

> TIP SHEET

ENSURING NETWORK DIVERSITY

- Sum up the reason for your network's existence in a single, succinct sentence — a 'mission statement'. For example: 'It is a fashion innovation network established to determine what's new and next in fashion.'
 - Make a list of all possible fields that are related to the issues you are attempting to address in your network mission statement and use this to identify the kinds of people you should initially approach to become members of your network.
 - If you already have friends in this sector, exclude them from your network (friends tend to know what you know) but do work with them to identify friends of friends who may be useful.
 - Once you have created your initial network membership list in terms of job types and industry categories, go online and create your own MySpace or Facebook site outlining who you are, what you are doing, and the kind of network members you are trying to recruit.
 - Make sure you include examples of what you are looking for on your site, and that you link it to online resources or special interest groups that fall within the sectors you need to recruit members from.
 - In tandem with doing the above, visit the bars, clubs, stores, streets, and neighborhoods of the areas within which you think potential members live and hand out flyers containing details of your network, its mission statement, the benefits of membership, and its core and ongoing objectives.
 - Make sure you include an ideal list of what it takes to be a network member, and why you are trying to collaborate with potential members who come from different social, cultural, ethnic, gender, and class-related backgrounds.
 - If your network is about answering cutting edge questions, make sure you populate it with as many cutting edge Innovators and Early Adopters as you can.
- Recruiting members can be as easy as listing the sectors and job titles of the people you are keen to attract or, if job titles are inappropriate or unimportant, the characteristics you believe potential members should have — but keep these positive.
 - Avoid phrases that alienate or suggest that you are being judgmental, elitist or scornful of the kind of differences you are trying to nurture and encourage in your network.
 - Finally, be collaborative, communicative, and constant in your dealings with your network. Make sure you speak to your network members on a regular basis, and that all network discoveries are shared equally, fairly, and with enthusiasm.