

## Tools and templates



### Building a network from scratch

Building a professional network is a great way to learn from others, find solutions to challenges and keep up with what other leaders in your space are doing.

This checklist will walk you through:

- Finding valuable contacts
- Expanding and diversifying your network
- Maintaining your established network

#### Building a network from your existing contacts:

- Reach out to people you speak to on a regular basis, like suppliers, long-term clients and other business owners
- Look at businesses in your local area that you could physically visit
- Build a LinkedIn profile and be active in making new connections
- Ask people you know for referrals if you want to connect with someone specific

#### Expanding your network:

- Use Meetup or LinkedIn to track events happening in your area
- Organise your own event and reach out to people you want to connect with
- Leverage your network's network – if you're meeting up with people, ask peers to invite other business owners
- Attend events outside of your area and sector to diversify your network – businesses in different industries can provide insight into the wider market
- Sign up to a mentoring programme to connect with more experienced leaders

#### Nourishing relationships in your network:

- Schedule time in your diary to focus on nurturing your network
- Make sure you're giving as much advice as you're receiving, so you're providing value to others
- Listen to other people's challenges and check in on their progress when you next see them
- Pick up the phone and arrange a coffee if you know someone's having a difficult time
- Be open about your own experiences, even if something didn't go to plan – it shows people in your network that they can talk honestly