



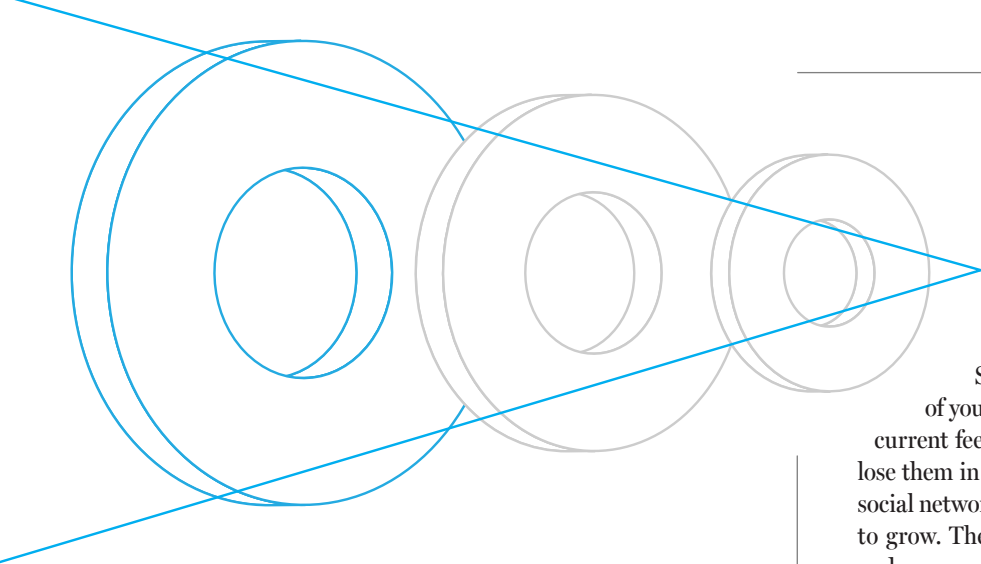
THE MONCHU METHOD

OF NETWORKING

Spend **20** Minutes a Day
Reaching Out to **Your Very Own VIPs**

BY CHRIS BROGAN

Monchu is an Okinawan word that means “one family,” but monchu is defined as going beyond those of our blood—it includes a family of our choosing. I’m enamored with the concept because I feel that a lot of times our intentions while we are networking become sullied by an expectation of receiving something in return. My monchu approach to networking weeds out selfish motives but still produces great results. —————>



1. IMAGINE CIRCLES.

In the smallest and tightest of circles are those people you love the most. These are the people I don't have to remind you to stay connected with often (at least I hope not).

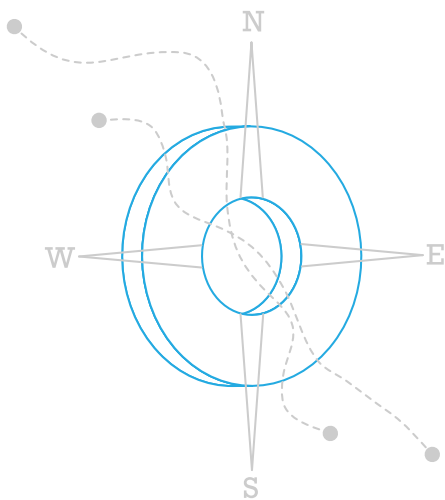
Right after that are the people you maybe "have to" stay connected with regularly, maybe your co-workers and/or your primary customers or vendors. They also don't need a lot of thinking about to sort out. You simply connect with them in the course of doing business with them.

Figuring out who fits in the third circle of your monchu—which is where the networking magic will happen—is harder, and it's where you're going to concentrate your efforts. So let me explain the third circle further as it applies to your business.

2. MAP YOUR MONCHU.

Your monchu's third circle consists of:

- People you personally want to help succeed.
- People you feel can help you succeed.
- People you care about who could use the help of people you know.



That's it. Your aim isn't to find prospects, although that might happen. It isn't about connecting with people who will grow your business, except perhaps indirectly. Instead it's about people you can help by enriching their lives—and people who might be able to help you if you ask the right questions.

So how many people should be in the third circle of your monchu? I'm not sure. I'm working on that. My current feeling is that if you grow beyond 20 people, you'll lose them in the crowd. This, by the way, is why almost every social network is inherently flawed for your use. They are built to grow. They need you to reach out over and over to more and more people to demonstrate their value, but that doesn't immediately benefit you. In fact, it lets you forget people easier. So stick to 20 people.

This leads us to the next part of the recipe: What exactly do you do with this group?

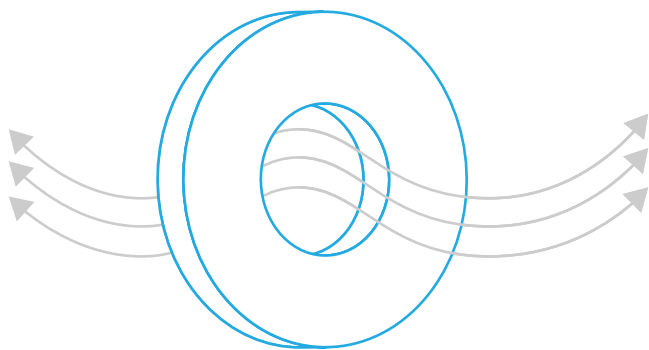
3. SERVE YOUR MONCHU.

