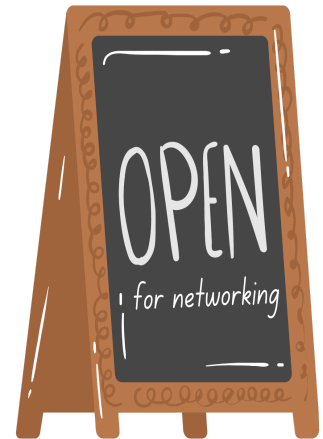


How a Relationship Action Plan Can Streamline Networking and Enhance Your Career

By Jake Brown, Secure Access & Digital Systems

The physical security industry, while spanning multiple facets, industries, and vertices, is wildly interconnected - and the network that you build within it will be one of your largest professional assets. For young professionals or those new to the industry, it can sometimes be difficult to build these fortified relationships. However, when you change your mindset from a passive networker to an intentional one, building a network not only becomes more manageable and welcoming but can propel your career forward in more ways than one. For this month's RISE Resource, we wanted to provide insight into how to build deeper, more authentic relationships in your career.



Inspired by a book we recently read in the RISE Growth Book Club, "Never Eat Alone" by Keith Ferazzi, the concept of Relationship Action Planning stems from the idea of "proactively working to advance relationships with the people most important in achieving your business [or personal] plans." He goes on to explain that at the core of every relationship is generosity and the idea of reaching out to other people to be of service in order to build genuine, mutually beneficial relationships.

For our community, this concept is important for two reasons. The first is that it's rooted in the ability to build authentic relationships. As you progress in your career, having allies both inside and outside of your organization will be instrumental to your personal and professional growth. And, if you feel overwhelmed or intimidated by typical networking events, getting granular in who you network with will provide a strong foundation to build upon. Second, offering to be of service can greatly enhance your understanding of and exposure to the industry at large while potentially opening doors you may have never even known existed.

So, let's dive into what a relationship action plan looks like and how you can use it in your career. We advise using as many copies of this document starting on Page 2 as you need to create your relationship action plan(s)!

This resource is broken down into three parts:

1. Goal Setting
2. Enabler Profile
3. Outreach Strategy

PART 1: GOAL SETTING

Your relationship action plan will be guided by your overarching goals. And when setting those goals. It's even more important to make sure that they are SMART - specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. So, let's get started.

To clearly define your goal, answer the following questions:

- *What SPECIFICALLY are you looking to achieve?*
- *How will you MEASURE your progress & ultimate success?*
- *Is this goal ACHIEVABLE?*
- *How would achieving this goal be RELEVANT to your life?*
- *What is the deadline to ensure that the goal is TIMEBOUND?*

With your SMART goal clearly defined, start jotting down your subgoals - or a breakdown of how you will accomplish your desired success. This should include 3-5 specific, actionable steps that will help you achieve your larger SMART goals. As you set your sub-goals, assign a timeframe in which you will accomplish them - either quantitative or qualitative.

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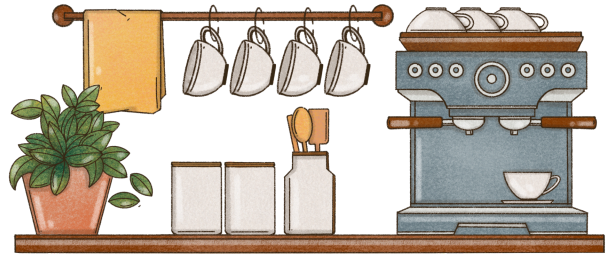
Next, determine who will be your “enablers” or who will help you achieve these goals. Start with the name or description of the person/organization and in the next section, we will build out an Enabler profile to aid in your outreach strategy. Keep in mind, these don't have to be people who you know personally!

