

## Growing Your Network



- Do you see conversations with new people as opportunities or just conversations?
- You may not be actively networking now, but knowing who's in your current network and how to expand it is an incredibly valuable skill.
- Active networking can lead you to relationships and opportunities that can help you grow as both an individual and a professional.

## Creating Your Network Map



- Using yourself as the starting point in the middle of the map, start to draw lines out to your immediate network (see the example below).
- From there, see if you can extend beyond the immediate by asking yourself questions, such as:
  - Where do those people work? Who would be there that I could connect with? Then add those people/titles to the map.
- Continue this process until you feel you have a well-rounded and flushed out map.

## Resources to Extend Your Network



- Using yourself as the starting point in the middle of the map, start to draw lines out to your immediate network (see the example below).
- From there, see if you can extend beyond the immediate by asking yourself questions, such as:
  - Where do those people work?
  - Who would be there that I could connect with? Then add those people/titles to the map.
- Continue this process until you feel you have a well-rounded and flushed out map.

There are so many tools and resources to help you extend your network.



*LinkedIn is the Facebook for the professional community. It's a great source when you're looking for specific people in specific industries, as well as a great place to manage your growing professional network. <https://www.linkedin.com>*



Meetup is a great place to search for groups and people who are getting together in social settings to host talks, events, and learning opportunities. Here you can search for specific industries and target the professionals you'd like to connect with. This is an excellent resource if you're looking to directly connect with professionals who could potentially be an Idea Mentor, plus it is a great opportunity to learn about the latest trends in industry and expand your network. <https://www.meetup.com>



Eventbrite is your source for a plethora of great events happening around the city. Here you'll find activities that are specific to an industry as well as innovation competitions you can attend, career fairs, industry conferences, etc. This will also be a great resource for you to visit and connect not only with potential Idea Mentors but other innovators who you can learn and share with to help grow your idea/solution for The ASPIRE Challenge. <https://www.eventbrite.ca>



## Tips for Successful Networking

1

### **Meet Face-to-Face Whenever Possible**

Social media has made it really easy to network, but we can't forget the value of interacting in the real world in person. Face-to-face interactions are still the best way to get to know others, so make sure to take those opportunities when they present themselves.

2

### **Quality > Quantity**

Many people still believe that it's about the number of people you know, when really, it's about the quality of those people and the relationships you form. Take the time to have great conversations where value and learning can be exchanged.

3

### **Make it Mutual**

Networking is a two-way street. When you're engaged in conversation with someone, pay attention to where you may be able to help them too. Think, how can this person benefit from knowing me as much as I can from knowing them?

4

### **Maintain the Relationship**

Sending a follow-up email to express thanks or gratitude after meeting with someone is a significant first step. We all lead busy lives, but little things like interacting through social media, sharing interesting articles, events, etc. can keep you connected with little effort.

5

### **Maintain Professionalism**

Although some of your networking contacts may ultimately become friends, remember to maintain an appropriate level of professionalism at the beginning of that relationship.