

# NETWORKING IN AN ONLINE WORLD

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Networking has long been considered to be among the most important components to running an effective business. However, following the pandemic, we have all had to navigate our way around online alternatives to in-person events in which to broaden our networks.

It's certainly not been easy either, given that as humans we value those in-person meetings the most. A recent study from Hubspot indicated that 95% of professionals say that communication in person is essential for long term business, and 72% say their impression is influenced by aspects of this interaction such as the handshake.

## BEING SELECTIVE

Being encouraged to network in an online world as opposed to face-to-face conferences and events has driven us to become more selective and targeted. Every day at REYL Overseas, we receive a new invite to a webinar or online event, and we've found ourselves having to be increasingly selective to find those events that ultimately provide the most value.

It's difficult though, as one of the main reasons to join is to share your knowledge and experience with people. Many webinars or events often have a Q&A at the end but if you want to network then this isn't very helpful - you want to meet your peers. In this instance, the onus is on all of us to be more proactive in our approach and make the most of our existing contact books. Whether it's checking in with people over email, or simply picking up the phone, there's no substitute for a one-on-one conversation.

## THE 'NEW NORMAL'

With reduced air travel expected to last until around 2024 before returning to pre-Covid levels, we have little choice but to get used to this 'new normal' for some time; and even when we can travel more freely, it's likely that things will have changed for good. I would expect many meetings to be replaced by online versions, and as for air travel it's likely that many companies will find themselves triple checking on the necessity of business travel before sending people on flights. This could significantly affect networking opportunities as we know it, and ROI will become a crucial indicator of success.

In times like these it's most important of all to be proactive and reach out to those colleagues who've gone quiet. Networking is driven by the individual - it's down to all of us to make it happen.



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**"It's most important to be proactive to maintain good business relationships."**

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