



## Centers of Influence

You have several Centers of Influence in your professional network. You may not realize how influential they are because possibly you weren't strategic about your career as you are now. YOU may even be considered a Center of Influence by others. Complete the following worksheet to identify who they are and then write or call them directly to connect with them right away.

Centers of Influence are people who like and respect you and who come in contact with enough people to be able to regularly refer you to the right people. They are natural “bridgers,” people who know lots of other people and who love to put people together. Connecting with your Centers of Influence and letting them know you are looking for a new opportunity or new clients is a powerful gutsy move you can make – because you are getting access to a huge pipeline of other people’s connections.

Make a list of people who are considered “bridgers” that already know, like and trust you, who know and come in contact with lots of other people:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

E-mail them and say:

“Hi <first name>, it’s been a long time since we caught up. I’d love to hear what you’re up to and let you in on what’s going on for me. How about coffee, my treat, or virtual coffee date sometime? Are you available on any of these dates: \_\_\_\_\_. Let me know when’s good for you and we’ll make it happen.

*How you say it, means everything*

Here’s an e-mail I received from a reader who hit the In Our Shoes website It’s short, to the point and unassuming. She did not know me. I have never met her. I reached out to her directly, asked how I could help, we met for coffee which led to an introduction to a friend of mine who had heard of a job opportunity that fit her credentials. 1-2-3 done. All from her sending me this one 30-second e-mail!

Assume most people like me, will want to help you. Not everyone will, but authentic Centers of Influence thrive on bringing people together – leverage that!

*Dear Marisa:*

*"From reading your articles in your career column and " In Our Shoes" content, I think that you are someone I should be networking with.*

*Would you have a few minutes in the next few weeks to speak? Many thanks in advance." Sandy*

E-mail to someone running a function you are interested in pursuing:

Hi John:

"I work in the XYZ department as <insert your expertise>. Dropping a line to see if you would be willing to meet with me sometime. I'm interested in learning more of how the XYZ function that you lead, operates here in the firm. Perhaps we can meet for a quick lunch, my treat? "

Be prepared for rejection and to receive back. Ask for permission to follow up with them later:

"Sorry, it's just not the right time."

That's ok. You can answer with:

"No worries, would it be alright if I checked back in later?"

This puts hair on your back and really makes you want something even more. Find someone else in the meantime and do not get discouraged. Make a commitment to dedicating two hours a week reaching out and finding new business contacts. It takes seconds to make a connection with someone. Consider it done. 😊