THE BUSINESS OF 1 · FREE GUIDE

From Connect to Coffee

How business of one *owner-operators* build a real network on LinkedIn, **in 30 minutes a day.**

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START HERE

Hi, I'm Donita.

I coach business of one *owner-operators*: people who are their own boss and their own worst employee.

I've been a business of one for 15 years. Before that, I spent 20 years in corporate media sales. So I know how much of your business runs on relationships, and how easy it is to let them go quiet when you're the one doing everything.

My own network went cold for a while. It wasn't for lack of effort. I just wasn't clear on what I did or who I served, so I didn't reach out. Once I got clear and started saying it out loud on LinkedIn, the right people started showing up. Other coaches. People I learn from. Speaking invitations. Friends.

This guide is the routine I use. It isn't about followers or going viral. It's about conversations that turn into coffees, and coffees that turn into people in your orbit.

> "She led me through actionable steps to get me up and running to over 500 connections, and encouraged me to create a profile that allows my personality to shine through. I now feel ready to jump into the arena of building business relationships."
>
> **Ivonne Plankey** · Wellness Advocate and Coach

BEFORE WE START

What a network means in a business of one

In a bigger company, the network comes with the job. In a business of one, you build it and you look after it. That's the good news: it's yours.

I think of my network in two layers:

Your referral network

People who do good work and serve people like yours. You send each other business, ideas and introductions.

Your inner circle

The people you click with on a deeper level. You choose them by trusting your gut, and they're with you through every season of business.

A few things I've learned about relationships along the way:

- **They last across seasons.** One of my closest business friendships started with an early client. Years later, we're in very different places and still meet for breakfast.
- **They take two.** I keep showing up, and so do they.
- **They take time and energy.** That's why this guide fits in 30 minutes a day. Small and steady beats big and rare.

STEP 1

Get clear, then tell people

Everything starts with knowing what you do and who you do it for. When you're clear, reaching out feels natural. When you're not, it's easy to stay quiet.

Write one or two sentences you could say at a coffee chat. Here's mine:

> **MY ONE-LINER**
>
> *"I coach business of one owner-operators: people who are their own boss and their own worst employee. I do it with an 8-week live cohort. We work on better decisions and better relationships."*

Then put those same words on your profile, so anyone who finds you knows exactly what you do:

- **Photo:** a warm, real smile. The person they'll meet on a coffee call.
- **Headline:** your one-liner, or the short version of it.
- **About:** start with who you help and what it's like to work with you. Then a little of your story.
- **Featured:** one link that matters most right now. Your website, a booking link or a free guide like this one.
- **Banner:** one clear line about what you do. Simple beats busy.

STEP 2

Warm up the network you already have

You're not starting at zero. You've been in business a while, and there are people who already know, like and trust you. They may just not have heard from you lately.

Take 20 minutes and make a list. You'll come back to it all week.

Past clients

Who loved working with you? Who would you love to catch up with?

Peers

Other owner-operators you've crossed paths with, in your industry or beside it.

Referral partners

People who serve the same clients you do, in a different way.

Your community

Groups, events, old colleagues, the people you volunteer with.

Then reach back out. No pitch. Just a friendly hello and a reason to talk.

> REINTRODUCE YOURSELF
>
> *"Hi Sam, it's been a while! I've been thinking about the work we did together. I'm now focused on coaching business of one owners, and I'd love to hear what you're up to these days. Coffee on Zoom sometime?"*

STEP 3

Post with clarity, not volume

Posting is how you tell the universe what you do. Two or three posts a week is plenty. What matters is that people can tell who you are and who you help.

If you're stuck, rotate through these three:

A story

Something that happened this week, and what it taught you about your work.

A lesson

One thing your clients often ask you, answered in plain language.

A question

Ask your people something you're curious about. Then read every answer.

A few habits that help:

- Write the way you talk. Short lines are easier to read on a phone.
- Reply to every comment, and ask a follow-up question when you can. A post is the start of a conversation.
- Show your face now and then. A short video or a real photo builds trust faster than a perfect graphic.

STEP 4

Notice who shows up

This is the step most people skip. Every week, look at:

- Who commented on your posts, or on posts you were tagged in.
- Who sent you a connection request, or viewed your profile.
- Whose content you keep stopping to read.

Those are your warm leads for relationships. Not for selling. For getting to know.

STEP 5

Reach out personally

Thank them, mention something specific you liked, and invite them into your network. This is the exact note I sent to a coach who commented on one of my posts:

> **CONNECTION NOTE**
>
> *"Hey, thanks so much for engaging. I love what I see at first glance at your LinkedIn profile. I'd love to add you to my network."*

That's it. Short, genuine and about them. We connected, had a call, and he's been in my orbit ever since.

STEP 6

Suggest a virtual coffee

Once you've had a little back and forth, ask for 20 minutes on Zoom. Distance doesn't matter. Some of my best coffees have been with people in other cities.

One coach I'd been following for a while beat me to it. She reached out and asked, "Do you want to go for a coffee?" We had a great call, and I gave myself a little slap for not thinking of it first.

> **COFFEE INVITE**
>
> *"I've really enjoyed your posts on [topic]. Would you be up for a 20-minute virtual coffee? No agenda, I'd just love to hear more about what you're building."*

STEP 7

Follow the rabbit hole

One conversation leads to the next. After a coffee:

- Send a short thank-you, and one thing you took away.
- Think about who you could introduce them to. Introductions are one of the kindest things you can do.
- Jot down a date to check in again. I keep a simple sheet with each person, how we met and when to follow up.

YOUR DAILY RHYTHM

30 minutes a day

Set a timer. Coffee in hand. This is the whole routine.

10 min

Engage

Leave thoughtful comments on five posts from people you want to know better. Add something real, not just "Great post!"

10 min

Connect

Look at who showed up (Step 4) and send three personal connection notes (Step 5).

10 min

Nurture

Reply to messages, reach out to one person from your warm list (Step 2), or invite one person for coffee (Step 6).

On the days you post, use your first 10 minutes to reply to comments instead. Consistency over time is what warms a network up. Some days you'll do more, some days less, and that's okay.

WHAT'S NEXT

Want to go deeper, with people who get it?

This guide is a taste of the relationships half of The Business of 1, my 8-week live coaching cohort.

The first four weeks are about making good decisions. The last four are about relationships, and what they really mean for a business of one. We do it together, live on Zoom, with a WhatsApp group in between, so you're not figuring everything out alone.

Starts January 6, 2027. About 2 hours a week, including the live call.

BOOK A FREE CALL

Let's stay in touch

Connect with me on LinkedIn: **linkedin.com/in/donitafowler**

Business videos on Tuesdays and Thursdays: **youtube.com/@donita_fowler**

And if this guide helped, send me a connection note and tell me. I'd love to hear from you.