

HOW TO BE A SUPER CONNECTOR



ConnectIreland.com
our country, your opportunity

Delivering the Succeed in Ireland Initiative



WorldIrish.com

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ConnectIreland collaborated with networking and Diaspora guru Kingsley Aikins and the International project to connect the Irish online, WorldIrish.com to bring you tips on how you can become a Super Connector both online and in the real world.

ConnectIreland is Ireland's incentivized referral programme where people all over the world are encouraged to reach out to their global connections, find a person in a company considering international expansion and introduce Ireland. If that company establishes operations in Ireland, then you, as the Connector, will be rewarded based on the number of jobs created.

ConnectIreland was appointed by IDA Ireland to deliver the Succeed in Ireland initiative which is part of the Irish Government's Action Plan for Jobs.



Networking isn't just about face-to-face meetings anymore. Some powerful connections you have may be people you've never met.

WorldIrish.com is an online platform for communities, groups and networks with an Irish interest around the world. It provides an online presence allowing people to connect, share content and develop their projects online, with fundraising, audience development and outreach at its core. It aims to be *the* Irish directory for the diaspora online. WorldIrish.com is proud to be an official partner of Connect Ireland, the Global Diaspora Forum, the Gathering Ireland, Riverdance and the GAA.





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Relationships are now the most important elements of exchange—they are about networking. Strangely universities or organisations don't teach people how to network. There seems to be a belief that you are either good at it or not.

Good networking is about giving, not getting, and building long-term relationships. It's about the person—not the deal.

Kingsley Aikins knows all about the power of networks. Born in Dublin, he's been awarded a CBE for fostering British-Irish relations, and has worked as the director of the Australia and American Ireland Funds, and the CEO of the Worldwide Ireland Funds. Today, he operates Networking Matters, a networking consultancy, and Diaspora Matters, which gives advice to governments and companies on international diaspora networks.





HOW TO BE A SUPER CONNECTOR



IT'S NOT ABOUT WHO YOU KNOW OR EVEN WHAT YOU KNOW —IT'S ABOUT WHO KNOWS YOU

The best way to meet people is through people you know. However, for people to know you, you need to build a large number of 'weak' connections to go alongside your smaller number of strong connections: family, friends and long-time work colleagues. Weak connections allow you to get to know people outside your immediate circles, and are often more valuable than strong connections because they open you to new ideas and new people.

CHANGE YOUR MINDSET

Put yourself in the other person's shoes and try to think about what you can give rather than what you can get.

BECOME A GREAT LISTENER

Realize that the greatest thing you can offer somebody else is the 'power of attention'. Listen with the intent of truly understanding the other person rather than preparing what you are going to say next. People are interested in you if you are interested in them.





REALIZE THAT SERENDIPITY AND GOOD LUCK PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE

But by doing certain things and behaving in certain ways, you can increase the chance of luck happening and making the right connection.

BUILD TRUST

Trust is not an event. It can take an age to win and a second to lose. Or, put another way: business is not deserved, it has to be earned.

YOU ARE NOT YOUR COMPANY

Your company has a website, and a blog, and maybe social media channels. But meaningful connections aren't made with corporate entities—they're made with you.





EXPLORE NICHE COMMUNITIES TO MAKE FEWER, BUT STRONGER, CONNECTIONS

You can't become best friends with everyone on the Internet. It's simply too big. Instead, find sites, forums, and people interested in the same things you are, and focus on those bonds.

DON'T SAY ANYTHING ONLINE YOU WOULDN'T SAY AT THE DINNER TABLE

Most stories of social media catastrophe come down to the same thing – typing without thinking. Remember that these are real people on the other end of your screen. They take offence, misunderstand things, or simply disagree – just like normal people in conversation. Without tone of voice, always try to be clear online.





THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS PRIVACY ONLINE

Imagine social networks like a big networking event in a room filled with hundreds of people. Only you can clearly hear every word said, and the whole event is being recorded. That's online interaction. The way to avoid this problem? See our last tip.

EVERYTHING YOU SAY SHOULD BE INTERESTING OR USEFUL

Most social interactions online want you to 'update' people and say something. But that doesn't mean, like the awkward person at a party, you should say anything that pops into your head to fill the silence. If you want to connect with people in a meaningful way, what you say should mean something.





DROP YOUR CONTACTS A LINE FROM TIME TO TIME

An old journalist's trick is to telephone everyone in your contact book at least once every six months to keep the relationship ticking over. You'll inevitably have many 'weak' connections online, but they can't be forgotten about. A quick, genuine comment on an idea goes a long way.

DON'T THROW YOUR VIRTUAL BUSINESSCARDS AT PEOPLE

Much like in real-life networking, there's nothing more frustrating than a fly-by-night marketer who only wants to self-promote. Tweeting people you don't know about your product is one of the most annoying things you can do. Instead, become a well-known person in your own right, and people will seek you out.





SWIM WITH THE STREAM, NOT AGAINST IT

If you're joining a network or community you're not familiar with yet, do as you would do in any social situation: observe others before diving in. You don't want to jump the gun and put a foot wrong before you've started. Many online communities have their own rules or accepted standards – try to stick to them.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO TURN YOUR DIGITAL CONNECTION INTO A PHYSICAL ONE

You may have had the good experience of meeting an online connection in real life: something relatively common in a small country like Ireland. The power of the internet lies in how easy it is to connect with others, but there's something about that first handshake that can strengthen a bond more than any number of comments or 'likes'. Don't be afraid of making that jump!



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