

CROWD CONTROL



Building Your Personal Network

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Table of Contents

Introduction	4
What is Networking?	10
<i>Takeaways for This Section</i>	12
Why Should You Network?	13
<i>Takeaways for This Section</i>	15
Networking Skills	17
<i>The More You Network, The Better You Get</i>	17
<i>Know Your Contacts</i>	18
<i>The Pareto Principle</i>	18
<i>Takeaways for This Section</i>	19
Networking Obstacles	20
<i>I Can't/Won't/Don't Network</i>	20
<i>I Don't/Won't Know What To Say</i>	20
<i>I Don't Know Anyone To Network With</i>	21
<i>Takeaways for This Section</i>	21
Face-To-Face Networking Checklist	23
Online Networking	25
Conclusion	27

Introduction

It's not what you know; it's who you know, right? Well, that's partially right. What you know and what you do with that knowledge are two very important components that lead to business success. After all, a business without an in-demand product line isn't in business very long. So, where does this demand come from? That's where the other half of the equation kicks in. The demand comes from who you know – your clients and customers. So, where do the clients and customers come from?

Clients and customers come from networking. Networking is how the buying public gets to know you and the products that you offer. This interplay between you and the public is what generates trust in you, loyalty to your brand and, most importantly, demand for your product line.

The goal of this book is to allow you, the business owner, to develop excellent networking skills that will enable your business to reach a new level of visibility. This increased visibility among the members of the buying public will, in turn, allow you to increase your edge against your competition and leverage that edge into greater profitability.

You will start at the beginning, learning what focused networking is all about and why it is so vitally important to your business. Next, you'll look at effective networking techniques and strategies. These proven techniques and strategies will be broken down into actionable steps that you can begin to use today. You'll also learn about some very common networking obstacles and what you can do to overcome them. You will then learn how to put together a networking checklist that you can use on the fly, prior to any networking events or opportunities. Finally, you'll take a look at the world of online networking and how you can use social media to further enhance both your exposure in the marketplace and your profitability.

Before we begin though, let's take a moment to examine some of the other core business principles that work alongside networking to ensure success. While

networking is probably one of the most important of these principles, it cannot work its magic in a vacuum. You need to make sure that the rest of your business house is order, so that when you do network you gain the most traction from your efforts and, hence, the most profit.

So, besides networking, what's the most important element in a successful business? The answer depends on the viewpoint of the business owner. An owner who is tightly focused on day to day operations may have a different answer than an owner who is taking a broad look at where the business might be in five years' time. In fact, the same owner could give you a different answer on different days, depending on where their priorities are at that time. Unfortunately, that's a problem.

You see, the basic building blocks of success don't ever change. They remain the same no matter what problems or preoccupations you may be experiencing. Your day to day perspective can and will change. The elements of success do not change. They are rock solid and immutable and you forget or ignore them at your own peril.

You can, and should, look at the elements of success much the same way that you look at the fundamentals of any sport. You need a basic understanding of both before you can even consider getting in the game. Additionally, if you want to excel and be your best then the fundamentals of success must be second nature to you, no matter the instant distractions.

So, outside of networking, what are the most important elements in a successful business? Let's take a look at the basic fundamentals involved in success and see if we can find an answer.

Resolve

Contrary to popular opinion, success does not come to those who wait. Success is earned and earned the hard way. The people who are the most successful at what they do tend to be the people who desire success the most. Achieving your goals is not a part time job. In fact, it is not a "job" at all. It is an avocation. It is a way of life. It is all-consuming.

There is a direct correlation between the level of success and the desire to achieve that success. In other words, if you want something badly enough then you increase the chances that you will reach your goals. Billionaire, Mark Cuban has been quoted saying that the reason he still works very hard every day is because he imagines that there is someone, somewhere who is working just as hard to take everything he has achieved away from him. This sense of urgency is something that every business owner needs to cultivate. Success cannot and will not be approached casually. If you take your business' success for granted, success will, very likely, fail to flower. Make sure that your business goals are always included first and foremost in every action you take.

Planning

If success depends upon a sense of urgency, it equally depends on a focused plan. Knowing where you want to go implies the need of a journey to get there. It goes without saying that every journey needs a plan on how to get from point A to point B. Without a plan, you simply run the risk of getting hopelessly lost. If you're lost, you likely won't end up where you wanted to go.

Planning is nothing more than a roadmap to success. It allows you to get to your destination in the most expeditious manner while avoiding delays and potential obstructions. No matter your goal, either long-term or short-term, you need to map out your plan on how to reach that goal.

When planning, make sure that you break down every element into actionable steps. There should be a logical flow to the plan, the same way that there is a logical flow to geographic directions. Don't leave out critical junctures in your journey. Every point that needs to be reached should be clearly outlined.

Also, use a timeline and milestones. You need to be able to measure your progress towards a given goal. Milestone achievements give you a clear idea whether you are ahead or behind schedule. Knowing this information will allow you to adjust your plan accordingly which, in turn, will keep you steadily moving towards your destination in a timely manner.

