

Strategic Networking Workbook

Build your internal network with intention

A 12-page guide for lawyers who think long-term

The Networked Lawyer

Why internal relationships matter more than ever

In a profession obsessed with external networking—client entertainment, industry events, bar associations—we often overlook the network closest to us: our own firm.

Yet research consistently shows that internal networks drive:

- Career advancement (people get promoted by people who know them)
- Work quality (collaboration yields better outcomes)
- Business development (internal referrals are the #1 source of cross-selling)
- Job satisfaction (connected lawyers stay longer and enjoy work more)

. The Myth of Organic Networking

"I'll meet people naturally." This works at a 20-person firm. At 200+ lawyers across multiple offices and practice groups, natural interaction reaches maybe 5-10% of your colleagues. Strategic networking closes that gap.

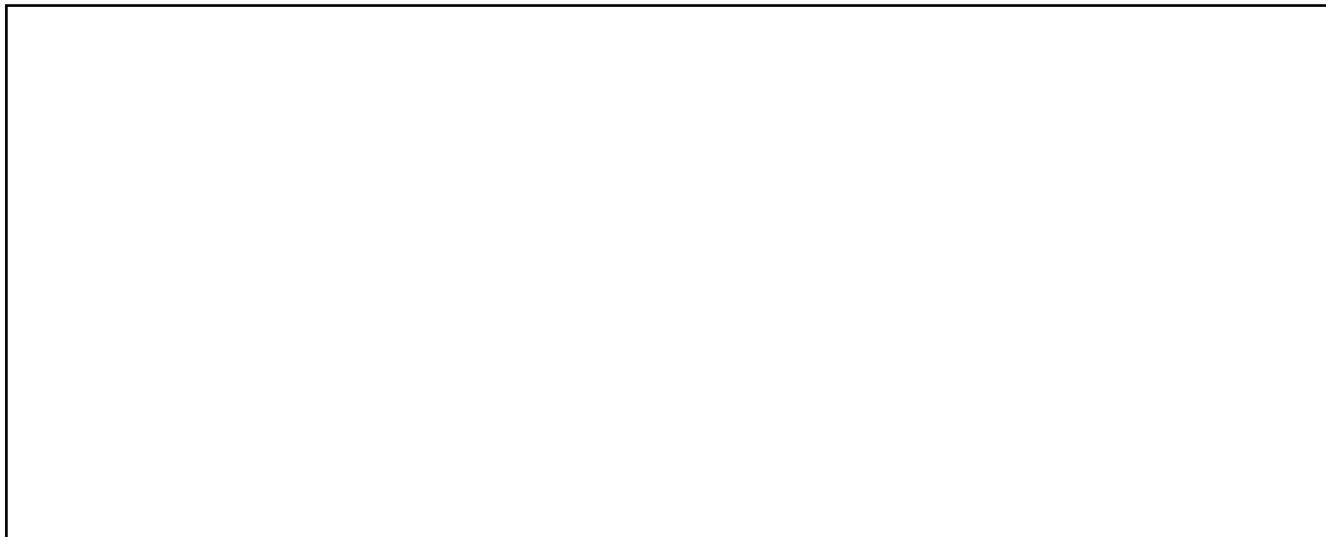
Network Mapping Exercise

Visualize your current connections

Before you can expand your network strategically, you need to understand what you have. Complete this network mapping exercise.

Draw your network:

Put yourself in the center. Draw circles for the colleagues you know well (size = strength of connection). Use different colors or marks for different practice groups.



. Analysis Questions

1. How many connections are outside your immediate practice group?
2. How many are in different offices?
3. How many are significantly more senior or junior than you?
4. Where are the gaps or clusters?

The Weak Ties Advantage

Why distant connections create opportunities

Sociologist Mark Granovetter's famous 1973 study found that job opportunities more often came through acquaintances ("weak ties") than close friends ("strong ties"). Why?

- Close contacts know the same things you know
- Acquaintances bridge different social circles
- New information flows through weak ties
- Opportunities hide in unexpected places

. In a Law Firm Context

Your practice group knows about every matter in your practice group. But the partner in Corporate you had coffee with once? She knows about a client looking for someone with exactly your niche expertise—and she thinks of you.

Ø=Ü| The Coffee & Law Advantage

Coffee roulettes systematically create weak ties across your organization. Each 15-minute chat adds a node to your network that might, someday, be the bridge to something important.

