



A PARTNERSHIP CONVERSATION GUIDE

The Three Wins

Design partnerships for the institution, for you, and for the person across the table.

Charney Robinson-Williams, Founder, Noire Impact

From "Rethink Networking: The Partnership Strategy That Opens Bigger Doors" • Dreamers & Doers • October 2026

THE FRAMEWORK

Every partnership has three wins to design for

Use these questions before, during and after an intro call to find all three. You won't ask every question. Pick three to five that fit, and keep it a conversation, not an interview.

01

The institution

The company, foundation, venue or brand, and the goals it's measured on.

02

Your organization

What you need: funding, access, visibility, clients.

03

The person

The human you're talking to: their stakeholders, career, workload and what they want to be seen for. The win most people skip.

STEP 1 • BEFORE THE CALL

Do your homework

Half of what you need you can learn before you ever get on a call. Spend 20 minutes here.

The institution

- ☐ What are they measured on this year? Check their annual report, impact or community investment report, foundation strategy or grant guidelines.
- ☐ Look at the numbers and demographics they report. Where could you help them strengthen that story?
- ☐ What have they sponsored, funded or partnered on in the past 12 months? What do those have in common?
- ☐ Where do they show up: which conferences, cultural moments or side events do they sponsor or attend?

The person

- ☐ What's their role, and how long have they been in it?
- ☐ What do they post, speak about or get quoted on? That's what they want to be known for.
- ☐ Who do you both know? Check LinkedIn for a warm introduction.

Yourself

- ☐ What can you offer besides the ask? Beyond "Can you sponsor or partner with me?": your audience, network, expertise, lived experience, your ability to produce the thing.
- ☐ What would you need from them, kept as small as possible?

STEP 2 • ON THE CALL

Get to know the person

Start human, not with your ask. Listen for what lights them up and what wears them down.

Openers

- 01 "What does a great partnership look like from your side of the table?"
- 02 "What's one project on your plate right now that you're really looking forward to seeing land?"

What they want to grow

- 01 "What's something your team has done this year that you wish more people knew about?"
- 02 "Are you speaking, writing or hosting anything lately? Where do you like to show up?"

Ask yourself, don't ask them. Based on where they like to show up, who could you introduce them to? Which stage, event or room could you connect them with?

What would make their life easier

- 01 "What would be most helpful to you from a partner on something like this?"
- 02 "How do you report on partnerships internally, and how often?"

Use what you hear to plan your updates. If they report monthly, quarterly or once a year, time a short update to land just before: a progress note, a newsletter, a few numbers and a photo. Share news about your whole organization, not only the project they supported. You stay on their radar, they have something ready for their next meeting, and you're top of mind when they want to plug in again.

Listen for a topic they keep coming back to, a name they mention twice, a frustration with past partners, and the event or stage they'd love to be on. Those are your clues to their personal win.

STEP 2 • ON THE CALL

Uncover the institution's win

Your partnership has to move their numbers. Find out which numbers, conversationally.

- 01 "What's the big focus for your team this year? What would make it feel like a great year?"
- 02 "Is there a community you've been wanting to get closer to?"
- 03 "What's worked really well for you in past partnerships?"
- 04 "When does your budget cycle open, and who's involved in that decision?"
- 05 "Beyond this project, we'd love to build a real relationship with your team. Are there other ways you like to partner, or anything you'd want to explore together down the road?"

Metrics: find them before you ask. Look for how they measure success in their grant application, impact report or what they already talk about publicly. Only ask directly if they're clearly metrics-driven, and keep it light: "How do you like to measure success on partnerships like this?"

Then say it back in their language. "So if this event put you in front of 75 founders in your target market and gave you content for your community team, that would count toward your goals this year?"

**The intro call isn't the pitch.
It's the research.**

STEP 2 · ON THE CALL

Questions by partner type

Add two or three of these to your call, depending on who's on the other side.

Venues, clubs and hospitality

FOR EVENT AND EXPERIENCE BUILDERS

- "Which months or days of the week are slower for you?"
- "Who do you want walking through your doors that isn't coming yet?"
- "What would make a partner's event a win for your team on the ground?"
- "Do you offer in-kind space, waived F&B minimums or member access for the right partners?"
- "Is anything new opening, or anything you're trying to launch?"

Sponsors and funders

CORPORATIONS, FOUNDATIONS, FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

- "What do you need to bring back to your team to justify a sponsorship or grant?"
- "Which audiences or communities are hard for you to reach directly?"
- "How much involvement do you want: hands-off, or showing up on site?"
- "What would make this easy to say yes to internally?"

Corporate buyers

HR, L&D, PEOPLE AND MARKETING LEADERS

- "What problem would you love to have off your desk by next quarter?"
- "How do you usually bring in outside experts, and who signs off?"
- "What would make you look like a hero to your leadership?"

Referral partners

EXPERTS WHO SERVE THE SAME CLIENTS YOU DO

- "Who's your ideal client, and at what moment do they usually find you?"
- "What do your clients need right before or right after they work with you?"
- "Would you want to co-host something for both of our client lists?"

Your existing clients

BRINGING THEM INTO BIGGER ROOMS

- "Where do you want to be seen over the next year?"
- "Would you be open to showing up at [event or side event] together?"
- "Who would you love an introduction to?"

STEP 3 • RIGHT AFTER THE CALL

Map the three wins

Fill this in while it's fresh. If one row is empty, you don't have a partnership yet. You have an ask.

Partner: _____

Person: _____

Date: _____

THE WIN	WHAT THEY NEED	WHAT I CAN OFFER	CLUES FROM THE CALL
The institution			
My organization			
The person			

The easiest yes check

- ☐ I'm bringing the plan, not the problem: the idea, the timeline and who does what.
- ☐ I can show how this hits a number they already report on.
- ☐ This gives the person a win they can share with their stakeholders.
- ☐ What I'm asking for is as small and specific as it can be.
- ☐ I have one thing I can offer them now, with no ask attached.

STEP 4 • AFTER THE CALL

Keep them in mind

The partnership doesn't start when the contract is signed. It starts with what you do in the weeks after the first conversation.

- 01 Within 48 hours:** send a thank-you that names one thing they told you. "You mentioned you'd love to speak more on financial inclusion. I'll keep my ears open."
- 02 Within 2 weeks:** send one thing that helps them, with no ask attached: an event, an article, a speaking opportunity, an introduction.
- 03 Before the proposal:** draft it around the three wins, in their metrics and language.
- 04 After the partnership:** report back in the numbers they need, and give the person credit they can share internally.
- 05 Ongoing:** when the right opportunity comes up for them, think of them first.

**It's not "if I do this, you'll do that."
It's goodwill that compounds.**

This can be a slow burn, and that's fine.



Building the rooms founders weren't handed a map to

Noire Impact is a strategy studio for capital, culture and storytelling.

noireimpact.com

Instagram [@noireimpact](https://www.instagram.com/noireimpact)

[linkedin.com/in/charneyrw](https://www.linkedin.com/in/charneyrw)

The Three Wins is a framework by Charney Robinson-Williams, Founder of Noire Impact.

© 2026 Noire Impact LLC. All rights reserved. This guide is for your personal use in building your own partnerships. It may not be copied, redistributed, resold, or adapted for commercial use, including in your own courses, workshops, client deliverables or sales materials, without written permission from Noire Impact LLC.