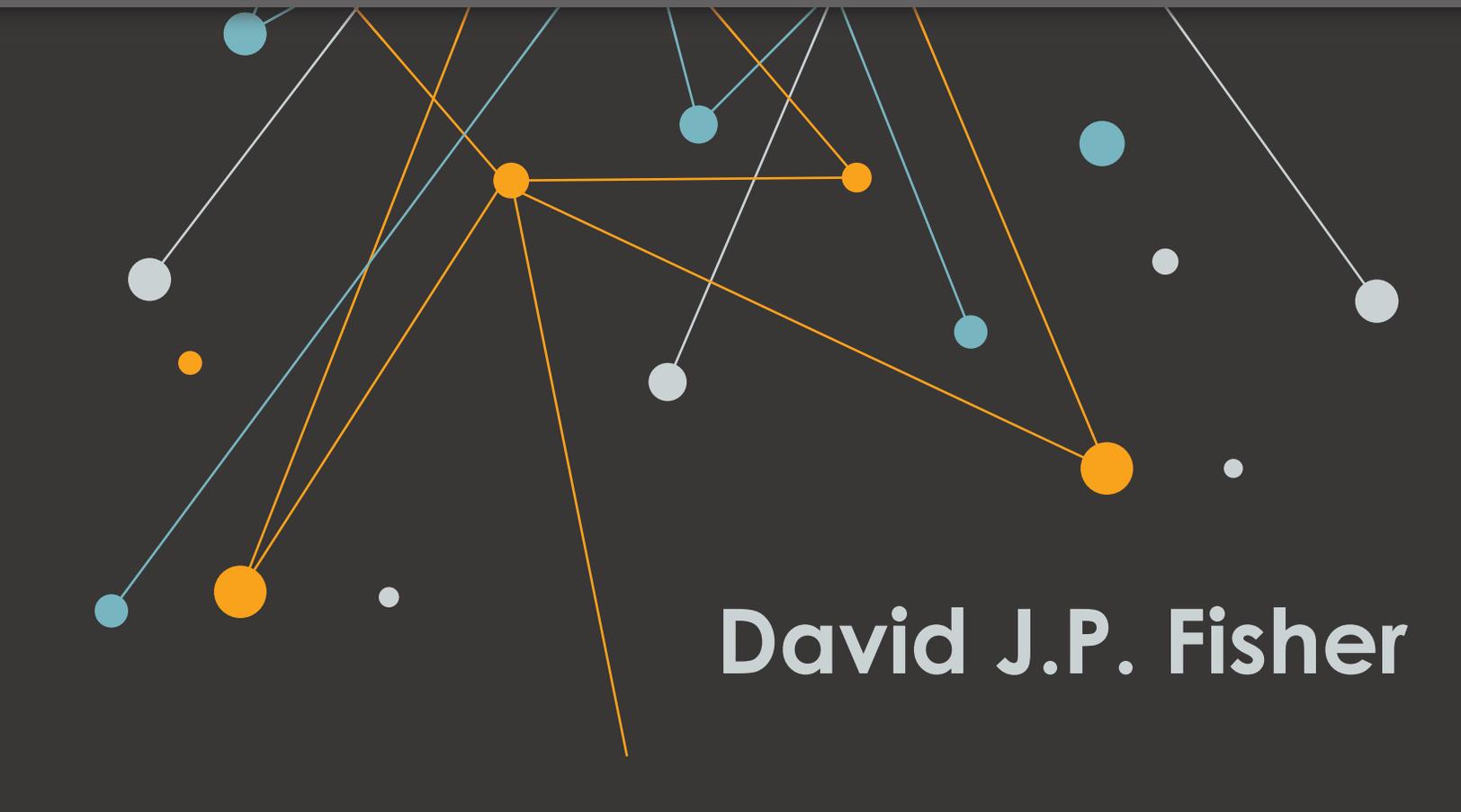




19 Ways to Immediately Skyrocket Your Sales Network:



More Connections in Just Five Minutes



David J.P. Fisher

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The world of selling has changed dramatically in the last decade.

The buyer's journey has evolved. You might have noticed that your prospects have way more information and much less attention than ever before. Trying to cut through the noise and build trust is more challenging than ever.

But if you know how to become a valuable and sought-after partner, you can make yourself an integral part of their process. If you can adapt to the new needs of your prospects and clients, you'll be more successful than ever.

In ***Hyper-Connected Selling: Winning More Business by Building Personal Influence and Creating Human Connection***, I share the ways that sales professionals are harnessing the new landscape of selling. A key step is building long-term relationships that keep you relevant and in a position to provide value. When you are in a position to leverage the power of your network, you can build a more vibrant pipeline, create more engaged prospects, and close more sales.

