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BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES AND SKILLS
DEVELOPMENT
module 3

GROWING YOUR PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

Developed by ALK (Czech Republic)



Stardust
Performing Arts Entrepreneurs



Aim

The purpose of this module is to highlight how building a professional network can help dancers to discover new opportunities and take part in various projects. Establishing new business connections and relationships is something that artists should always work on.



Watch and discuss



[The Basics of Professional Networking](#)



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By the end of this module, you should be able to...

Knowledge

- Know where to look for places where they can attend networking events, either online or offline.
- Understand how to build long-term connections and business relationships

Skills

- Plan and commit to networking opportunities
- Make your presence noticeable by staying in touch with your connections, either or in person or via social media

Attitudes

- Be open-minded and be a part of a professional network that will allow him/her to stay in contact with other professionals in the industry





Key-concepts

What is a professional network?

A professional network consists of individuals who are connected for career or business opportunities.

Members are often called contacts or connections. They share information between themselves, including some that lead to new job opportunities.

They also help each other solving problems and give each other recommendations.

Benefits of a professional network

Being a member of a professional network can help you get a job opportunity. This is not the only reason why people participate in networking.

It can also help you get new information about your chosen career, find new colleagues or employees (if you run your own business), get and offer advice, check out your potential employer or clients.





Key-concepts

People in your network

Your personal network can include anyone you ever met. Each one of your contacts can lead to a new one in the future.

You can start by connecting with:

- Your current and former colleagues
- Members of professional associations
- Family and friends
- Former professors, mentors and classmates

Taking care of the network

Your network is not just a list of names and numbers. You need to keep your connections active. If you don't, it is possible that people in your network will forget about you and you will miss out on a good opportunity.

Keep in touch with your connections, invite them to meet up if they are ever in your city, send a holiday / birthday card and inform them about important changes regarding job or promotion.





Key-concepts

Digital tools

Digital technologies allow us to stay in touch with people who are far away. You can start by using platforms such as LinkedIn and Facebook. This way you can make and keep connections without too much work.


Make sure that your profile looks professional and check your accounts regularly.

Tips on expanding your network

Here are some tips on how to expand your professional network:

- Look for networking events in your area
- Become a member of professional organization
- Make connections in other industries
- Try volunteering activities





**What are the advantages of
networking and attending
networking events?**



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Some of the benefits are...

- Forming new connections
- Getting new perspectives
- Exchanging information
- Building your reputation
- Advancing in your career
- Getting more opportunities
- Gaining new knowledge
- Giving and receiving career advice
- Developing long-term relationships
- Getting advice when you need it





**What kind of networking events
have you heard of?**



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Some of the common types of networking events are...

Casual meetups

Organizers of the event usually rent a table in bar/restaurant for the group. Everyone can have something to drink or eat while making connections. The atmosphere is informal.

Career fairs

Career fairs, also known as job fairs, are large events that connect organizations with potential employees.

University career events

Events for current students offering internships and job opportunities.

Workshops

Workshops provide an opportunity to learn a new skill while expanding your network.

Professional conferences

Organizations and associations throw networking events as part of educational offerings

Virtual meetings

Social media platforms and websites allow people to attend virtual meetups, where the event organizer can present an online lecture or hold a live discussion.



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LinkedIn for artists

[LinkedIn](#) is the largest professional network on the internet. Everyone can use it to build connections in their industry, including artists and dancers. In fact, it is very useful for professional artists.

Artists can use LinkedIn to meet gallery and venue owners, corporate art reps, designers, collectors, and other successful art professionals. This can significantly extend their reach and expand their horizons as professionals.

LinkedIn members can make posts, comment and send private messages. The content should not be too personal as the platform should provide interesting or helpful posts for people in your network.

If you learn how to use LinkedIn properly, it will be very helpful for your career. You can create an account for free and start networking from your phone.



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LinkedIn for artists

- What do you think makes LinkedIn different from other social media platforms? Which social media do you currently use to support your career?
- What rules should you keep in mind when creating a profile?
- How would you start looking for a new connections?
- How would you make your presence on LinkedIn noticable?
- Is it easier for you to make new connection online or in person?
How did this change after the COVID-19 pandemic started?



How to network

Get started on LinkedIn

First of all, create a professional profile on LinkedIn. Give yourself time to make your profile the best it can be. Upload your photo, tell others what you do and mention your accomplishments.

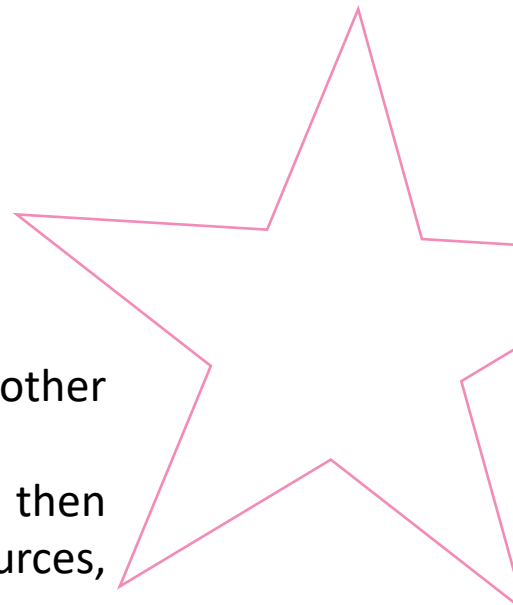
Connect with other people through Groups – select those that are relevant to your art. Once you're in, join the discussion.

