



Networking Mini Roadmap

Curated by Vanguard Impact

How to Use This Roadmap

Networking isn't about collecting business cards or LinkedIn connections, it's about building genuine, lasting relationships that help you and others grow. Focus on building genuine relationships, and over time you'll create a community that grows with you.

This roadmap breaks it into practical steps you can follow before, during, and after networking opportunities.

Reframe Networking

Mindset Shift

- Networking = building community, not asking for favors.
- Go in thinking: “How can I help?” not just “What can I get?”

Quick Exercise: Write down 3 things you can offer others (skills, knowledge, introductions).

Prepare Your Foundation

Craft Your Introduction (Your “Elevator Pitch”)

A short, confident way to explain who you are.

Formula: I help [who] do [what] so they can [result].

Example: “I help women entrepreneurs simplify marketing so they can grow their business with confidence.”

Exercise: Write your own intro statement. Practice it until it feels natural.

Polish Your Online Presence

- Update LinkedIn photo and headline.
- Add 3–5 recent accomplishments.
- Follow leaders/organizations in your field.

Be Intentional About Where You Connect

Networking Spaces to Explore:

- Events & Conferences (like the Vanguard Impact Summit 2026).
- Professional Associations (industry-specific).
- Online Communities (LinkedIn groups, women-in-business networks).
- Local Meetups (chambers of commerce, coworking hubs).

Action Step: Pick 2 spaces to focus on this month. Don't try to be everywhere.

During Networking: Make it Authentic

Conversation Starters

- “What inspired you to attend this event?”
- “What projects are you most excited about right now?”
- “What’s one challenge you’re working through?”

Listen More Than You Talk

- Aim for 70% listening, 30% talking.
- Take mental notes about what matters to them.

Leave Them Remembering You

- Share a story or example, not just your title.
- Be enthusiastic but genuine..

After Networking: Follow Up

Golden Rule: 48 Hours

Reach out within 1–2 days to keep the connection alive.

Follow-Up Message Template:

“Hi [Name], it was great meeting you at [event]. I really enjoyed our conversation about [topic]. I’d love to stay in touch and explore ways we might collaborate. Let’s connect on LinkedIn!”

Give Before You Ask

- Share an article, event, or resource they’d find useful.
- Make an introduction to someone in your network.

Build Relationships Over Time

Simple System to Stay Connected

- Add contacts to a spreadsheet or CRM.
- Note their interests, goals, or challenges.
- Set reminders to check in every 3–6 months.

Ways to Nurture Relationships

- Congratulate them on milestones (new role, anniversary, achievement).
- Share opportunities (events, grants, collaborations).
- Offer support. Sometimes just checking in means a lot.

Leverage & Expand Your Network

Ask with Confidence

- Once you've built trust, don't be afraid to ask:
- "Do you know anyone who might benefit from my work?"
- "Would you be open to making an introduction?"

Create Opportunities for Others

- Hosting your own small gathering (coffee circle, mastermind, virtual panel) helps you become a connector, not just a participant.

Reflection & Action Plan

Prompts:

- What 3 networking goals do I have this year? (e.g., find a mentor, gain new clients, join a community)
- Who are 5 people I'd like to reconnect with?
- What 1 habit will I commit to for consistent networking?