



The newsletter of the National Career Pathways Network

# Connections

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## ***How Collaboration and Networking Mean You Will Never Go to an Interview—but Are Always Being Interviewed***

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In a world that's asking, "What have you done for me lately?" collaboration, networking, and performance-based hiring dramatically impact your next employment opportunity. With nearly half the workforce employed as contingent workers, there is increased competition to skillfully collaborate and create a portfolio of deliverables at an innovative and

masterful level (<https://www.mbopartners.com/state-of-independence>).

Consider the "how," the "what," and the "who."

**How:** Collaboration—the process behind the product, a living portfolio and ongoing interview

**What:** Innovation—creative ideas that have value and generate a portfolio of high-level work

**Who:** Networking—direct and indirect connections bridging you to the next opportunity

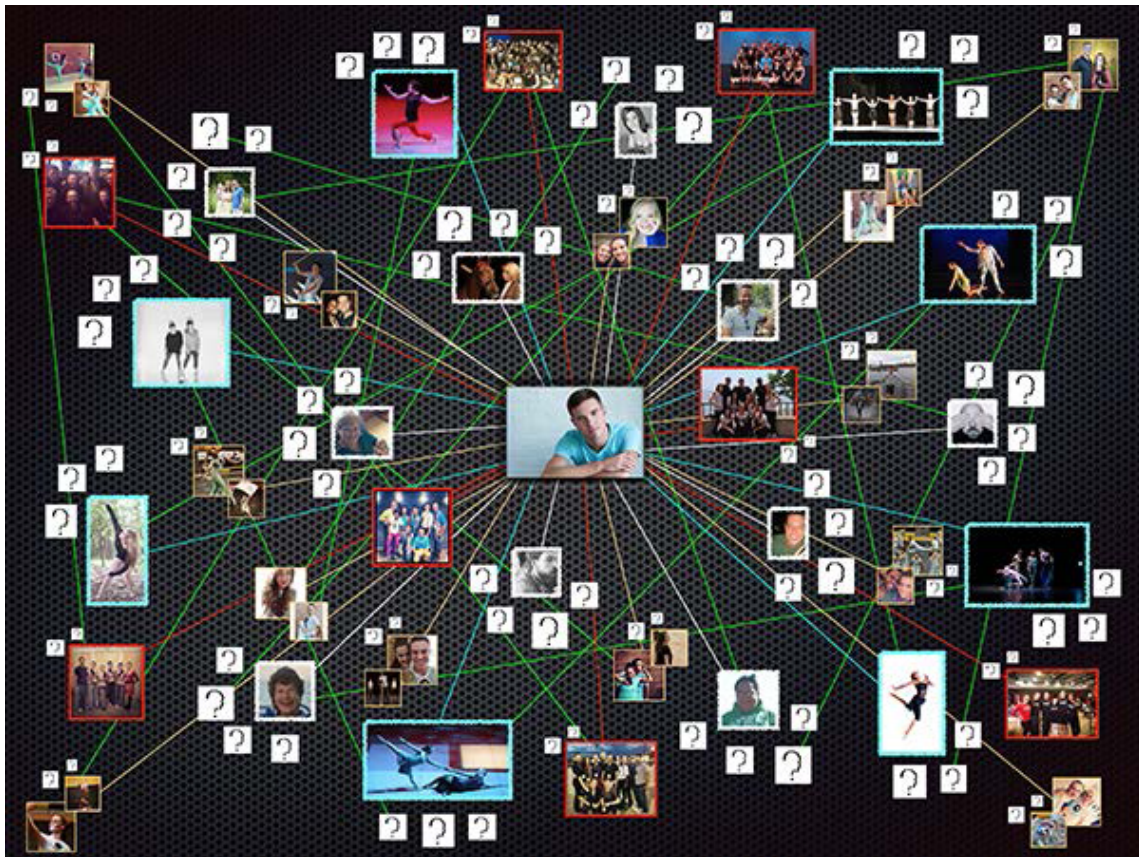
### **Building a Portfolio and Network Connecting You to the Next Opportunity**