Building a useful network of prospects, clients, and influencers is a high-return activity. Unfortunately, it's also a little more complex than just making a cold-call or sending an email.

Building and maintaining a network can be daunting because it takes time and energy. We just don't know where to start. It seems like a huge undertaking, and so it keeps dropping to the bottom of our to-do lists. How do we make it fit in our already busy schedules?

What if there were small, simple actions steps that you could take right now? Like planting little seeds, those activities add up and cause huge ripples that spread out and create positive effects.

This is the trick. Instead of being overwhelmed by the work, smart salespeople redefine networking as a collection of small, consistent activities that lead to big payoffs down the line.

Where should you start? You now have 19 actions that will help you kickstart your networking. So pick from the list below and take five minutes to do it right now! Happy Networking!

D. Fish

Get your head straight and create some clarity

1

Outline a 5-minute networking plan

Do you really know what you are looking to accomplish with your networking, or are you just bouncing around from event to event, person to person, and conversation to conversation? Even a few minutes of planning can structure your activities and point you in the right direction. Write down the answers to these questions on a sheet of paper, the back of your lunch napkin, or Evernote on your phone:

- ***What are my biggest professional goals for the next year?***
- ***Who do I need to be connected with to help make those happen?***
- ***Where can I meet those people?***
- ***What activities can I engage in right now to build those relationships?***
- ***How can I maintain my relationship with these people?***

2

Write out your “quick and dirty” mission statement

A personal mission statement doesn't require a corporate retreat in the woods, two days of brainstorming, and a huge poster in your office. Instead, create a simple statement that clearly describes who you help and how you help them. If you can't clearly state what you do, how can your networking partners have a chance of understanding what you do? And how they can help you? Use this simple template:

I help (what type of customers/clients you work with) by/with/for (what specific benefit you bring to the people you work with)

Get feedback on your marketing niche

A marketing niche is simply a description of who you serve. It can be your external customers and clients, internal departments, or even other vendors and service providers. You want to be clear about who you are specifically serving. Sometimes, though, we're too close, and it's good to get out of our own head and ask someone for their perspective on our professional focus. Send a quick email to three people who know your professional role:

I was hoping you could help me with some 90-second feedback. I'm working to create more clarity when I describe what I do professionally. I think that I help _____ with _____ (see the previous idea). Is that clear and does it jive with your view of what I do. Please let me know if I'm missing something or if I'm being too vague. Thanks!

Reach out and touch someone

Invite someone in your network to coffee

OK, the conversation over the cup of coffee is probably going to last more than 5 minutes, but sending the invitation is often the bottleneck. One-on-one conversations are a high-leverage activity that will quickly improve your networking relationships. Even one coffee or lunch conversation a week means you are having 52 conversations every year that could lead to mutually beneficial ideas, opportunities, and introductions. Keep it easy:

***Hi _____,
I hope that this email finds you well. I know that we haven't had a chance to chat in a while, and I'd love to catch up to see how things are going in your business world. Would you have time for a quick, 45-minute chat over a cup of coffee in the next few weeks? Maybe next week on Thursday or Friday afternoon? We could also grab a phone conversation if that's easier. If that time doesn't work, no worries, let me know what would be better for you.***

Extend a LinkedIn invitation to someone you don't know (but would like to)

Social media blows apart many of the old limitations on our network, including the geographic constraints. Now it's possible to connect with anyone without having to physically meet them first. These are "aspirational contacts", people that you would like to have in your network, but don't. It's important to customize the LinkedIn invitation when you reach out to a stranger and let them know why you want to connect – and why they would want to accept.

*Hi _____,
I hope that this message finds you well! We don't know each other yet, but I'd like to connect with you on LinkedIn because (we share many connections/we have the same professional focus/I've enjoyed reading your LinkedIn articles/we both participate in the _____ LinkedIn Group). Please let me know of any way I can be of service.*

Send a check-in email to someone you haven't spoken to in a while

We know a lot of people, and it's impossible for us to keep a high level of contact with everyone all the time. Our brains are actually wired to only maintain 150 relationships on average, so relationships with your networking partners will ebb and flow. It helps to touch base with people every once in a while to reconnect and see if you can help them.

