's sustainable. The main goal? Meeting new people and businesses that you can share experiences and insights with. This ensures you are truly investing in other companies with the [long-term mindset](#) necessary to success. Approach networking with this mindset and you set yourself up for better results over time.



### Define your objectives

Before attending any networking events, you need to know exactly what you want to achieve. Think about what you are doing, who you will be meeting, and the context of the networking. What is your main goal? This is where "defining your objective" comes into play (anything from securing a new deal for your company, to simply introducing yourself to five new people). Being very clear about what you want to accomplish will help you to be more focused and make the most of your time.

### Prepare an elevator pitch

An "[elevator pitch](#)" is a brief, persuasive speech that you use to spark interest in you or your business. The point? To be able to quickly distill exactly what it is you do — regardless of the kind of networking you are taking part in. This elevator pitch should be clear, concise, and memorable. Practice your pitch until you can deliver it naturally and confidently. This will allow you to be efficient with your own time, as well as avoid wasting the time of others.

### Lead first with value

You get value from networking by first providing value. What can you give this person or business? How can you help them? Who do you know that they should talk to — and can you make an introduction? These are all questions that provide value first before asking for anything in return. This is how you make yourself valuable to other businesses, and is the start to a kind of networking that pays you in dividends.

### Utilize the right tools

There's nothing wrong with the [traditional "introduce yourself at an event"](#) kind of networking. That said, times have changed. Not only are there networking events that happen completely digitally, but you can now contact people that otherwise haven't heard of you. For that you need the right tools. This can be anything from running ads, to joining online networking groups, to targeting people via [cold email](#). Regardless, make sure you research the best networking tools that you might use.

### Listen more than you talk

As we've already mentioned numerous times, networking is not just about selling your business. It's also about building genuine interest and learning from others. With that in mind, it's important to prioritize listening over talking. This shows genuine interest in what others have to say and gives you more opportunities to learn from people. Of course, this can be difficult to do when you are excited about a potential opportunity for your business. Follow [this advice](#) to ensure you are listening enough.

### Follow up

After a networking event (or even if you met somebody spontaneously), it's essential that you continue the conversation! Otherwise you risk [forgetting about you](#). That's why you need to perfect [the art of follow up](#). Send a personalized message, connect on social media, or invite them for a chat over coffee. This will help you to build and maintain relationships and increases the likelihood that that networking actually goes somewhere. Struggling for ideas on how to follow up in a way that increases the odds of a response. Check out [this helpful guide](#).

### Be patient

Building a network takes time. And if you are doing it the way you should (providing value before asking for anything in return), it may. In fact, [as many studies show](#), effective networking can take more time than you expect. But this is where the best networking results come from, and how you build relationships that actually last. So don't expect immediate results. Rather, be patient, consistent, and keep showing up — regardless of whether that is continuing to send cold emails for introductions or attending networking events.

Networking is a critical part of building a successful small business. By following these tips, you can make the most out of your networking efforts and build a strong network of contacts that can help you grow your business.

Indeed, networking for small businesses is an ongoing process. The more you put into it, the more you'll get out of it!



## RESOURCES

Lastly, we'll finish this guide to networking for small businesses with some resources you might consider. These are either tools or organizations that can propel your networking efforts and give you better results, faster.

### LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a professional social network where businesses can connect with potential clients, partners, and employees. It allows you to build a professional profile, post updates, join groups, and participate in discussions. You might also consider trying out LinkedIn ads.

### Meetup

This is a platform that allows businesses to join groups and attend events with people who share similar interests. Generally, Meetup is also a great way to meet new people. Consider it if you are looking for ways to promote your business over time.

### Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber of Commerce is a network of businesses that work together to promote economic growth and development in their community. Joining a local Chamber of Commerce can help you easily find other business owners to connect with. It will also give you the chance to attend networking events and gain exposure for your business.

### American Marketing Association (AMA)

Looking for training, resources, and networking opportunities that will make you a better and more well-rounded marketer? Look no further than the AMA. Overall, this is a great resource for businesses that want to improve their marketing skills and connect with other marketing professionals.

### Freelancer's Union

Networking as a freelancer can bring its own unique set of challenges. Thankfully, there are great organizations like the Freelancer's Union, which provides resources and support to freelance workers. This includes health insurance, retirement planning, and (you guessed it) networking events.

By utilizing these resources, small businesses can expand their networks and gain access to valuable resources and support. Be sure to check out the ones that most resonate with you, and don't be afraid to research for other resources that might be more applicable.

## CONCLUSION

It's important to remember that networking is not just about meeting new people. It's about building and maintaining relationships over time.

By focusing on building strong relationships and providing value to others, small businesses can establish themselves as trusted partners and grow their business over time. Good luck with all your efforts.

Are you an enterprise, nonprofit or small business looking for help on your website? Give us a shout! We provide a free consultation.

Email us at [info@lughstudio.com](mailto:info@lughstudio.com) or call us at (718) 855-1919!