- **Product and Process Portfolio:** You are continually engaged in an ongoing interview where your work and your process to develop work are constantly evaluated. In an age where collaboration and innovation are central to success, the process and the product are equally important. Finding commonalities and building upon varied perspectives fosters an environment of plussing ideas rather than evaluating or "fixing" them. A collaborative process that generates shared experiences and respect for others' ideas promotes innovation and creates a living portfolio that clients see as essential.
- **Networking:** Your personal and professional networks are more crucial than ever before and increasingly intertwined. Analyzing your various roles is helpful in visualizing the interconnectedness of the people in your networks. An activity that focuses on this concept is to list the roles you assume, then quantify them. For example, in my role as:
  - *Student*, 25 teachers and mentors have invested in me;
  - *Performer*, 30 choreographers and 500 performers have worked with me;
  - *Teacher*, 2000 students have been in my classes;
  - *Choreographer*, 25 groups have engaged me to choreograph 65 works;
  - *Artistic director*, 30 performers have been members of my ensemble;
  - *Designer*, 40 designers have collaborated with me; and
  - *Volunteer*, 15 non-profits and over 50 volunteers are part of my service network.

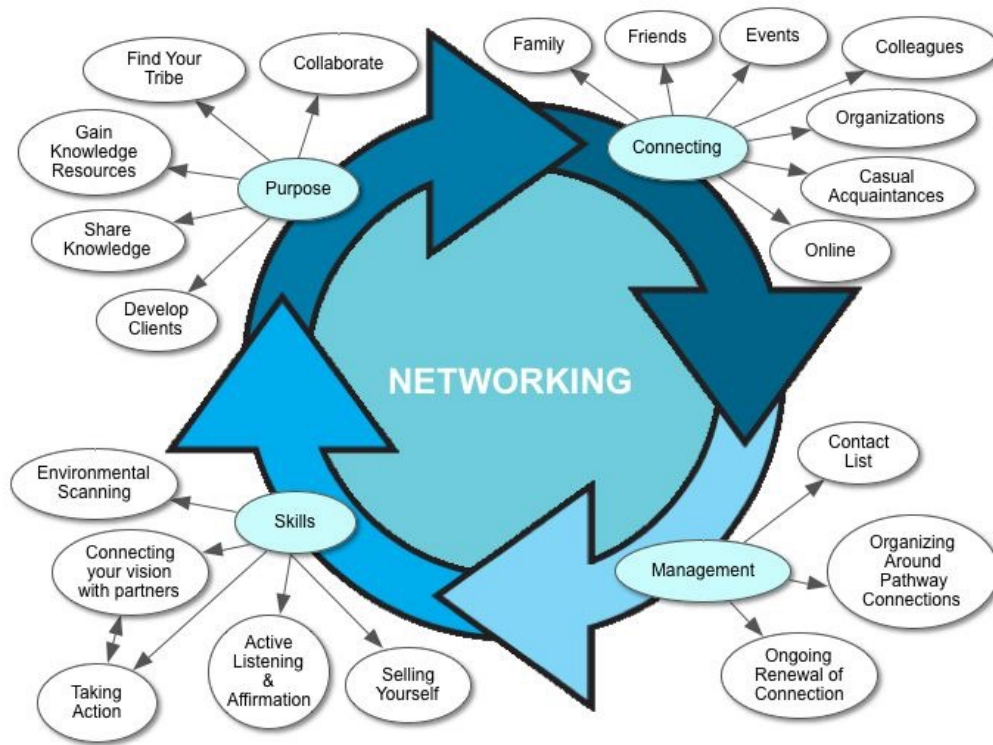
These people have their own networks, which I can become a part of. An interesting activity is to map your network (Figure 1). The mapping process helps visualize your network and see the interconnectedness across networks. Understanding networking as a systematic process allows you to develop your network (Figure 2). Networking is a skill that can be learned and empowers you to maximize your potential to create the next opportunity.

Today's contingent work is much more demanding and competitive than a traditional employment arrangement. There is a significant paradigm shift that educators and students must make to adapt to this new reality:

- The “interview” has transformed into collaboration as an ongoing interview.
- A living portfolio of shared experiences conveys that the process drives the product.
- You must always be ready to connect with the next opportunity.



**Figure 1:** Creating a web of your network helps visualize the power of connections.



**Figure 2:** Use this networking model to strategically empower your network.

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