



# Networking in the Gig economy, as described by Diane Mulcahy

Article by Finpro Canada

In her book *The Gig Economy*, Diane Mulcahy highlights the crucial role of networking. Specifically, in the chapter "Connect without Network," she emphasizes how other individuals are vital in building our careers.

Our reliance on others is crucial for success in the gig economy. This includes people who consider us for opportunities, provide referrals, offer mentorship, and connect us with new avenues through institutions, colleagues, and companies.

Mulcahy proposes that networking can be more effectively approached by applying the inbound and outbound digital marketing framework. In this context, inbound marketing draws potential customers to a company through engaging and pertinent content it produces.

Inbound connecting similarly relies on "pulling" people toward us through the content we create. There are multiple ways to inbound connect: writing articles, blogging, being active on social media, speaking at conferences, or hosting events. Through these platforms, other people can seek out, connect with us, and begin a relationship. Inbound connecting favours introverts who



may prefer fewer in-person interactions and appreciate time to think about their positions and views before sharing them.

When it comes to networking, especially in the gig economy, taking on the role of an event host or organizer significantly boosts visibility compared to merely attending. As Diane Mulcahy points out, this position facilitates immediate connections during the event and helps attendees remember the host long after it concludes.

Conventional networking, frequently referred to as outbound connecting, entails participating in conferences and events with the objective of encountering new individuals and disseminating one's message. This methodology tends to favor extroverted individuals who thrive in such social environments, enjoy meeting new people, and are adept at self-promotion.

Networking, whether for inbound or outbound connections, fundamentally relies on the principle of offering and asking for help. This reciprocal exchange, where we extend assistance and receive it in return when needed, forms the bedrock of community building, a practice that has endured throughout history.

Offers and asks often lead to deeper relationships over time. These do not have to be big, require a lot of time or effort, or cost anything. These offers and asks can be authentic and honest and lead to genuine personal relationships.

Diane Mulcahy emphasizes the crucial role of human connection in the Gig Economy, asserting that success hinges on our ability to seek assistance effectively. Similarly, to maintain a robust and equitable network, it's essential to reciprocate by offering valuable support to others.

Offers can vary from important introductions, customers, and financial leads; to smaller overtures like book recommendations, directions to great restaurants in a particular city someone is travelling to, or a link to a relevant article or talk.

A good offer demonstrates that you have thought carefully about the recipient and have evaluated how you can support them. A good offer is one that the recipient finds valuable, helpful and relevant. It is specific, thoughtful and meets the needs of the person that receives it.

Diane Mulcahy notes that individuals, particularly early in their careers, often believe they lack expertise or valuable contributions. However, everyone possesses something beneficial to offer. Even seemingly minor assistance, such as providing referrals for internships or entry-level positions to friends, can be immensely helpful at opportune moments.

According to Mulcahy, when someone asks for help, they are looking for assistance to progress in their current life, projects, or work. This help could manifest as requests for job leads, recommendations, introductions, referrals, information, or expertise.

To formulate an effective request, consider these qualities: it should be specific, well-thought-out, and targeted. Additionally, it's important to be mindful and respectful of the other person's time, energy, and social or political influence when making demands.

To create an effective "ask," invest time in researching and clearly defining your request. A well-crafted ask significantly increases your chances of success and distinguishes you from those who make vague or poorly formulated requests.

Making requests for introductions and referrals is a common practice, yet these requests are often poorly executed. According to Mulcahy, when you ask someone for an introduction, you are essentially asking for their time, effort, and a portion of their social capital. Therefore, it is crucial to make such requests in a manner that demonstrates respect for all three.

Mulcahy emphasizes that individuals within a network are generally willing to help. Therefore, when making a request, it's crucial to be perceived as someone worthy of assistance by being judicious, thoughtful, and precise in your ask.

Maintaining your network. The final step of connecting is maintaining the good network that you spent time and effort building. The easiest way to do this is to implement some sort of system that will help you connect and track those connections. You need to implement any system that helps you reach out and continue cultivating your connections.

For Mulcahy, connecting with the right people is critical to succeed in the Gig Economy. Other people are our greatest sources of ideas, opportunities, and referrals. In the gig economy, individuals must proactively create their own opportunities and anticipate transitioning between various jobs, gigs, and projects. Finding ways to feel comfortable connecting with others is essential to our success.

Building connections with others is vital for fostering new opportunities and personal development. To achieve this, consider the following:

- Inbound and Outbound Connecting.
- Offers and asks I make to others
- Maintain the network that you have built.