*Hi _____,
How is life treating you? We haven't spoken for a while and I wanted to see how business is going for you. Things on my end are going well, in fact I recently (finished or started a business project/had a business success/ran across a shared connection). What are you focusing on these days? Please let me know if there is any way I can be of service down the line. Looking forward to our next conversation!*

Write a thank you note to someone in your network

When I graduated from high school, it took me three months until I finished the thank you notes for my graduation gifts. I'm embarrassed to think about it now, but I'm so grateful that my mom kept nagging me. Sharing appreciation with your network is a powerful way to bring positive energy to the relationship, and it adds to your networking karma. You don't have to wait until your networking partner does something specific, you can always say thanks for being in your network. (And you can write an email, but it will only take 4 minutes to write this note on paper, use the other minute to address and stamp an envelope)

Hi _____,

I wanted to send you a quick note to say thanks! I really appreciate (the introduction you made/your insight into my issue/our conversation the other day/having someone like you in my networking/your support). It has (made a big difference in my business/given me a new perspective/created an opportunity). If I can help you in any way in the future, please let me know. Thank you again!

Do social media right

Refresh your LinkedIn Photo

An easy place to touch up your personal brand online is to make sure your LinkedIn profile photo looks great. There isn't necessarily a "perfect photo", but ask yourself if the person in your photo is these three things:

- **Polished** – *Would you trust them with your professional challenges? It doesn't mean you have to wear a suit and tie, but you have to look competent and successful*
- **Approachable** – *Do they look like a friendly and engaging person? You don't have to sport a goofy grin, but your visitor has to imagine that you are someone they can have a conversation with.*
- **Consistent** – *Does the person in the photo match what the profile text says about them? If you talk about how hard you work for your clients, and the picture shows you on a beach, there's a mismatch*

Tweak your Twitter Bio

If you aren't on Twitter, you aren't going to get started in five minutes. (Well, you can, but it's going to take a lot more than that to use it effectively). But you can do a quick audit of your Twitter bio. Because you only have 160 characters, you have to be concise, clear, and to the point. Remember that a new connection doesn't know anything about you besides what they read, so touch on the important areas. What you do, who you help, and what differentiates yourself. It's also good to put in something more personal – but leave the quotes and cutesy stuff for when you have more time and space. Your Twitter bio reader is asking themselves, "Who is this person, should I care, and should I follow." Give them the best answers through your bio.

@dfishrockstar
 Bestselling #author of #Networking in the
 21st Century-keynote #speaker-Business
 #coach-#podcast host. Love salsa
 dancing, old-school hip-hop, & dark craft
 beer

Post a status update on LinkedIn, Twitter, or Facebook

If you haven't posted an online update recently, now's the time to do it. If you aren't posting regularly, you are missing out on the opportunity to interact with a large group of people in a short period of time. The five minutes you spend posting a status update could be seen by 25, 50, 100, or thousands of people. If you aren't sure where to start:

- **Share an article that you've found online that is relevant to your industry**
- **Mention a professional event you've attended or are going to attend in the near future, such as a conference, training, or association meeting**
- **Publicly thank a colleague or partner for their help on a project – or just recommend them for a service that you've also taken advantage of**

Take a picture of your office or coworkers and post it on Instagram

We've become a visual culture, and we love photos and videos. Take a picture of your team and post it on Instagram. Or if you have something interesting happen in your office, take a photo of that (I've taken pictures of the coffee houses I've been working in). You can also shoot a quick intro video and post it to YouTube. Whenever you have the chance to humanize your workplace (by sharing something about the people that work in it), you need to take it.



Follow 10 people in your industry on Twitter and create a list for them

The biggest complaint about Twitter is that it's noisy and chaotic and mostly irrelevant (that complaint is sometimes completely valid). But there's also some great connections to be made and information to be uncovered. One of the ways to be intentional with your Twitter time is to create a list (or lists) that focus on your industry/field/prospects/goals. If you don't know how to create a list, a quick Google search will get you the directions. Then add 10 people in your industry to that list by doing a Twitter search of #yourindustry or #yourinterest.

Create a new list

List name

Description

Under 100 characters, optional

Privacy

Public · Anyone can follow this list

Private · Only you can access this list

Save list

Be the helping hand

13

Connect two of your connections by email

It's easy to get caught up in thinking that networking is all about what's in it for you. However, if you flip the script and look for ways to help your connections you'll get to feel good, create positive networking karma, and will be better positioned in the minds of your contacts. An easy way to help is to facilitate connections among your network. It's great if you think they can do business together immediately, but it also helps to connect people so they can build their own relationships and find their own ways to help each other.

Hi Carlos and Karen,

I wanted to introduce you because I think you would benefit from meeting each other. Carlos is (his position), and I know him (how you know him). Karen is a (how you know her), and she (what she does). I think you would enjoy meeting each other and it would be mutually beneficial.

Carlos, this is Karen.

Karen, meet Carlos.

You can grab each other's email address from the cc. Have fun!

