



Building Internal Relationships

MODULE 8: THE FIRST 90 DAYS (LESSON 2 OF 4)

Your internal network is a stronger predictor of career advancement than your performance reviews.

Research from Harvard Business Review confirms that who you know inside the company matters more than how well you execute your tasks. While technical skills ensure survival, relationships act as the necessary multiplier for long-term growth and promotion.

*Source: Harvard Business Review /
Internal Capital Research*

The 90-Day Relationship Roadmap



"This roadmap outlines the systematic expansion of social capital from the core outward."
Neue Haas Grotesk Display Pro in Cool Charcoal.

The Framework: Relationships Compound



The Relationship Rings Model

Networking is not random; it is a concentric process starting from the center and moving outward. The goal is to establish the core operational relationships first before expanding to the strategic edge.

Key Insight: Invest early to reap rewards for years.

Phase 1: Secure Your Inner Circle (Weeks 1-2)

The Goal: Survival

You need these people to execute your daily job effectively. Focus on information flow and role clarity.

Who to Target

- Your direct manager
- Immediate teammates
- Your manager's other direct reports

AI Application 1: Coffee Chat Question Generator

Use this tool to generate context-aware questions for your immediate team. It helps break the ice without feeling transactional.

Example Output: "What is the one historical context about this project that isn't in the documentation?"

Phase 2: Expand to the Extended Team (Weeks 3-6)

The Goal: Cross-Functional Influence

The best opportunities often come from outside your immediate silo. Expand your visibility.

Who to Target

- Cross-functional partners you work with
- Key stakeholders who influence your work
- People your manager mentions frequently

AI Application 2: Stakeholder Prioritizer

Use this tool to sort the noise and identify who matters most in the wider organization based on project impact and influence.



Phase 3: Build a Strategic Network (Weeks 6-12)



The Goal: Career Acceleration

Address the invisible lines of influence. This requires navigating office politics not as manipulation, but as awareness.

Who to Target

- Senior leaders (Potential Sponsors)
- Informal influencers (Power without titles)
- People currently holding roles you aspire to

AI Application 4: Office Politics Navigator

Use this tool to decode unwritten rules and map the invisible lines of influence within the senior leadership team.

The Critical Distinction: Mentors vs. Sponsors

Dimension	MENTOR	SPONSOR
Primary Role	Advises you	Advocates for you
Visibility	Private conversations	Public endorsements
Candidate Pool	Anyone with experience	Senior leaders with influence
Availability	Easier to find	Rare; must be earned

Key Insight: You need both. Mentors provide perspective; Sponsors open doors when you aren't in the room.

Strategy: Earning Sponsorship and Mentorship

Identify

Locate 2 potential mentors and 1 potential sponsor based on career trajectory.

Build Goodwill

Give before you ask. Sponsors require you to be excellent and trustworthy before they stake their reputation on you.

The Outreach

Don't ask for a job; ask for perspective. Use low-pressure inquiries.

AI Application 3: Mentor Outreach Drafter

Use this tool to craft perfect, concise outreach messages that respect a senior leader's time while maximizing response rates.

Tactical Drill: The Coffee Chat Strategy

5

The Rule of 5

Schedule 5 coffee chats in your first month. Do not ask for favors. Use these chats to learn, connect, and build deposits in the 'relationship bank'. You will need to make withdrawals later.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						Coffee Chat 1
		Coffee Chat 2				
			Coffee Chat 3			Coffee Chat 4
				Coffee Chat 4		
			Coffee Chat 5			

Tool Focus: The Stakeholder Map

Exercise: Audit your current ecosystem using this framework.

Stakeholder Name	Role / Title	Ring (1, 2, or 3)	Relationship Quality Score (1-5)	Next Action Step

The 'First 90 Days' AI Toolkit

Technology as the enabler of human connection.



Coffee Chat Generator

Break the ice with immediate teams using context-aware questions.



Stakeholder Prioritizer

Identify key players in the extended network amidst the noise.



Mentor Outreach Drafter

Craft the perfect 'ask' for senior leaders.



Office Politics Navigator

Decode influence maps and unwritten rules.

Key Takeaways

01.

Relationships > Skills

Your network is the foundation of information flow and promotion. Technical skills are just the baseline.

02.

Work the Rings

Build from the inside out. Secure survival (Inner Circle) before chasing growth (Extended) or acceleration (Strategic).

03.

Sponsors Over Mentors

You need both, but sponsors open doors mentors can't. Sponsorship is earned through visibility and excellence.

04.

Reciprocity

Give before you ask. Build goodwill early so you have capital to spend when you need it.

Immediate Action Plan



Map your **stakeholder rings** using the **Worksheet framework**.



Schedule **5 coffee chats** in your **first month**.



Identify 2 potential mentors and **1** potential **sponsor**.



Relationships Compound.

The connections you build in your first 90 days create the foundation for everything that follows. Invest early.