Quality

There is no doubt that quality is an important element in any successful business. In fact, you could go so far as to say that there is no truly successful business, in the long-term, that fails to provide a quality product or service. Speaking of products and services, this is an excellent time to digress for a second to address a common misconception.

There is no difference between a product and a service when it comes to quality. In the eyes of a consumer, a product and a service are exactly the same. They expect equal quality from both, as well they should. When a potential customer has a problem or experiences a need, they look to a business that can satisfy that need or solve that problem. They will, all things considered, likely choose a business that provides the highest potential quality at the lowest potential cost. In other words, they are looking to maximize their buying experience. The difference, in their eyes between a product and service, depends entirely on the problem or need at issue. In this way, it can be seen that the only real difference between a product and a service is one of form and not function.

A successful business clearly understands this concept. At all times they attempt to maximize their customers buying experience. They never make the mistake of substituting the needs or convenience of their business for the needs and convenience of their customers. In a very real sense, they subscribe to the maxim that “the customer is always right.”

Responsiveness

The concept of responsiveness is closely related to the concept of quality. A successful business is proactive when it comes to their customer base. They work to anticipate the needs of the marketplace and understand that those needs are always in flux.

When it comes to business, change is really the only reality. What worked to drive profit yesterday may not work today and certainly will not work tomorrow. The market is not static and a business owner who ignores this fact does so at their peril.

It is important for any business to keep their eye on changing market conditions. Avoid the temptation to be locked into one business model when it comes to providing marketing channels. Remember that you can be so in love with an idea that it strangles your profitability.

This is where responsiveness and quality are most closely interrelated. Meeting consumer demands is what generates profit, not meeting specific and particular business needs. Your business' operating hours, delivery times and methods of production all need to be attuned to what makes the most sense to your customer. If any or all of these are based on what makes the most sense to you, you are likely losing sales and, therefore, money. Know what your customer wants, even before they know what they want, and you will have taken an important step towards continued success.

Sales

That sales are an important element in any successful business goes without saying. It almost seems too obvious of a point to warrant discussion. However, many businesses lose sight of the importance of sales. They get so caught up in the process of running a business that they forget that the process is only there for one reason – to produce a profit. By not seeing the forest because of the trees, these businesses often founder and fail.

You are in business for one reason and one reason only – to make money. The generation of a surplus of cash is why your business exists. Yes, providing quality, responsive products or services are important, as are the planning and resolve that goes into the same. However, all of the other elements of a successful business are there to produce the sales that, in turn, produce the profit. Without sales, you're out of business.

This brings us back to the importance of networking. Effective networking is the best way to generate continued and sustained interest in what you do. This interest produces leads which produce sales which generate money. So, while sales may be the most important element of business success, networking is the most efficient way to get those sales, time and time again. With this in mind, it's

time to turn your attention to the subject at hand. Let's learn more about networking and how you can use it to take your business to the next level of profitability.

What is Networking?

At its essence, networking is an exchange of information. It is a specific form of communication, one that human beings have been using for thousands of years. Let's face it, information didn't become a valuable commodity with the invention of the Internet. Information has always been valuable.

People have always known that the right information at the right time was a powerful tool. If you knew when your enemy was going to attack, when your prey animal was likely to migrate or when a particular plant was going to be ripe you had a distinct advantage over your competitors. So, when people lacked a particular piece of knowledge that could be critical to survival, they sought out others who possessed this knowledge. They, in return, often knew something that others didn't. As a result, they were also sought out by others. People quickly realized that this mutually beneficial exchange of information was, well, mutually beneficial. These relationships were the first examples of networking.

There has always been a quid pro quo element to networking. People offered valuable anecdotal information with the expectation that the favor would be returned sometime in the future. The sharing of information was a form of a gift with a string attached. I'll help you out now by letting you in on a piece of news. In the future, when I need help, I'll expect you to do the same. In a sense, networking is a form of informational insurance. You spend a little now to protect you from potential harm in the future.

When it comes to business, these principles remain the same. You may not need to know about food sources or enemy attack, but you do need good sources of information. After all, while business may not be life or death, the marketplace is still a competitive arena. If information is power, then having the right information at the right time can give you the edge over your competition that you need to succeed. It might be that a particular piece of information could spell the difference between success and failure.

So, at its heart, networking is two like-minded people getting together and talking. Networking is really nothing more than a mutually beneficial conversation that continues over time. The benefits that each party to the conversation receives can be immediate and concrete or longer-term and indefinite. The point is that the conversation has been initiated and that the benefits of that conversation are recognized by the participants.

Networking always has been, and largely still is, a face-to-face activity. After all, this is where the phrase “face time” comes from. It recognizes the importance of being able to physically communicate with someone. When we sit or stand across from another person and talk we are doing much more than verbally communicating. When we can see the person we are talking to we can make use of a whole plethora of subtle facial queues and body language gestures that serve to build up trust and approval. As humans, we prefer (or should prefer) face-to-face communication. After all, this is how our species learned to communicate. This is why “face time” networking is the most effective way to network.