Share an article with someone who could use the information

The amount of content that exists right now is staggering, and most of us are reading online newspapers, blog posts, professional development sites, etc. on a constant basis. An easy way to share the networking love is to forward articles you read to contacts that would find the information relevant. It's a great way of providing value and letting them know that you are thinking of them. Most sites even have easy "share" buttons right on the article. Add a sentence to your message that says:

I read this and thought you might want to see it too because (it is on your field/we've discussed the topic before/it might give you some ideas). Hope you are well!

Send an email to someone in your network and ask how you can help them

If you aren't sure where to start with your networking or what to do, reach out to someone and ask if there is any way you can help. It's a great way to reconnect and to remind them about you. More importantly, it gives you an opportunity to be of service which can lead to lots of good things.

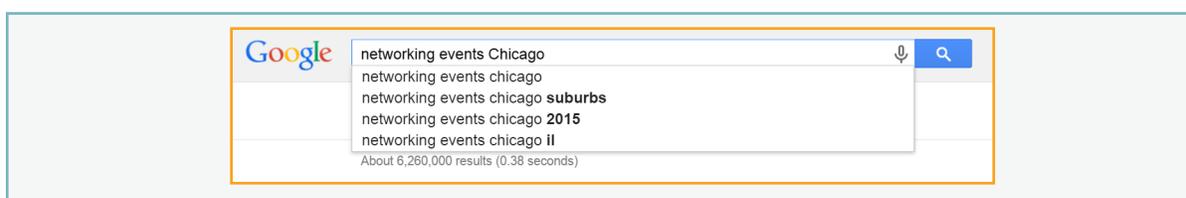
*Hi _____,
It's been awhile since we spoke and I just wanted to check in with you. I hope everything is good in your world! I'm always on the lookout for ways to be of service to the people in my network. So if there's ever a resource you need or a challenge that you are working on that I might be able to help with, let me know. Even if I can't help directly, I may be able to point you in the right direction. Have a great day!*

Find new friends

16

Search for networking events in your geographic area

Do you know what networking opportunities are in your area? Whether or not you are already involved with professional groups near you, it never hurts to see what other possibilities there are. New groups and events pop up all the time! Do a quick Google search for “networking group event your location”. You’ll find interesting ways to add some new blood to your network.



17

Reconnect with your alumni association

If you’ve attended a college or university, you can leverage your connections with other graduates by reconnecting with your alumni association. Alumni associations want to stay in touch with you. And many are focused on providing ongoing career development opportunities, including training, mentoring, and networking. Check out their website and see what’s going on in your area. You can send a quick email to their staff:

**Hi _____,
I'm a (year you graduated) graduate of (school). I'm currently living in (location) and I was hoping to reconnect with other alumni in the area. Are there any offline or online ways that I can do that? Please let me know of any ways to get engaged with other alum in the area or with the association. Thanks!**

Ask for an introduction through LinkedIn

LinkedIn has opened up new networking possibilities because now we can see our 2nd and 3rd level connections - the friends of our friends! This used to be hidden, but now we can find people with a simple search online. When you find someone that you would like to know who is in your extended network, ask for an introduction. You can do it through the internal messaging system, by phone, or a simple email:

*Hi _____,
I hope this message finds you well! I saw that you were connected to (connection's name) on LinkedIn, and I was wondering if you would be able to introduce us. I would like to meet him/her because (reason you want to connect). If you aren't in a position to introduce us, or if he/she is a LinkedIn contact that you don't know well, that's totally OK. But if you could send a quick message or email, that would be great. Thanks!*

Register for a networking event

In the history of networking, "thinking" about meeting new people has created a grand total of zero new relationships. Researching opportunities is great, but you have to actually go. That will take more than 5 minutes, but filling out the registration form and committing to going is something that is quick and you can do it right now. If you are nervous, ask a friend to go with you – then you will both improve your networks. And while you are there, find someone that you can have a networking conversation with over a cup of coffee.

Add your own

If there's something on the list that I missed but that you want to do, go do it! Consider this official permission to go and rock your networking idea. If you think it's a great action step and that I should add it to the list for others to use, email me at dfish@davidjfisher.com. If it makes it into the second edition, I'll give you all the credit!



David J.P. Fisher (D. Fish) is a speaker, coach, and best-selling author of ***Networking in the 21st Century: Why Your Network Sucks and What to Do About It***. Building on 20 years of experience as an entrepreneur and sales professional, he combines nuanced strategy and real-world tactics to help professionals become more effective, efficient, and happy. He lives next door to a beautiful cemetery in Evanston, IL, that reminds him to appreciate every day (and to always be on the lookout for zombies).

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