

MANAGEMENT

Networking

Globalise Section 7 Topic 6

The RETAILER programme aims to provide practical resources for independent retailers in the Eastern region, backed by the support of intermediate mentors and the RETAILER website www.independent-retailer.com

The RETAILER programme is supported financially by the European Social fund (ESF). Elements of the RETAILER programme build upon the APU SESAME programme. If you are interested in joining the RETAILER programme, please complete and return the form at the back of this document.

This RETAILER topic is based on Topic 6, *Networking*, from Section 7, *Resources*, of the SESAME Globalise materials.

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Topic 6 Networking

Networking can best be described as the process of creating, developing and using personal contacts for:

- the benefit of your business
- mutual benefit.

As a small business owner/manager, networking can be of enormous benefit to your company. By meeting new people you will be able to:

- get to know people who can help you and your business
- get to know the people they know who can help you and your business
- get to know people whom you can help
- share ideas and pool resources
- create new opportunities.

Effective networking can save you time and money, help you to close new and lucrative deals and avoid easy-to-make mistakes, especially when you are moving into a new venture like trading internationally.

If you are fortunate, you can also make some good friends as well as develop useful business contacts.

I find that
the harder I work
the more luck I
seem to have ...

**Thomas
Jefferson**

Help for your business

Just about everyone you know will either be able to help your business, or know someone who will be able to help your business. The help may not be immediately obvious, in that most people are unlikely to offer to work for you free of charge, or hand you a blank cheque to spend as you please. But, for a small business owner/manager help can come in many different forms and can include:

- general information – about potential customers, suppliers, what the competition is up to, tricky procedures, legislation, rules and regulations etc.
- specific information about suppliers to avoid, hard-working potential employees, joint ventures, volume- buying discounts, sharing resources etc.

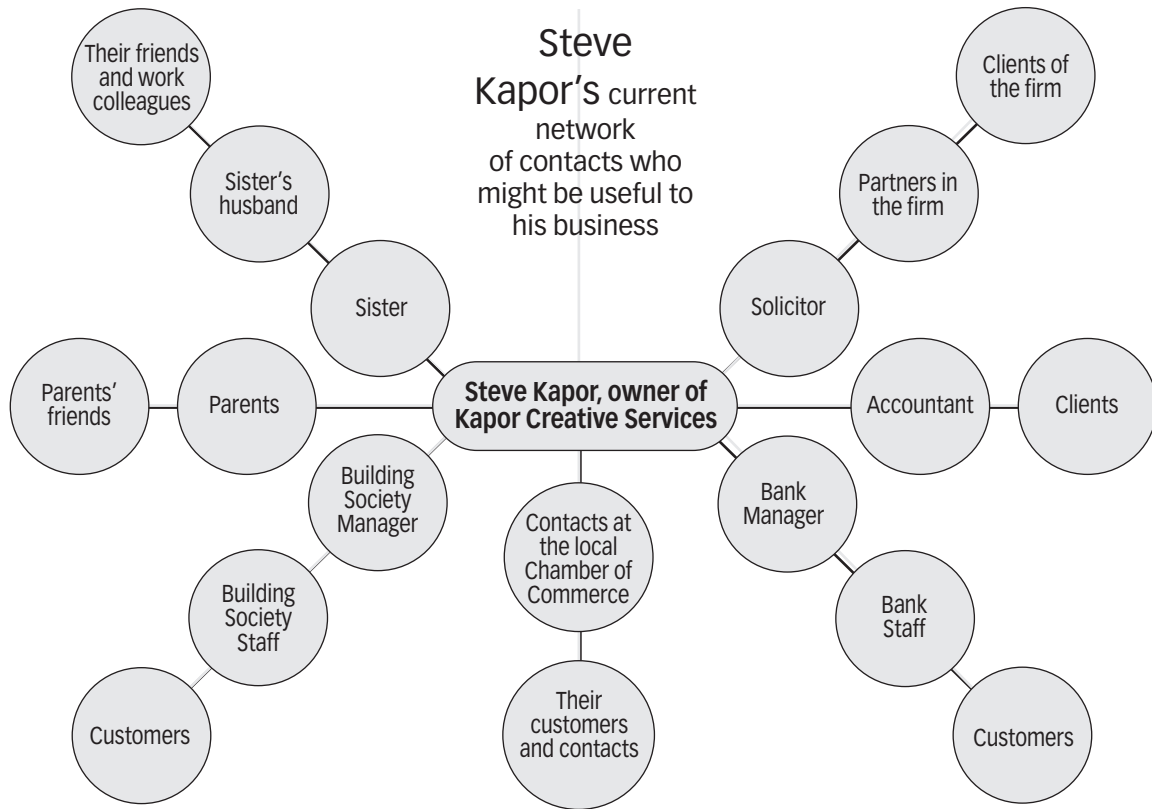
Making new contacts

In addition to the people you already know who may be able to help your business (or who know others who can help your business), there are many more people just waiting to network with you so they, too, can give and receive help. Here are some suggestions as to how you can enlarge your own business network and make some new contacts:

- Join your local Chamber of Commerce. This is a good place to get to know other entrepreneurs. Go to www.britishchambers.org.uk/internet_home_page.htm or look in your local telephone directory for details of your local Chamber.
- Go to the Business Link website at www.businesslink.org or look in your local telephone directory for details of your local Business Link office. They hold regular meetings for owner/managers of small and medium-sized businesses.
- Join the Federation of Small Businesses at www.fsb.org.uk which is the largest lobby group for small businesses in the UK.
- If you are a member of a professional organisation such as, for example, the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development, go along to their meetings. You might even feel that you could volunteer to be a Committee Member which, in turn, would help you to get to know lots more people.

