

The Success Net



10 Important Tips That Can Make
Your Networking More Effective

Today, we are swamped by information. Unlike previous eras in human history, this is not information we, necessarily, have to seek out. Instead, much of it is information on demand. Movies, television shows, magazine articles, music and books are there for us when we want them and where we want them. This deluge of information has not only spoiled us, it has also jaded us. For many, information has become devalued precisely because it is so widely accessible. This perception that information is cheap leads to the idea that everything and everybody is equally accessible on demand. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Information is still as powerful as it ever was. It still has the ability to change lives and fortunes. The right piece of information at the right time can still spell the difference between success and failure. Only the foolish treat the power of information with a cavalier attitude.

When it comes to networking, information is everything. After all, networking is nothing more than a mutually beneficial form of communication. It is probably the best way to increase the visibility of you and your business and, as a result, also increase your business' profitability. Every successful business owner is also a successful networker. If you want to achieve the next level of success in your business life, then you have to use the power of information to your advantage by networking.

These 10 networking tips are an easy way to become a networking pro. These tips consist of simple, actionable steps and recommendations that can be implemented by anyone, no matter their experience with networking and no matter their area of business. Use them correctly and watch your business and bottom line grow.

1. Do Unto Others

This one really is simple, but exceedingly important. (That's why it's number one.) Treat the people who you network with like you would want to be treated. There's nothing more to it than that and there's nothing less. Think about the behaviors that turn you off and act accordingly. No one likes a hard sell. No one likes a big ego. No one likes a know it all. No one wants to be condescended to. No one wants to be bored, or lied to or fawned over. In other words, act appropriately and your networking efforts will pay huge dividends. Act inappropriately and you'll be wondering why networking doesn't work.

2. No Strings Gifts

Networking is about giving more than it is about receiving. Yes, there is certainly a quid pro quo element inherent in the networking process. Yet, there is also an element of karma at work, as well. You essentially get what you give. So, when you offer something to someone, be it help, knowledge or advice, do so without any expectations of receiving something in return. This doesn't mean that you need to be a dispenser of free and potentially valuable information. It does mean that you need to keep a balance in your networking efforts. Don't go into any event with your hand out. Instead, pay it forward and watch as the karmic networking wheel returns your generosity in kind.

3. Silence Is Golden

Non-western indigenous peoples were often considered "stoic" or even "dumb" by European explorers. Nothing could have been further from the truth. In many cultures silence is a sign of respect, a sign of intelligence and a socially acceptable behavior. You say something when you have something to say, as opposed to using words as filler. This concept, while foreign to many, is perfectly appropriate, with some tailoring, to networking. When you meet someone you do admire use silence in equal measure with talking. Stop to listen to what the other person is saying. Think about what they've said before you respond. Structure your

response around the other person, as opposed to yourself. When you take the time to listen, you'll be surprised at what you hear.

4. Honesty Is the Best Policy

When networking be yourself. Your personality, simple and unadulterated, is what will attract people to you. The worst type of encounter, in any social situation, is with someone who feels they have to “pump up the volume” personality-wise. Too much of a good thing comes off feeling wrong. Everyone knows when they have encountered someone who is doing this. Usually, the word to describe them (behind their back, of course) is “fake”. Fake does not engender trust. It will not make people feel warm and fuzzy about you. What will endear people to you is genuine human behavior. So, don't try to be something you're not. Try being yourself instead.

5. Vive La Difference

There is a tendency when networking to only socialize within your profession or within circles of people within your profession who share your hobbies or interests. While this behavior is perfectly acceptable, it does limit the scope of your networking efforts. Try expanding your horizons by going outside of your profession and hobbies so that you can meet people you normally wouldn't have an opportunity to connect with. You will be surprised at the results. You'll find that people outside your usual sphere of influence offer as much positive networking opportunities as the people within your social and professional circle. Don't leave valuable networking connections on the table. Try something different and see what happens.

6. 30 Seconds Or Less

One thing you will encounter over and over at any networking event is people asking you do. This simple and common question is your opportunity to capture other people's attention and have them remember you as someone who stands out from the crowd. The way you do this is with an “elevator speech”. An elevator speech is a simple, yet clever condensation of your professional expertise that can

be delivered in 30 seconds or less. That's why it's called an elevator speech. You should be able to deliver it in the time it would take the average elevator to reach your floor. Take your time and come up with something memorable. Then, practice your speech over and over so that you can deliver the goods on a dime or, better yet, within 30 seconds.

7. Clearly Simple

It is important when networking to keep what you are saying simple and clearly understandable. After all, networking is communicating and communicating implies the transfer of information from one person to another. You can't effectively translate information if the other person can't understand you or has no idea what you're talking about. Therefore, when you are networking slow yourself down and talk clearly and simply about the topic of conversation. Remember that less is more in any conversation. Put yourself in the shoes of the person you are talking to. If you were them, would you understand what it is you are saying?

8. No is Not a Dirty Word

The world is full of all types of people and when you're networking you'll probably meet a representative sample of most of these types. Not all of them will be good and you have to develop the instinct to detect the people who have the potential to affect you and your business negatively. Some people see the possibility of meeting someone negative as a reason for abandoning networking altogether. That, of course, is nonsense. Realistically, good and bad people are encountered everywhere. All of us learn how to distance ourselves from those individuals we feel are, in one way or another, "bad". The easiest way to do this while networking is by using the word no. Don't be afraid of telling anyone no. It is the easiest way to protect yourself from those people who don't have your best interest in mind.

9. Mind Your Manners

Manners and etiquette are the easiest way to demonstrate to others that you are someone worth getting to know. In every social situation, including a networking

event, manners have a place. Being “casual” or “laid-back” is not an excuse for being rude. In fact, those who jettison common social curtesy and use informality as an excuse are simply lazy, or worse. Exercise common sense while networking. Don’t interrupt a conversation or another person when they are speaking. End every conversation with a “thank you”. Don’t block someone else’s access to a door, the bar or a restroom in order to get their attention. It all very simple. Utilize class to attract the same.

10. Take a Long View

We are a culture of instantaneous gratification. We expect immediate results and are easily dissatisfied and distracted if the results we expect don’t materialize on schedule. If you want to successfully network, you have to get rid of this social programming. Networking is an activity that yields results over the long term. Therefore, you need to take a long view when it comes to networking. The seeds you plant through contacts you make today may not produce results for months or years. That’s ok, because that’s the way the process is supposed to work. Networking is a layered activity that has a cumulative effect on your business. The more people you know, then the more people you get to know.