Meet other artists

Create relationships with other artists/dancers

Start within your existing network, then go to meetings and offer your resources, tips and take part in discussions.

Keep attending to make yourself familiar and be willing to help others as they will be more willing to help you in the future.



How to network

Be prepared

It does not matter if you work online or offline, you will get asked what you do quite often.

When that happens, you should know what you want to say – it can be just a few sentences about who you are and what are you interested in.

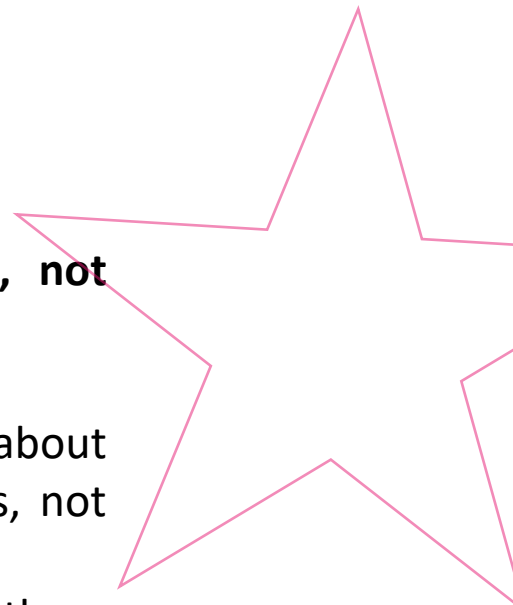
If you catch someone's attention, you can talk about your work in more detail in follow up questions.

Networking is about connection, not selling

Remember that networking is about creating and building relationships, not about selling.

Show your interest in others, ask them for their business cards or contact information. Do not forget to bring your own business cards, too.

Meeting new people will lead to new opportunities, so stay open-minded.



How to network

Search for more networking opportunities

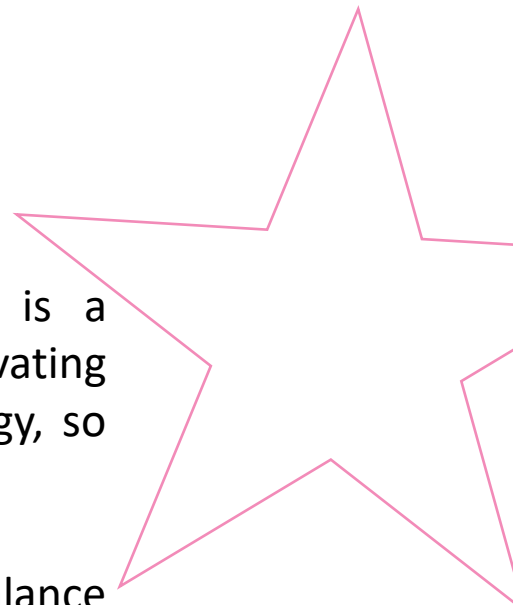
LinkedIn is a good place to start, but you can also join artist communities online, participate in artist gatherings, and connect with your current or former teachers, colleagues and friends.

Networking is not about constant reaching out to new people – strengthening your existing connections can be more effective. If you already work in the art industry, use the relationships you already have.

Maintain your network

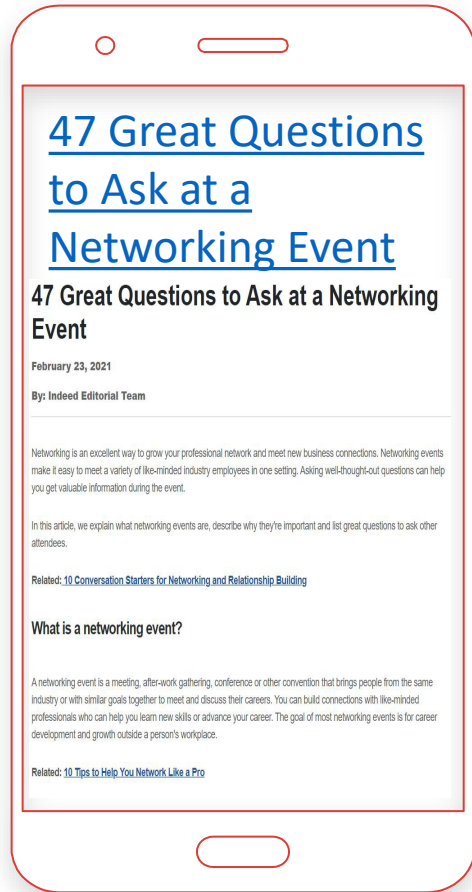
Building a professional network is a long-term process. Cultivating relationships takes time and energy, so do not give up easily.

It is not easy to find the right balance between connecting with new people while staying in touch with those you already know, so try to figure out what works best for you.



Further reading

Get more knowledge about networking



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Action plan

Boost your professional network

1 – Focus on your current relationships

Networking is more about quality than quantity. Think about your current connections and try to deepen some of them. Make the first step and reach to a colleague or a new connection.

2 – Attend networking events in your area

Find networking events in your area, attend and make new connections. You can also try to find online networking events. In case you cannot find these events or do not wish to attend, reach to individual people and invite them for a coffee or lunch.

3 – Get active on LinkedIn

If you do not have a LinkedIn profile, create one as soon as you can. You do not need to post often or comment on everything you see to get more exciting opportunities and create new connections.



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