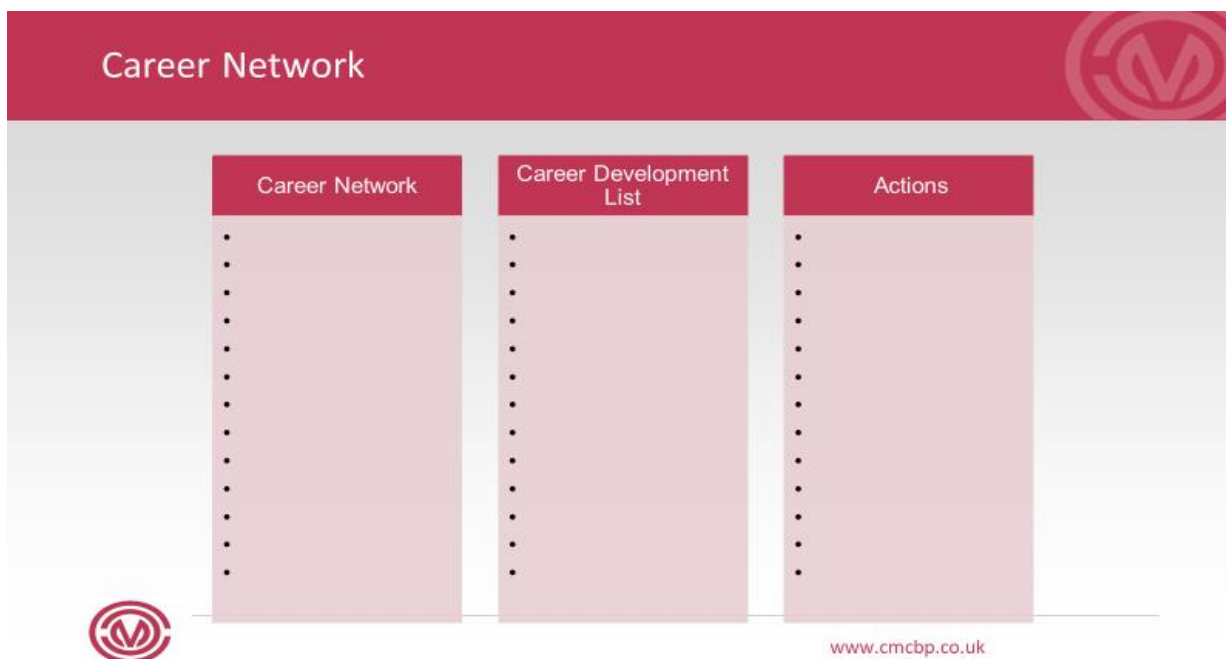




Coaching Card Seven – Developing your Career Network

Our seventh coaching card in the series is focused on Developing your Network. You can [download and print the cards here](#).



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There is a theory we use in career management and for leadership support which is 'Social Capital' to help people develop their career network.

When you are thinking about your skills to develop for your career, you have three areas of capital

1. Human capital – this is your skills, experience, competencies. This is the stuff we usually put on our CV
2. Psychological capital – this is your personal resources and will include self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience
3. Social Capital – this is the diversity and strength of your network. It's a theory to help us understand the value of the relationships in your network and the impact of these relationships. It can be assessed at an individual, team, or organisational level. For today we will be looking at your individual social capital

There are steps to follow and we have attached a full exercise you can use. We often use this exercise with leadership development or for challenging bias for inclusive cultures. I would recommend doing a review of your network each year, and this is something I personally practice too!

For coaching we also sometimes do a shorter version which we will explain now. We use this exercise to explore your career related relationships/career network. This network is important as they know so much about you and can help with your career planning. Also, they can help with your development and even job opportunities through their own networks.

Step 1 – Review Career Network

List 5 – 10 people you speak to most about your work. They could be colleagues, friends, family, associates etc.

Review this network, maybe with someone else? Questions to ask:

- Is there diversity in your network? Are they all similar to you? Should you increase the diversity of your network?
- Does this network support where you want to be in your career?
- Is there a mix of time known or are they all people you have known for a long time? This is important as sometimes making change can be harder with people who know and like you as they don't always feel comfortable with you changing how they know you

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- Do you talk to people regularly or are you dependent on a small selection? Think about the diversity of ideas you may be missing out on if you only talk to small number of people
- Is there anyone you would like to include in your career network? How could you develop relationships with them?

Step 2. – List career development actions

List 3 things you wish to develop for your professional career. This could be ideas such as

- Get a promotion
- Develop skills in a software such as PowerPoint
- More leadership experiences
- Run more effective meetings
- Become more proficient in a work process

Step 3. – plan network development

Now review your original list

- Does anyone in your network have these skills? If so, can you reach out to them for support?
- If not, is there anyone else you know who has these skills? Can you reach out to your expanded network?
- Is there any other way of gaining the skills you need? Is there a course you can attend or a network you can join?
- Have you realised there is gaps in your career network? How would you go about developing your network to support your career ambitions?

Please note, this isn't about removing people from your career network. Some people are in your network because they are a great support or just because you really like them and that's brilliant. This exercise is about developing and adding to your network, so it supports your career goals.

One of the great benefits, if you become a bit more strategic about your networking and realise why you want to talk to someone, then it becomes so much easier to contact them. If you are specific about the help you need, then its easier to reach out and connect with someone.

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If you want more information regarding networking, then please check out our blogs ([Psychology of Networking](#) and [10 tips to improve your networking skills](#)) and [reading list](#) on career development which includes some references on this subject

If you have any questions, then please contact us at coaching@cmcbp.co.uk. We would also love to hear from you on how you have used this model.

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