Let's imagine that you had 20 minutes each day to try and make your world more amazing. Twenty minutes. That's less than the duration of a TV sitcom. It's probably equal to the amount of time wasted doing tasks that yield much less value. Here's how to structure those 20 minutes:

1. Spend 10 minutes reaching out to people in your third circle whom you think you can help, providing whatever assistance, advice or resources you can offer.
2. Spend five minutes asking people whose feedback you value some questions that will help you better understand your next steps in business.
3. Spend five minutes introducing people you know among your circles.

Which communication medium works best for making these connections? Whatever works best for you and the members of your monchu. I love email. Other people use the phone. Some people prefer Facebook messages. Others like Skype. Here's what I suggest:

- Build a spreadsheet. In it, put the person's name in the first column, his pertinent contact info in the next column or two, preference for contact in the next column, the date of your last contact in the column after that, and, finally, notes from your last conversation in the final column. You might also add a "notes history," but that's up to you.
- Think this through. Imagine you now have a list of 20 people who matter to you in one form or another. You have committed to helping people every day for a total of 20 minutes, including asking for some help for yourself. You work the list daily, with the three above-mentioned goals: Help others, ask for help, and connect people.



The key to the workings of the monchu is that we all want to be on the inside.

4. BEGIN THE COMMUNICATION FLOW.

Imagine the difference between a cold call to someone you want to reach for business versus connecting with someone you've helped directly or indirectly through the efforts listed above. Because there's an ongoing flow with those people you've chosen to connect with frequently via your monchu, everything will feel a lot smoother, or at least there will be more options. I'll give you a real-life example.

My friend Charlie is writing a book. He reached out to five people in his monchu for advice. Four people gave reasonable advice that affirmed Charlie's thoughts. I ended up saying something contrary to everyone else. My comment was a trigger that gave Charlie an even better idea. What came next was a chance for him to work through the idea with others in his monchu and receive an even better answer than mine... all rather quickly, all without a lot of friction.

The key to the workings of the monchu is that we all want to be on the inside. When a friend or business ally has an opportunity for us, the existing relationship works much more smoothly than when someone external or without connections tries to make the same experience happen. For instance, have you ever applied for a position at a company where you know people who work there versus trying a place "cold"? Day and night.

5. GIVE WITHOUT SEEKING RECIPROCATION.

Susan Murphy, co-founder of Jester Creative Inc., a Canada-based media production and training company, is practicing her own kind of monchu method and says it has helped her professionally. But she adds a caveat to the process: "There's one important thing that's often overlooked. It must come from a place of a genuine desire to help others and from a real interest in connecting. Too often, people's intentions are self-serving, and it shows. Connect because you want to connect. Be helpful because you want to help. That's where the real payoff is."

Here's another real-life example of that payoff. Around the time I wrote this article, I flew to see some clients who also have partnered with me on some business ventures. They're midway through selling their company, and I'm helping them with the process.

The reason for the trip, it turned out, was a lot more about building relationships monchu-style than it was about the pending sale. That's because, during the visit, my clients/partners did me a great favor by introducing me to some people who will potentially grant me the opportunity to sell something to them. My clients/partners won't directly profit from extending this opportunity to me. But they're building the monchu and improving the power of their business relationships by being personal.

Yes, some people might abuse this—taking a lot more than they give. And once your monchu network is up and running, you'll learn quickly who does. Maybe that person doesn't belong in your monchu. But start from the mindset that everyone you seek to help will use your gift to help others. In short order, you'll sort out the rare exceptions and adjust your monchu members accordingly.

And you should take the advice to guard against being self-serving: When someone gives primarily with the goal of getting something in return, it's fairly obvious to the other party and puts people off. If you choose to build and nurture relationships through the monchu approach, do it with unselfish intentions—or else your results might be the opposite of what you desire.

6. BUILD A DAILY HABIT.

By delivering something valuable to your monchu connections every day, you'll learn not only about how to help others succeed, but also what you're capable of offering the world at large. The help you offer might guide you toward even more business opportunities.

By simply staying connected with my friend Raul Colón, a business consultant who helps companies build their digital presence, I can pass along clients to him that aren't right for me. By listening to the community I have the privilege to serve, I can find people doing like-minded projects and connect them. Invariably I'm providing value to others—advice, information, insights, client leads, etc.—long before I seek value for myself.

The payoff for your effort every day—just a 20-minute daily commitment—is that you can build a great network. Is there value in this? Yes, and you'll see it in as little as a few weeks. **S**

SUCCESS contributing editor Chris Brogan is CEO of Human Business Works (HumanBusinessWorks.com), which provides courses and other media to improve your business.