

THE C.O.N.N.E.C.T. FRAMEWORK

Turning Strategic Relationships Into Innovation Engines

C - CARE

- *People trust intent before competence*
- People decide about you in 0.1 seconds – they remember how you made them feel
- **DO THIS: Show genuine care first; demonstrate competence second**

O – OBSERVE

- *Connection starts before conversation*
- Trust assessment happens before words – 55% from energy, body language, tone - Observe to understand, not to reload
- **DO THIS: Read the room; notice energy and tone before content**

N – NAME

- *Name what's unspoken*
- People relax when understood – defensiveness drops – collaboration starts
- **DO THIS: Acknowledge the elephant in the room; call out what you notice with curiosity**

N – NURTURE

- *Relationships break from neglect, not conflict*
- They die politely in inboxes – requires constant investment – water before it wilts
- **DO THIS: Schedule intentional check-ins; nurture the relationship**

E – ELEVATE

- *Trust gives permission to challenge*
- Partners challenge, friends stay friendly – best partnerships make each other better – excellence is relational
- **DO THIS: Challenge assumptions; push toward higher standards**

C – COMMIT

- *Trust isn't built when it's convenient*
- Trust is built when it costs something – Trust is built when it's easier not to – Relationship matters more than comfort
- **DO THIS: Show up when it's hard; protect the relationship**

T – TRANSFER

- *Build a culture that connects*
- Connection can't die with you – Innovation needs trust at scale – Most innovative = most connected
- **DO THIS: Create connections between others; build trust systems**

THE CONNECTION AUDIT

Where is connection strong? Where is it assumed? Personally: thriving or autopilot? Internally: connected or distant?
Partners: Innovative or transactional? Customers: known or numbered?

THE CHALLENGE

Make ONE decision: ONE relationship to invest in, ONE conversation to have. **Connection is not an accident. The future will be won with innovation created by the most connected people.**