

Networking in Practice

There's no better time than right now to get started networking. It's a simple thing to do, and the more you do it, the better you'll become. Practice makes perfect, as they say.

Set out to initially spend a specific amount of time – 30 minutes or an hour – devoted to online networking utilizing social media or email. Do a bit of research, and find names of people with businesses in the same market as yours is. Look them up online, and send a friend request through Facebook. If they accept your friend request, send them a private message thanking them for accepting, and get the ball rolling that way.

If you've done your research well, you'll be able to inquire a bit about their business using the information you found doing your research. If it's someone that you look up to, let them know why. People love getting sincere compliments.

Try to find one or two people each day that have a business or utilize a business model that you truly admire and would like to emulate. Initially, you may be afraid of rejection from them, but you'll soon come to realize that they are just like you in most ways, and the communication will come easier to you.

Along with all the things you should do to be successful at networking, there are a few things you shouldn't do as well. First and foremost, never spam your network contacts. Don't try to sell them anything unless they have specifically inquired about a product or service on their own first. This is the number one faux pas in business networking, so use common sense. It's acceptable to mention that you offer a particular product or service if the conversation is going in that direction, but even giving the impression of spamming will shoot your integrity right in the foot.

And when you do find a suitable opening in which to mention your products or services, do your best to not get pushy. You may be enthusiastic at the prospect of more customers, clients, and money, but keep your cool when it comes to your conversations discussing them.

Networking is not difficult, nor is it complicated. Use your common sense in your business interactions, be genuine and sincere in your communication, and offer real value to those you meet. You'll be on the right road to the old adage "practice makes perfect"!