

# Networking spring cleaning

by Chi Chi Okezie, contributing writer

Networking is constantly evolving, and it is important that business owners take inventory, evaluate, and assess their networking methods. From time to time, quarterly or throughout the year, measuring the success of your networking efforts is very useful. The benefits include, but are not limited to:

- Identifying strengths in networking and building upon them.
- Identifying weaknesses in networking and improving them.
- Making sure resources, capital, relationships, etc. are being used productively.
- Maintaining ethical business protocols and relations.
- Goal setting for future endeavors.

Unlike the typical concept of “spring cleaning,” your networking does not have to be a chore. As a matter of fact, it can be an opportunity to find insights, innovations, and quality ways of connecting.

## STEP 1: Revisit Your Metrics

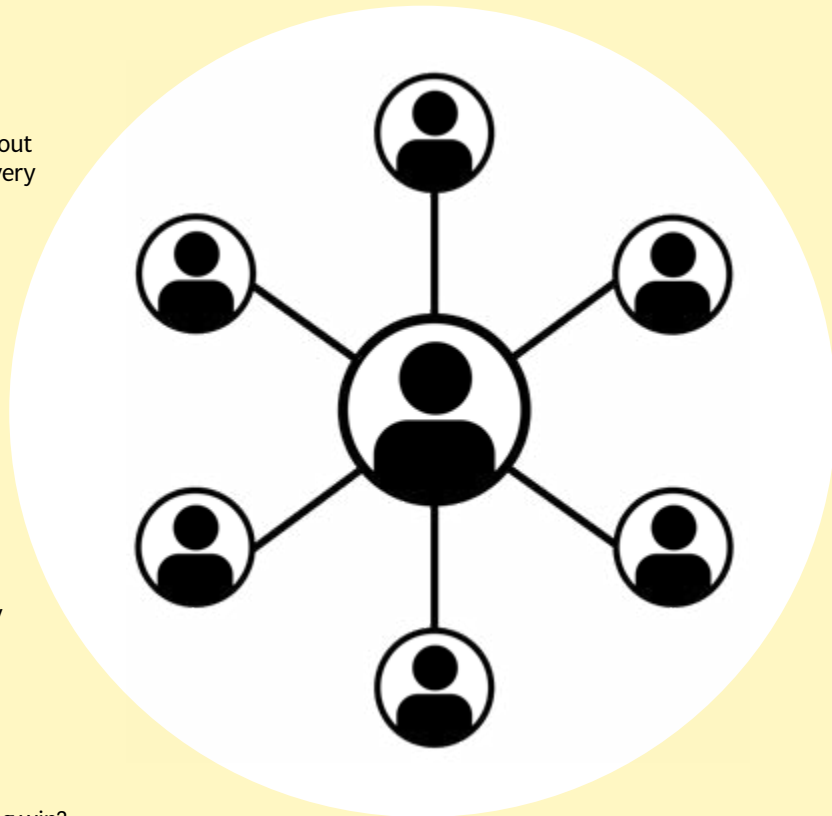
The first step to cleaning up your networking is to review your system for measuring success. Does it involve qualitative, quantitative standards, or both? What constitutes a networking win? What does a learning moment really look like? Are these standards reasonable and attainable? Can they be improved for better efficiency? Answering these questions gives a deeper dive into your networking journey, as well as, milestones and goals to be aware of in various situations.

## STEP 2: Checks and Balances

Networking revolves around relationship building. Developing connections involves nurturing and sustaining them. While making connections, do you have a way of checking in? Do you set up reminders to stay updated and vice versa? Are you aware of key people in your network(s) who can support you and vice versa? Are you fully engaging with your network(s) on a consistent basis? A great idea is to align with an accountability partner. Refer to a trusted colleague who can offer support as well as objective, constructive feedback or criticism. They can also offer sound advice and encouragement.



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## STEP 3: Take Action

Once you have identified roadblocks, and obstacles, the next step is to take action. Use this as an opportunity to make changes, pivot, speed up, slow down, etc. Procrastination is the thief of progress. Be flexible in your planning and goal setting, while giving yourself grace, as well as, identifying dependencies which can alter the order of your action steps.

Be intentional about staying on course, not getting discouraged or feeling as though your networking has been completely derailed. This is also a good opportunity to connect with your accountability partner, as well as garner support from your existing network(s).

Utilize networking spring cleaning to maximize your networking efforts. Follow these practical steps to evaluate, assess, and review your networking process(es). Ask for the assistance of an accountability partner for support and encouragement. Last, but not least, keep a mindset of continual improvement for business success. **TE**