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PART II: ENABLER PROFILE

In part two of the Relationship Action Plan, you will dive deeper into each of the key personnel or “enablers” above. By understanding who they are, what they do, how they can help you, and more importantly, how you can help them, you will start to build a strong foundation for the subsequent outreach strategy. Something to remember is that they do not have to be people you know! This can be someone within your company, someone you have admired on LinkedIn from afar, someone who wrote an article you resonated with, or someone who is in a similar position as the one you want for yourself. Take some time to research this person to understand the following points:



Personal Information:

- Name & Company:
- Role/Position:
- Years in Industry:
- Contact Information:
- Description of Experience:

Enabler Impact:

- What level of impact can this person have on your goals (scale of 1-10):
- In what ways can this person impact your goals:
- On what level do you know this person:

Personal Details/Interests:

- Hobbies & Passions:
- Volunteer Time:
- Professional Passions:
- Personal Passions:
- Other points of conversation:
- Areas of common interest/intersect:

PART III: OUTREACH STRATEGY

In today's world, there are a multitude of ways to connect with a person who you want to develop a relationship with. The below points provide guidance on creating an outreach strategy for each of your enablers. Whatever method you choose, be direct and specific in your purpose for reaching out.



Personalization is KEY: After doing research on this person, you should have a good idea of how to customize an email or message to them, giving you the best chance to pull them into the conversation and elicit a response. The key here is to be as authentic as you can (leave the sales pitches at home) and figure out a way to extend generosity to them from the start.

Some examples include: Where can you highlight common ground? Do any of your passions align? How can you help them out in their professional life? Is there anything new and exciting in their lives that you could congratulate them on? Personalization gives you credibility and authenticity by showing that you've taken the time to learn more about who the person is and what makes them special in the desired connection.

The Warmer Lead: Ideally, there should be no cold outreach - think "seven degrees of separation." Do you have any mutual connections? If so, one of the easiest ways to connect with your enabler would be to utilize them. Why does this work so well? Because your mutual connection hopefully already has established trust with the enabler you are trying to connect with. By leveraging a shared connection, a warm introduction, or a reference to a mutual friend, you immediately gain credibility. So, start connecting the dots!

The Touchpoint: Sometimes, timing is key, so it's important to stay connected with your enablers via small touchpoints. Connect with them on LinkedIn, send them an article that reminded you of them, connect them with someone who you think would bring value to their lives, and ask them a genuine question you'd like their thoughts on. The concept behind these outreaches is to stay top of mind so that when an opportunity arises or you ask for their help, you're asking from a place of generosity and well-being. Below are some ideas from Keith's custom Relationship Action Plan that you can tailor specifically to your enabler.



Meetings:

- Coffee/Lunch/Dinner
 - Arrange a coffee meeting or a meal if you are both in the same area
- Thought Leadership
 - If there's something they are passionate about that you have an interest in, set up a discussion with them! People usually enjoy talking about the things they love & are usually willing to assist with

Events:

- Lifestyle Event
 - Shared passion for fitness? Arrange to meet them for a workout.
 - Think they could gain value from a mutual connection? Invite them to a networking event that you are attending.
 - Have a shared interest in a social cause? Invite them to a philanthropy event that you are involved with.
- Family Specific
 - Once you have established a healthy relationship, think of ways to help out their family
 - Help a relative of theirs network, get a job somewhere, write a letter of recommendation for a college application, etc.

**Pinging:**

- Phone Call
 - Call to wish them a happy birthday, even if that means leaving a voicemail
 - Call to congratulate them on a recent accomplishment of theirs/or of their companies
 - Call to congratulate them on a big win from a sports team they are a fan of
- Email
 - Personal email to wish them the best on a holiday that they celebrate
 - Personal email of an article that is related to a professional or personal passion of theirs
- Personal Card
 - Thank you card if they help you with anything
 - Holiday card wishing them a happy holiday season and a prosperous New Year
 - Congratulating them on any major milestones

Using these three steps can help you build your network, create authentic and impactful relationships, and approach your career in a more strategic and proactive way!

Want to learn more about relationship action plans? Check out author Keith Ferrazzi's article, [here](#).