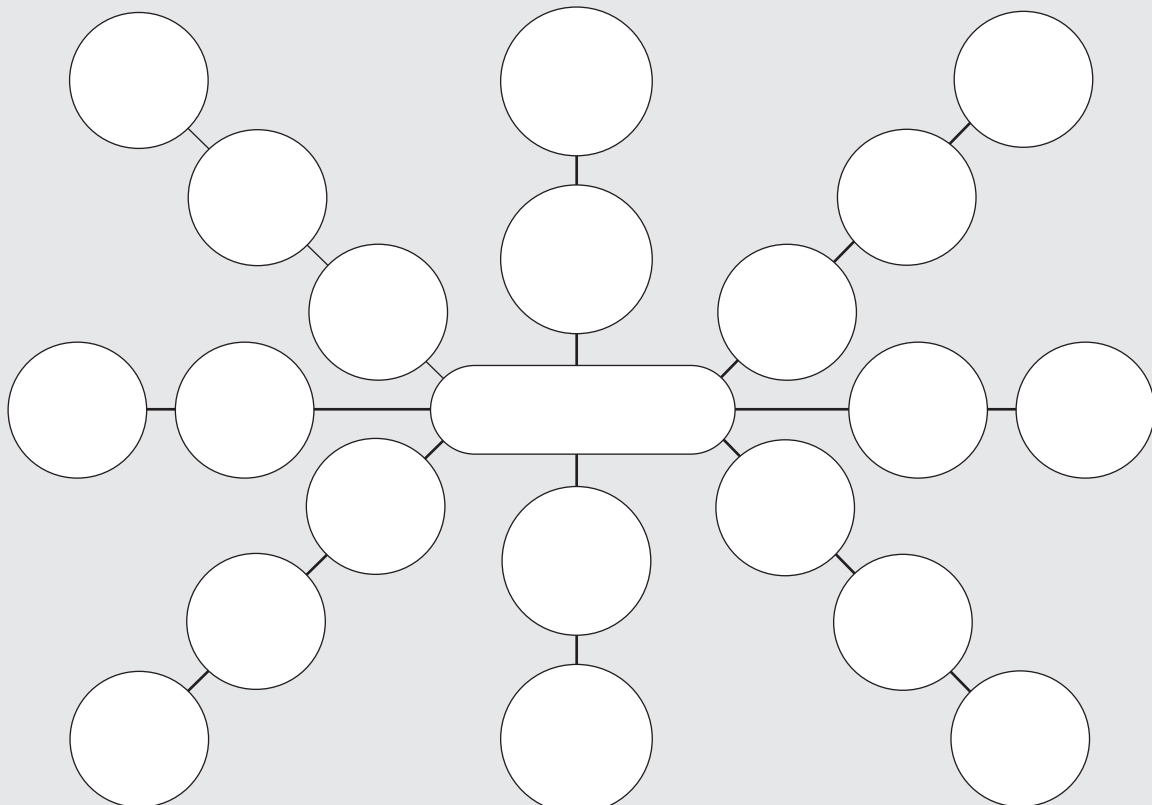
Your existing network

The diagram on the next page illustrates the existing network for a small graphic design company owned by Steve Kapor, which is based in Wales, and which employs just two people.



Check Point

Use this check point to help you to identify the contacts who currently make up your business network. Follow the example in the diagram above and write your own name in the centre rectangle, then add all your existing contacts. Then, think about how you can further develop and expand your network.



Now that you've seen some of the RETAILER materials, would you like to benefit from the RETAILER programme?

Through the RETAILER programme, Anglia Polytechnic University offers Till Side Training for independent retailers in Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, Norfolk and Essex employing less than 250 people.

The training is backed by practical materials, relevant resources, the support of experienced mentors and the RETAILER website.

Retailing is a 'people' business. Supermarkets, department stores and chains spend a significant amount of time and resources training their staff. Product knowledge, customer service, merchandising and selling are prerequisites for working in these companies, but training also:

- demonstrates commitment to their employees and their professional development (for many employees, the offer of training is the reason for deciding which company to work for)
- forms the principal rationale that supports all quality initiatives from simple Quality Control right up to Total Quality Management.

The RETAILER programme is supported financially by the European Social Fund, and is free to beneficiaries. The RETAILER programme is intended to train you, train your employees, and help you train future employees.

To find out more about the RETAILER programme please fill in your details below and send a copy of this page to:

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Job title:

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