

# Networking in action

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A locally, nationally and internationally renowned ceramic artist, Graham Hay's incredible career has spanned over two decades. His work has featured in over 130 exhibitions worldwide. Graham's research and expertise has led to invitations to teach and demonstrate on over 220 occasions and in more than twelve countries. As a celebrated Western Australian paper clay expert, Graham has come a long way from his humble beginnings, growing up on a farm with four brothers and a sister in small-town New Zealand.

Graham attributes much of his early success during his degree to networking and meeting fellow artists and creators locally, nationally and internationally. He stresses the importance of connecting with others whenever possible.

We asked Graham for advice about networking and the arts.

He suggests:

1. Surround yourself with like-minded people: those who take the time to travel long distances to meet up are often highly committed and have confidence in their work. "You meet people of the same calibre as you – switched on and doing unique work."
2. Find and establish an informal network: it can provide a welcoming and supportive environment in order to nurture your art.
3. Aim to develop long-term relationships: and not just associations within the industry.

Like Graham, students don't have to wait until they graduate to begin networking. If you take some time to look at your existing connections from:

1. your workplace
2. current degree
3. high school peers
4. hobbies or sports
5. family

You'll soon realise that you've already got the foundations of a professional network. From here, you can:

1. Assess the circles that you belong to
2. See how they connect with each other
3. Identify some potential connections you can make

To help build your networks, keep your contacts together in a single platform, like LinkedIn or other social media. This allows you to further expand and not lose the various different connections you've made.

## Working in a team

Partnerships and collaborations are a large part of professional life. During his career, Graham often contributed to a team of artists in order to collect funding and host exhibitions and conferences. His long-term residency at Robertson Park Art Studio culminated in many successful collaborations, and the members actively seek and provide input on each other's work.

When working in a team, you should ask yourself:

1. What are your individual goals, and how will working with this group fit your plans?
2. What is your mission? What sorts of activities will you undertake, and how will you brand yourselves?
3. Where and when will you work?
4. Where and how frequently will you showcase your work?

## References

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