



# Working Out Loud Circle Guide

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## Week 6: Expand your influence

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### What to expect this week

As your lists grow, you'll need to become more efficient and effective. The first exercise this week will help you expand your influence. The second will give you a simple system for managing the increasing number of relationships and contributions.

### Related reading from *Working Out Loud*

*Chapter 14 - Deepening Relationships through Contribution*

*Chapter 15 - How to Approach People*

*Chapter 16 - Expanding Your Network*

Blog post: [workingoutloud.com/blog/the-best-system-for-managing-your-network](http://workingoutloud.com/blog/the-best-system-for-managing-your-network)

### Suggested agenda

Thing to do	Approx. time
Check-in	10 mins
Exercise: Leveraging existing networks	15
Exercise: From ad hoc to systematic	15
Help each other expand your networks	15
Checkout for Week 6	5

### Check-in (10 minutes)

Share how you're feeling about your goal and the progress you're making towards it. It's likely that many of you are having similar experiences and reactions, and sharing them can be helpful.

### **Exercise: Leveraging existing networks (15 minutes)**

One way to accelerate developing your own network is to leverage networks that already exist. When you make a contribution to a large organization, you can become visible to people in that organization, extending your reach.

Play Internet detective and find at least five organizations that are relevant to your purpose.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

If you're stuck, here are suggestions for different kinds of networks that might improve your Internet sleuthing.

*Professional groups:* Are you a project manager? Then take a look at the Project Management Institute. Are you from New Zealand? Take a look at the Kiwi Expat Association. Organizations related to specific professions or experiences are designed to help members connect with each other.

*Conferences and meet-ups:* This is where people related to your goal will congregate in person. Organizers are often eager for contributions - from help promoting the events to volunteering to original content.

*Online communities:* On the Internet, there's a community for everyone. Even clowns have the Clowns of America International online community ([www.coai.org](http://www.coai.org)). Such communities are the online versions of conferences and meet-ups. It's often easier to meet people in the online version because there's a much broader range of contributions you can make over time.

*Vendors:* Many people use a product or service related to their job. The salespeople working at these vendors are eager to introduce customers to other customers or to

prospects. In some cases the vendor also hosts an online customer community, making it even easier to contribute.

*Influential individuals:* Look through your relationship list and identify people in your network who have much more influence than the average person in your list. If you don't find anyone, use the time to play Internet detective again. You might start by looking for people who are already reaching an online audience, including bloggers, authors of books and articles, and other content providers related to your goal.

Contributing to one or more of these networks isn't a replacement for deepening individual relationships. It's just a way to amplify your contributions so you can come into contact with more people and more possibilities.

### **Exercise: From ad hoc to systematic (15 minutes)**

Instead of going through everyone on your relationship list each week, tracking these three additional things helps you focus and ensures you don't lose touch.

1. The last contribution you made.
2. The date you made it.
3. The date you would like to make another one and what that might be.

For example, if you just made a connection with someone and you're not sure how much you want to invest in the relationship, you might set a reminder to make some kind of contribution within two weeks or so. I maintain this information on simple index cards, as described in the blog post in the related reading above.

Go through your own relationship list, and add the three new bits of information for each person. As you each do it, share the system you use.

### **Help each other expand your networks (15 minutes)**

This is an excellent time to reinforce the habit of going through your lists. Take a full 15 minutes as each of you review your lists and share with each other how you maintain them. Are you tracking your last contribution and the date of your next one? How often do you go through them? Help each other add at least one more name or network to each of your lists.

For details on one way to manage your list, read the suggested blog post "The best system for managing you network."

## Checkout for Week 6 (5 minutes)

1. Schedule the next meeting.
2. Remind each other to read the Week 7 circle guide and suggested reading.
3. Ask: “What will you do this week?”

Before the next meeting, go through your relationship list and make at least one contribution.

## Frequently Asked Questions

*Q: But what if I don't want a big network?*

You don't need a big following to achieve your goals. Generally, what matters more than the size of your network is the depth of the relationships with people in your network. Still, leveraging existing networks and influencers relevant to your goal will increase the chances you'll find people who can help you or who will otherwise have access to opportunities that interest you.

*Q: Why would influential people respond to me?*

Your contributions over time are what enable you to deepen a relationship with almost anyone. Keep in mind that most goals don't require you to connect with celebrities who have millions of followers. Instead, you're just looking for someone who has influence in communities and organizations related to your purpose.

## Bonus exercises

### Easy: Something you can do now

Search Xing for groups relevant to your goal and join one. Or, if you use Facebook, join the [“Working Out Loud” group](#) to see how easy it is to connect with people around the world who have something in common.

### More challenging: Something you can do in less than 5 minutes

Make a contribution to an author whose work you admire. I've offered my appreciation to authors on Twitter as varied as Austin Kleon, Amanda Palmer, Gretchen Rubin, Amanda Ripley, and Sandra Boynton - and I got a response from each of them. The point wasn't to get something from them. I was just offering a sincere “thank you” and happy to interact with someone whose work is appreciated by so many people.