

Benefits of Networking as a Trade Contractor

By Kaiya Barrett

We've all heard the saying, "It's not always about what you know but who you know." As a trade contractor, in an unpredictable economy, it may make more sense to say, "It's always about what you know and who you know."

Your ability to network with other construction industry professionals should be as detailed and precise as your skilled trade. There are several ways to network and discuss business, face-to-face or digitally. Attending conferences, professional events, and webinars are just a few ways to meet your peers and exchange information. Once you reach a certain level of success, your reputation will garner positive or negative word of mouth to pass around the industry. So, treat every meet-up as a future opportunity.

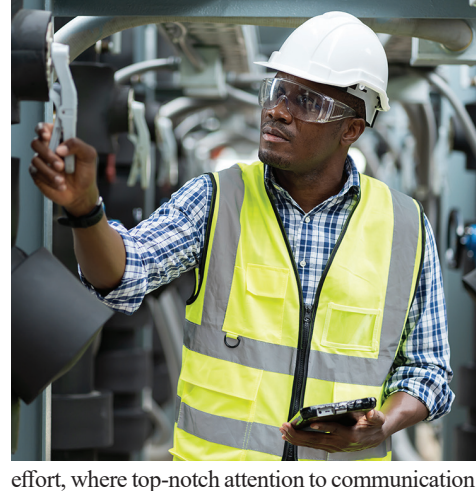
Think of networking as a key pillar of your business and its overall success. There are many ways to build and maintain relationships in the construction industry, and we will go over the how and why behind it.

The Networking Company to Keep
Former employers, coworkers, and contractors are all people you can come across again in future projects. In an industry where everyone knows everyone, maintaining healthy relationships with contacts from the past could become a benefit for the future.

Another tip is to think of networking outside of work. You could make great contacts standing in line for coffee, waiting for an oil change, or at your child's school function. It's not a bad idea to have an elevator pitch ready to go for a brief interaction. The elevator pitch is a to-the-point, high-level view of what you do and how your services make a difference in construction projects.

Networking Has Its Benefits
Going through the process to attract and win new business involves a large amount of networking and building relationships. Outside of growing your project pipeline, there are several reasons to improve your networking skills.

1. Let people get to know you. Taking a construction project from start to finish is a team



effort, where top-notch attention to communication and relationship building is required. People must learn about your brand and company history to establish a good working relationship from the start. Let the industry see who you are and what sets

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2023

8(a) Orientation and SAM Registration Webinar
Wednesday, August 16, 2023, 9:30 am–10:30 am CDT Online
Main Sponsor(s): US Small Business Administration
Contact: SBA Illinois District Office, 312-353-4528, illinois.do@sba.gov
Fee: Free; registration required
Join the Small Business Administration (SBA) Illinois District Office for a virtual workshop providing an overview of the 8(a) Business Development program, eligibility requirements, and program benefits. Also learn how to increase your potential for federal contract opportunities through System for Award Management (SAM) registration, including information that you need for the registration process. SBA presenters will offer additional tips, address FAQs, give directions on where to get further assistance, and answer your other questions. To register for this free webinar, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/8a-orientation-sam-registration-tickets-518989961947>

Federal Contracting: Woman-Owned Small Business (WOSB) Program Webinar
Thursday, August 17, 2023, 9:00 am–10:00 am CDT Online
Main Sponsor(s): US Small Business Administration
Contact: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/welcome-to-wosb-webinar-tickets-482397041537>
Fee: Free; registration required
Welcome to the WOSB webinar series! Are you a woman owner of a small business? The federal government's goal is to award at least five percent of all federal contracting dollars to woman-owned small businesses each year. Join us for training on how to register for SBA's Woman-Owned Small Business (WOSB) program, which helps eligible small businesses to qualify for federal contracting opportunities. The monthly sessions will include an overview of the self-certification process, as well as a discussion of the NAICS codes that qualify as WOSB or EDWOSB. Register for this free webinar at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/welcome-to-wosb-webinar-tickets-482397041537>

Selling to the Federal Government Webinar
Thursday, August 24, 2023, 12:00 pm–3:00 pm CDT Online
Main Sponsor(s): US Small Business Administration
Contact: George Tapia, 610-382-3086, george.tapia@sba.gov
Fee: Free; registration required
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