



DON'T EXPAND JUST BECAUSE YOU CAN

I'M AN ENTREPRENEUR, so women frequently ask me for advice on growing their business. They are often surprised when they hear my response: "Just because you can doesn't mean you should."

I was 22 years old when I used my meager savings to start my company, Green Ivy Educational Consulting, which helps teenagers develop organizational and time-management skills and creates curricula for schools on social media safety and wellness. Green Ivy quickly became successful, and many people pushed me to expand with new locations and more employees. The advice followed a "bigger, better, more" philosophy. But expanding would have meant less autonomy and freedom, and that wasn't what I wanted. Instead, I defined my own metrics for success—focusing on ways I could make an impact while remaining true to my values of helping others, traveling and writing.

For example, last year I visited three continents, touring schools and meeting with students. Speaking with them inspired me to write my third book, *Social Media Wellness*, which helps people work together to promote positive online experiences for young social media users.

I'm proud that I've created a business that is in sync with my vision of success; I've been able to build my own blueprint rather than borrow from someone else. Thirteen years on, the business is strong, and we are growing in our own way. —ANA HOMAYOUN

ANA HOMAYOUN is an author and the founder of Green Ivy Educational Consulting. @AnaHomayoun

Networking clubs for highly motivated people

MANY OF THE most sought-after businesspeople aren't on LinkedIn or Facebook. To develop strong connections, entrepreneurs are flocking instead to these exclusive networking groups.

1

ENTREPRENEURS' ORGANIZATION (eonetnetwork.org)

BEST FOR Established entrepreneurs.
PRICE \$1,000 initiation fee; \$3,000 a year.
DETAILS The network of 10,000-plus members (including Michael Dell and Sara Blakely) is a place to learn from other entrepreneurs. Sign up for a chapter near you to take part in face-to-face events, discuss problems and socialize. Note: You must lead a company that brings in at least \$1 million a year in order to join.

2

RELATIONSHIP SCIENCE (relsci.com)

BEST FOR Those seeking specific contacts.
PRICE Contracts start at \$9,000 a year; nonprofit pricing begins at \$6,000 a year.
DETAILS Relationship Science has a database of 3.5 million decision makers. To meet one, type in a name or your search criteria—say, tech investors in Denver—and let the site cull your email and social media to tell you how you are connected to that person.

3

FOUNDERSCARD (founderscard.com)

BEST FOR Budding entrepreneurs searching for a mentor and some advice, and established founders eager to find a mentee.
PRICE \$95 initiation fee; \$795 a year.
DETAILS Members meet twice a month for exclusive cocktail-party-style events in high-end hotels across the country. The 20,000 members include cofounders of such innovative companies as Birchbox and Rent the Runway. Because FoundersCard has no financial qualifications, it is ideal for people just starting their business.

4

ALLEY TO THE VALLEY (alleytothevalley.com)

BEST FOR Women who want to share knowledge or get help from those with a wide variety of specialties; investors eager to find out about new ventures.
PRICE Onetime fee of \$350.
DETAILS The 7,500 women in this online-only community (past participants include Barbara Corcoran and Sheryl Sandberg) exchange requests and offers for angel funding, seed money, book deals and more, or they bring up opportunities such as board seats and strategic partnerships.
—ALICE OGLETHORPE

56%

Percentage of female entrepreneurs who report a strong sense of purpose, compared with just 47 percent of male entrepreneurs, according to a Gallup-Healthways poll.