. Weak Ties Tracker

List 5 colleagues you know slightly (not close friends) who work in different areas:

1. Name: _____ Area: _____ Last contact: _____
2. Name: _____ Area: _____ Last contact: _____
3. Name: _____ Area: _____ Last contact: _____
4. Name: _____ Area: _____ Last contact: _____
5. Name: _____ Area: _____ Last contact: _____

The 360° Strategy

Building connections in every direction

A robust internal network extends in all directions:

. UP: Senior Lawyers

- Partners control staffing, origination credit, and promotions
- Senior associates and counsel have institutional knowledge
- Approach: Seek advice, share updates, be helpful without being needy

. ACROSS: Peers

- Fellow associates/partners are future leaders of the firm
- Cross-practice peers become referral sources
- Approach: Build genuine friendships, collaborate on business development

. DOWN: Junior Colleagues

- Today's juniors are tomorrow's partners
- They bring fresh perspectives and energy
- Approach: Mentor, advocate, include them in your network

. ADJACENT: Business Services

- Marketing, HR, Finance, IT—they make everything work
- They know things lawyers don't (and vice versa)
- Approach: Treat them as colleagues, not staff

Relationship Investment

Allocating your limited time

You can't go deep with everyone. Use this framework to prioritize:

. The Priority Matrix

Inner Circle (5-10 people)

Deep relationships with regular contact. These are your go-to people for advice, referrals, and collaboration.

1-2 interactions/month

Active Network (20-40 people)

Solid connections you maintain with periodic touch-points. They know your work and will take your call.

Quarterly check-ins

Broad Network (100+ people)

Acquaintances who recognize your name and work. Maintained through occasional interactions and visibility.

Annual touchpoints

. Your Priority List

Who are the 5-10 people in your ideal Inner Circle?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Practical Tactics

Simple actions that compound over time

. Weekly Habits

- Have at least one coffee chat (Coffee & Law or self-initiated)
- Send one "thinking of you" email to someone in your network
- Comment meaningfully on a colleague's internal announcement or LinkedIn post

. Monthly Habits

- Have lunch with someone you don't know well
- Forward a relevant article to 2-3 people with a personal note
- Attend one internal event (CLE, practice group meeting, social)

. Quarterly Habits

- Review your network map—who have you neglected?
- Introduce two people in your network who should know each other
- Reach out to someone you haven't spoken to in 6+ months

ØÜ; The Compound Effect

52 coffee chats a year. 12 lunches. 4 reactivated relationships. After 3 years, you've had 200+ meaningful interactions beyond your immediate team. That's how careers are built.

Difficult Networking Situations

When it's awkward but important

. Reaching Out to Someone Senior

Fear: "They're too busy / They'll think I'm wasting their time"

- Be specific about why you're reaching out (not just "pick your brain")
- Make it easy: suggest a 15-minute coffee, not an open-ended meeting
- Come prepared with thoughtful questions
- Follow up with value: share a relevant article, make an introduction

. Reconnecting After a Long Gap

Fear: "It's been so long, it would be weird"

- Acknowledge the gap without over-apologizing
- Reference something specific from your last interaction
- Have a genuine reason for reconnecting (it's okay if it's "I saw your name and thought of you")

. When You Don't Click with Your Coffee Match

Reality: Not every chat will be magical

- Be pleasant and professional—15 minutes won't kill you
- You can still learn something or help them
- One awkward coffee doesn't define your networking journey

Annual Networking Review

Reflect and plan for next year

. This Year's Metrics

Approximate numbers:

Coffee chats completed: _____

New meaningful connections made: _____

Relationships deepened (inner circle additions): _____

Introductions made for others: _____

. Reflection Questions

1. Which new relationship proved most valuable? Why?
2. Which areas of the firm do I still not have connections in?
3. Did any of my networking efforts lead to concrete outcomes (work, mentorship, ideas)?
4. What will I do differently next year?

. Next Year's Goals

Set 2-3 specific networking objectives:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Conclusion

The long game

Building a strategic internal network isn't about collecting contacts or gaming the system. It's about genuinely connecting with the people who make your firm what it is—learning from them, helping them, and creating the kind of collaborative environment where everyone thrives.

The work you do in the next few years will compound. The associate you mentored becomes a partner. The partner who took your call becomes a champion for your promotion. The random coffee match becomes a dear friend and collaborator.

Start small. Be consistent. Think long-term.

Your Strategic Networking Commitment

I commit to:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

