

## **So You Don't Want to Network**

There are many reasons you may tell yourself you don't need to network, but in reality, your business can't live without it. Realistically, each of your arguments against doing networking is largely based in unrealistic fears – fears that you can't avoid if you want to experience business and personal growth. Let's discuss some of these fears, and you'll quickly see there's really nothing to fear at all!

"I don't know what to say."

This is a common fear that usually stems from thinking that you don't really know enough to be successful, when the exact opposite is probably true. Keep in mind, also, that people who attend networking events, meetups and the like are there specifically to hear about others businesses!

Start with your name, your title, the name of your company, and what your company does. Like this: "Hi, my name is John Smith, and I'm the CCO of Anything Enterprises. We supply widgets to widget sellers across the country." When the person you're introducing yourself to does the same, respond with a question about their business. People love talking about the things they're involved in, and the more you listen and retain, the more you'll be known for being a "spectacular listener!"

"I'm shy."

There is no way around this one. Networking is going to be very uncomfortable for you at first. The silver lining to this cloud is that growth is nearly always uncomfortable in some way. By actually going out and networking, even though it is painful, you will once and for all be able to wave goodbye to the fear of meeting others. The key here is that you just have to do it, over and over again, until you no longer fear it.

"I'm just starting out and have nothing to contribute."

This couldn't be further from the truth. Even if you're a brand new business owner, there will always be someone that knows less than you do. You have your life experiences to share, and those are valuable. Spend your first few times out

networking inquiring about others businesses, seeing how people interact, and just seeing how it's all done. Eventually, you'll come across people that need your expertise and advice, and you'll no longer be the "new guy".

Networking is a learned skill, and the good news is that anyone can learn how to network effectively. It takes practice, but will reward you in many ways.