

## *Making a Modern Project Manager*<sup>1</sup>

### **Network to Share and Learn (Part 1)**<sup>2</sup>

**Yasmina Khelifi**

#### **Uncover your narratives!**

In the [one of my podcast's episode](#), my guest [Nahia Orduña](#) talked about the power of networking to grow her career.

Until recently, networking was a scary word for me because it triggered the following narratives in my head:

- It's not in my culture
- It's not my personality
- I have nothing to offer for business
- I don't network with famous people
- I'm not gifted

These negative thoughts held me back from meeting new people, learning from them, and sharing knowledge with them.

*What about you? What stops you? Do you network more easily with people of the same background? The same country? The same social class? The same region? The same culture?*

Investigating your hurdles will help you move forward. Thanks to reading articles, listening to podcasts, and interacting with others, I've discovered the true power of networking.

What I got wrong about networking is that it's not only about building a business. It's about developing collaborations, sharing experiences, and building supportive relationships. It's about paving the way to growth.

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<sup>1</sup> Editor's note: This series of articles is by a project manager for other Gen X, Y and Z project professionals. The author Yasmina Khelifi is an actual project manager with a large multinational telecom in France while also an active PM professional, authoring articles, interviews and a popular LinkedIn blog as well as a podcast with a global audience. Also active in PMI France for many years, she has been an international correspondent for the PMWJ since 2021. We are delighted that she has agreed to author a series of articles based on her personal experiences over the last decade.

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## **Put yourself in the right mindset!**

First of all, you need to put yourself in the right mindset to make the most of it.

## **Use each networking opportunity as a learning experience.**

Networking is often considered inauthentic.

"When you think more about what you can give to others than what you can get from them, networking will seem less self-promotional and more selfless—and therefore more worthy of your time."

- [Francesca Gino](#), Maryam Kouchaki, and Tiziana Casciaro in *Learn to Love Networking*, a *Harvard Business Review* article

It implies listening with sincerity and genuine interest.

During training at work, we were in small groups. I talked to a colleague working in communication and we got on well. Through our ongoing interaction, I discovered he was a PowerPoint and communication expert. A few weeks later, I needed to revamp some slides to make them look more professional and attractive. So I contacted him and he coached me to improve my presentation.

At work, the other day, I arrived early at an online meeting: a colleague I didn't know was already there. In the past, I would just have said 'Hello' and gone on mute to wait for the meeting to start. Now I asked, 'What role do you have?' and he explained to me he was organizing weekly short conferences about innovative topics. I said, with sincerity, 'That's interesting'. He replied: 'I'll invite you'.

I didn't follow up (my mistake!) but he sent me the invitation anyway: and I now take part in the conferences and find them very interesting. I also meet new people.

However, it doesn't always work. For example, I wanted to know more about digital transformation. So, I contacted a former colleague – networking is not only about meeting new people. I planned a 30-minute call, but he didn't show up until 5 minutes before the end. He answered my questions briefly and seemed to be happy to have helped me but I didn't get much out of it. Still, it was worth trying.

## **Come with an open mind and a smile.**

During a governance committee meeting, one of the supervisors suggested having a meeting because he wanted to ask some questions about the project. I knew it would be hard to get the answers, but I thought I needed to practice the tips and advice I've read in articles and seen in online communities. So, I told myself I should listen to him with a genuine interest (and not repeat the script in my head: 'What is the aim of this meeting?').

By talking to him, I discovered he was part of a new initiative I was looking to get more information about. So our ongoing contact would benefit us both.

## **Prepare yourself!**

[Keith Ferrazzi](#), the author of *Never Eat Alone, Expanded and Updated: And Other Secrets to Success, One Relationship at a Time* has developed a relationship action plan (RAP): once you've defined your three-year goals, you can identify people you'd like to connect with. By applying a systematic process, you'll open more doors.

For instance, before a meeting, search for information about people by looking at their social media, and by reading their comments or posts.

## **Talk less to listen more.**

You may be passionate about your work, volunteering, or a new hobby, and talk on and on about it until the other person wants to escape the conversation! Try to avoid delivering monologues and stay tuned to cues and new topics that come up. After all, this is a conversation, not a conference.

"Power, today, comes from sharing information, not withholding it." - [Keith Ferrazzi](#) and Tahl Raz in *Never Eat Alone, Expanded and Updated: And Other Secrets to Success, One Relationship at a Time*

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## About the Author



### Yasmina Khelifi

Paris, France



**Yasmina Khelifi**, PMP, PMI- ACP, PMI-PBA is an experienced project manager in the telecom industry. Along with her 20-year career at [Orange S.A.](#) (the large French multinational telecommunications corporation), she sharpened her global leadership skills, delivering projects with major manufacturers and SIM makers. Yasmina strives for building collaborative bridges between people to make international projects successful. She relies on three pillars: project management skills, the languages she speaks, and a passion for sharing knowledge.

She is a PMP certification holder since 2013, a PMI- ACP and PMI-PBA certification holder since 2020. She is an active volunteer member at PMI France and PMI UAE, and a member of PMI Germany Chapter. French-native, she can speak German, English, Spanish, Italian, Japanese and she is learning Arabic. Yasmina loves sharing her knowledge and experiences at work, in her volunteers' activities at PMI, and in [projectmanagement.com](http://projectmanagement.com) as a regular blogger. She is also the host and co-founder of the podcast [Global Leaders Talk with Yasmina Khelifi](#) to help people in becoming better international leaders.

Yasmina can be contacted at <https://yasminakhelifi.com/> or LinkedIn:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/yasminakhelifi-pmp-telecom/>

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