

# BUILD YOUR NETWORK MATRIX: TEMPLATE

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The Network Matrix is an exercise I created several years ago to help business leaders identify potential marketing and brand-building opportunities within your own network. Traditional marketing strategies lean heavily on tactics that promote brands to strangers, like social and SEO. But there are important and often undiscovered brand-building opportunities that sit within groups of people you already know. This is also often where the most creative partnerships are born (and, because of the existing relationship, an easier sell!).

The purpose of building your Network Matrix is two-fold.

First, it's to give you a holistic view of your network. We talk about the importance of building a strong and vibrant network, but few of us actually have a handle on the breadth and depth of the people we know, what they're doing now and what the network looks like as a whole. Building this Network Matrix gives you a lay of the land and helps answer questions like: What industries does my network span? Are the majority working in corporate, startups or do they own their own businesses? What conversations are they overwhelmingly participating in?

The second purpose of the Network Matrix is to identify brand-building opportunities that exist with people you already know. What are your main PR and marketing goals this year, and who in your network may be able to help you reach them? How can you offer your services and network in return?

## WHERE TO BEGIN

Start by listing out the people you consider to be in your network. I find most people crank through this section by listing people they know from the following areas of life, but move through this in whatever way feels most intuitive:

- Childhood
- College (if attended)
- Job #1
- Job #2
- Job #3 (etc.)
- Friends
- Family
- Friends of friends
- Organizations or groups you're involved in (sports, religious, business, etc.)
- Misc. connections

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Next, take a look at your LinkedIn contacts to identify people in your outer circles—those you can comfortably email but who you may not be in touch with as regularly. To export your contacts from LinkedIn for easier sorting, [follow these instructions](#).

## HOW TO SPOT OPPORTUNITIES

Once you have your V.1 network list down, start to identify brand-building opportunities that exist within this group of people (which we note under the “opportunities” header of the template). We organize these opportunities into five buckets:

- 1. Potential clients and customers** (or people who can connect you to clients and customers). First, make a note of any people you’d consider to be potential clients and customers OR who could connect you into potential clients and customers. For example, I recently worked with an event marketing company shifting to a sustainable event production model. They were interested in pitching larger organizations who shared their sustainability values. One of the first things we did was build out their Network Matrix to get a handle on who they knew that 1) worked for one of these companies or 2) might be able to connect them into one of these companies. As almost always happens, we identified more potential connections into these organizations than any of us originally thought existed.
- 2. Potential strategic partners.** Next, consider who within your network works in an adjacent field. For example, if you’re a nutritionist, you might make note of anyone you know in fitness, yoga, acupuncture, therapy or the restaurant business. These strategic partnerships can be as informal as mentioning one another’s businesses in an upcoming newsletter all the way up to hosting a thought leadership event together. Include anyone who works for a nonprofit or cause-based organization you’d be interested in working with and supporting, too. For the purpose of this exercise, you don’t have to have the details of the strategic partnership worked out just yet—just make a note that there could be something to explore here.
- 3. Potential media and PR opportunities.** Third, make note of anyone you know who works in media or events. If you read through the [A Guide to Understanding the Modern PR Landscape in 2023](#), you know cold pitching is more competitive than ever right now. Identifying any relationships you have with journalists, podcast producers and event managers can help you build relationships with the publications and event companies you’d like to be featured in. Even if the person you know doesn’t cover your industry, make note of them. If you have a relationship, they’ll likely be happy to connect you to the right person within their organization.

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4. **Potential hires:** Fourth, make a note of anyone on your list you'd consider hiring in the short term or down the line. This can include a full-time hire, someone you know who works within a consulting agency or a solo freelancer.
5. **Miscellaneous:** Finally, make note of any opportunities you spot within your network that sit outside this list. For example, you may know a restaurant owner that may be able to host one of your upcoming events or a healthcare expert you'd like to interview for an upcoming article.

## ACCESS THE NETWORK MATRIX

To create your Network Matrix, you can either access this [Google Doc](#) template or [this Notion template](#) (the content is the same, I just have two versions depending on your platform of choice). You won't be able to edit the Network Matrix until you make a copy.

## NEXT STEPS

Once you have your V.1 Network Matrix down, you'll likely have a list of opportunities to pursue within your network, hopefully some of which have surprised you. Here are a few additional things you can do after building out your Network Matrix:

1. If you have a newsletter, add potential clients, customers and strategic partners. You have implied permission to add people to your subscriber list if you have an existing relationship with them. Just be mindful to only add people who you believe will get real value from your content.
2. Keep an eye out for opportunities to connect people within your network to one another. It's useful to spot opportunities for your own business, and just as fun to see potential connections between people you know.

To help you keep a real-time finger on the pulse of your network, continue to update this list as your network expands. As I've found with clients, you'll be surprised by how much you begin to reference this document over the years to come.