

How to grow your network virtually

Get ready:

- Choose your online community or communities based on who you want to meet. Don't try to be on every platform. Strategically pick the best ones for you and then use them with the audience in mind.
- Familiarize yourself with platforms like Zoom, Google Connect, Microsoft Teams and any others that people you want to meet might be using.
- Keep your profile up to date
- Use a real photograph on a professional networking site. Avatars and bitmojis are fun but people network with people, and they need to see you to establish a connection with you.

Get busy:

- Reach out to seek connections without a request of any other sort. Connect first and try to do business later.
- Comment on others' posts in relevant settings
- Share relevant content that might attract others to your page
- Consider posing a question that entices others to tell something about themselves.
- Respond to those who comment on your posts and send a connection invitation to those who you don't know.
- Be helpful and answer questions when you can

Get together:

- Virtual Coffee: If you work in or lead a large team, set up virtual coffees among people who don't routinely work together. Use the Ten Thousand Coffees model that resembles blind dates.
- Share your plans to attend/join virtual meetings that others might also join and seek you out for. (Keep that up even when we're back to face-to-face gatherings)

Get Inforum:

- Membership is an important way to link with others.
- Complete your membership profile so other members can seek you out.
- Use the Inforum Member Directory for random networking
- Join the Inforum Speakers Bureau and be ready to present virtually.

Exercise for you and your team:

List three people with whom I want to connect inside and outside my organization. Make sure to build both your close, inner network and a broader, wider network at the same time!