
Overview

Building relationships is crucial for finding out about business opportunities, gaining the resources you need, winning customers and getting help and advice. Any successful business relationship has to be based on trust and respect and be mutually beneficial to the individuals involved. This unit identifies the key things that are essential to building effective business relationships.

You might do this if you need to:

1. set up or run your own business or a social enterprise
2. spot new opportunities for your business or social enterprise
3. expand your customer or client base

Build relationships to build your business involves:

1. establishing business relationships by effective networking
2. laying the foundations for long term business relationships
3. developing effective strategies for continuing stable business relationships

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Performance criteria

You must be able to:

- P1 invest time in networking activities and build a network of business contacts
- P2 be prepared to make the first approach when an opportunity to network arises
- P3 establish rapport with others quickly and effectively and make a good first impression
- P4 make sure you communicate a consistent message, including your non-verbal signals
- P5 find and use effective techniques to learn and remember other people's names
- P6 make a note of relevant information you learned about an individual or organisation
- P7 tell people clearly what you have to offer and how it is of benefit to your customers
- P8 make sure that you make contact effectively with as many people as possible in any networking situation
- P9 follow through on commitments to make further contact or take action
- P10 let people know why as soon as possible, if you cannot deliver what you have promised
- P11 recommend other people in your contact network when you are unable to provide a service or product
- P12 find ways to keep in regular contact with new and existing contacts
- P13 identify business relationships that are not working as well they should and try different ways to improve them
- P14 take into account the differences between people from different backgrounds in your business relationships
- P15 recognise that people have different approaches in their dealings with others and adapt your behaviour to accommodate this where possible and appropriate

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

Communication

- K1 how to develop rapport quickly when meeting people (for example by using appropriate eye contact, friendly demeanour and a firm handshake)
- K2 how body language can influence your communications with others

Business relationships

- K3 how to create a good first impression (for example by finding out what others are interested in and encouraging others to talk about themselves)
- K4 how to listen attentively to other people and paraphrase to show that you have actively listened
- K5 the importance of acting with integrity to others at all times
- K6 what you need to do to develop and maintain respect and trust in business relationships
- K7 how important it is to recognise and respect appropriate boundaries in your relationships with others
- K8 how you benefit by introducing and referring your business contacts to others when the opportunity arises
- K9 how to maintain networking relationships (for example by making time and space in your diary to meet or talk with others relevant to your business even when you are under pressure)

Networking

- K10 the range of networks that are available to help your business for example:
 - K10.1 general business membership organisations such as the Federation of Small Businesses, Forum for Private Businesses and Chamber of Commerce
 - K10.2 trade or industry association
 - K10.3 business clubs and networking organisations
 - K10.4 your customers and suppliers
 - K10.5 professional advisers
 - K10.6 family, friends and other informal contacts
- K11 the benefit of a geographical network to local businesses in influencing regional decisions or in getting funding for joint action
- K12 how to spot business opportunities in networking situations by listening to what other people do and finding possible connections with your own business
- K13 how to be effective in networking situations (for example, by taking other people's contact details or business card and agreeing when and how to get in touch)

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K14 how to promote what you do in a way that will encourage other people to find out more about your business

Culture and Personality

K15 how to recognise, learn about and respect the differences between people from different cultures or backgrounds

K16 what makes people behave in certain ways

Information and advice

K17 how to find specialist advice and support to help you to develop your skills in networking

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Additional Information

Links to other NOS

1. EE1 Achieve the goals for your business
2. EE2 Win and keep customers
3. EE3 Make deals to take your business forward
4. EE4 Find innovative ways to improve your business

Links to other standards

If your business grows and develops a management team it may be appropriate to consider the following units from the Management and Leadership Standards.

5. A3 Develop your personal networks

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