

5 ways freelancers can build contacts

For any freelancer, contacts are the lifeblood of their business and social world. The creative and cultural industries are certainly no exception. Here are five tips for building contacts and keeping your business pipeline healthy.



"Opportunities do not float like clouds, but are attached to people."

1. Have your contact details ready

Never leave home without a means to pass on your contact details to a possible business prospect.

While plenty of apps allow you to use near field comms to transfer data between smartphones, I'm not convinced of how effective they are.

Contacts are the chance to elevate you to the head of the queue when new work becomes available.

The trusty business card remains king. Well-designed, good quality cards are widely available – or design your own. [Moo.com](#) provide a range of good value cards, some designed specifically for the freelance creative.

If you are at an event and you want your smartphone to help do some of the work, apps can be useful for scanning and storing business cards. Popular apps for this include [FullContact card reader](#), [Shape card reader](#) and [ScanBizCards](#) – but there are plenty more out there so find one that works for you.

2. Fish where the big fish swim

Don't fish in a shallow pond. Sure, we can't all afford the membership fee for the Groucho Club, but big hitters are big because they speak and comment at a range of accessible events, both online and face to face.

Be proactive in discovering upcoming events in your area that relate to your professional expertise or interest. Think across the board, from socials and workshops to trade shows and conferences.

A thorough search on Twitter and Facebook should help you identify what's coming up that you could participate in. Also useful is the [Eventbrite listings page](#), which allows you to drill down by location and subject to find an event that's right for you.

Make contact via Twitter before you attend and ask a question if there is an open mic Q&A spot. Go ahead: be bold and raise your profile.

3. Look out for potential contacts

Friends, family, school and university mates are all potential contacts or introducers of contacts. Do you know where they work, who they work with and who else they mix with?

They can have a good idea about what your skills and interests are and may well recommend you with enthusiasm.

Also, don't dismiss university or college alumni or reunion gatherings. They are great for re-establishing old connections and making new ones.

4. Remember LinkedIn

Don't miss the opportunities presented by LinkedIn. With over 350 million global members, it is fast becoming a major tool for social B2B selling and business connecting.

Big hitters are big because they speak and comment at a range of accessible events.

LinkedIn is not a 'push' platform, but is instead designed to 'pull' business contacts toward you.

Seek the advice of an expert to make sure that your LinkedIn profile is properly designed and executed to stand out from the crowd. Recommend people for skills that you believe they are truly good at and you will find that they will be inclined to return the favour.

5. Don't leave things to chance

Luck is an attitude of mind and research shows that 'lucky' people are actually just experts at creating and noticing opportunities. If you change your attitude towards life's challenges, bad luck can be transformed into good.

Being on the lookout for new contacts should be hardwired into your approach. You will find they come from the most unlikely of places.

Contacts are a source of business intelligence and offer the chance to elevate you to the head of the queue when new work becomes available. This allows for better workflow management, less personal stress and less unproductive downtime as you scramble for low-value assignments.

As networking guru Rich Stromback says: "Opportunities do not float like clouds, but are attached to people."