Despite the effectiveness of physical networking, technology has provided us with more convenient ways to experience what can be termed “virtual face time”. E-mail, messaging and social networking all allow an individual to use the Internet as a networking gateway. Online networking is an excellent way to open the channels of communication with numerous individuals around the world who you otherwise would have no opportunity to meet. It allows you to get your feet in the door so to speak. However, online networking cannot ever replace the potency of face-to-face networking. Establish contacts online, but if the opportunity to chat face-to-face arises, at a conference for example, make sure that you take advantage of that fact.

So, in conclusion, networking is two people talking face to face and exchanging information that is, or could be, mutually beneficial. It can be casual, informal and enjoyable. It is a form of collegial community building, both friendly and uncompetitive. Talk to the people in your line of work. Talk to the people in related fields to what you do. Get to know your competition. You’ll be surprised at what you can learn and how that knowledge can fuel your businesses success.

Takeaways for This Section

- Networking is a specific form of communication that has existed for thousands of years;
- Networking involves mutually beneficial exchanges of information;
- Networking is a form of information insurance – you share tips and advice now so that you can receive the same in the future;
- Networking is largely a face-to-face experience because people can develop trust relationships quicker through physical communication;
- Online networking allows you to expand the reach of your networking efforts, but should be followed up with physical communication if the opportunity arises;
- Networking is a casual, enjoyable and collegial process that yields valuable results.

Why Should You Network?

Why should you network? The short answer is that you should network to increase your business' profitability. Yet, there's a lot more to it than that. Profitability can be defined in a lot of different ways, depending on the circumstances. So, while you do network to become more profitable, you don't always network simply to make more money. Networking to promote your business aims to utilize your business contacts and personal relationships in order to produce a steady source of new clients and customers. While this sounds simple, the actual process itself can be more complex than it appears. Let's take a closer look.

If an army moves on its stomach, a business moves on its clientele. In order to maintain viability, a business needs to generate sales on a regular and predictable basis. Sure, regular sales mean regular profits. However, there's more to predictable sales than money. The more regular and predictable the sales, the easier it becomes to plan for growth and expansion, as well as to survive negative market fluctuations. Cash flow is like oxygen to a business. Intermittent or interrupted supplies of cash will cause problems that can become serious.

The only way to guarantee a steady cash flow is by maintaining and growing a solid customer base. No matter how much you focus on quality, responsiveness and satisfaction, you cannot control all the variables that can influence your customer's decision to patronize your business. You will inevitably lose customers to market attrition no matter what you do. People relocate to a different area. Their financial situations change. Their preferences in regard to the product or service in question alter. If you rely on your existing pool of clients you will see a smaller and smaller market share over time.

The only way to combat this natural attrition is to attract new customers regularly and often. Customers equal sales and sales equal profit. When you lose customers you lose sales and your bottom line suffers. It's that simple. So, how do you go about attracting new customers? One of the answers is networking.

Networking is probably one of the easiest and most efficient ways for you, the business owner, to garner the additional customers you need to keep your business in the black. How does this work? Well, no matter what it is that your business does, there is always someone out there who needs that particular product or service. When you meet up with colleagues, friends, relatives or former satisfied customers you have the opportunity to ask them to refer anyone in need of your product or service back to you. Because these people know you and trust you they are more than willing to “spread the word” about your business. When they do so, you begin to see more and more potential clients contacting you to inquire how you can help them. This, in turn, leads to even more satisfied clients willing to recommend your business.

As you network, you begin to build a “web of trust” through the word of mouth recommendations that are being made. The more recommendations there are, the larger this web becomes and you begin to be able to capture greater and greater shares of the market in your given field. The end result is a potentially explosive growth in your business and its profitability.

However, there are other benefits to networking outside of the opportunity to grow and become more profitable. These additional benefits may not yield direct income, but they will indirectly lead to increased revenue by advancing your exposure and reputation.

One of these collateral benefits is the opportunity to find a mentor. Nothing is new in the world of business. Older and more successful businesses in your field got to that position through the same process that you are experiencing now. The owners of these more established businesses are more than willing to help you out by offering advice and pointing out potential pitfalls. This type of mentoring can be an invaluable asset to you and your business.

Another benefit of networking is being able to discover new ideas and opening in the marketplace. There are people in your field and in related fields that bring a different perspective than yours to the table. Being able to see something through someone else’s eyes can be an enlightening experience. These colleagues can give you the heads up on developing trends that you may have missed. This allows you

to make proactive decisions to changing market conditions and capitalize accordingly.

Let's face it, everyone can get burned out. Even the best of us go through bad patches in whatever endeavor we have chosen to undertake. Oftentimes, these bad patches can spell trouble for even the most successful of businesses. If you lose the fire that got you started, you also lose the motivation to continue. Networking can help you overcome the times when you're creatively stalled. The people who you network with can help you rediscover your inspiration. They can relight that fire that drives your motivation, so that you can begin to see how to continue to achieve your goals. When the road ahead gets dark, this type of help can be invaluable.

Finally, networking can help you make friends. Everything associated with success does not entail money and how to make money. The relationships you make while doing business are what really defines true success. How you treat the people around you is, in some sense, more important than what you sell them. Networking can help you foster these types of relationships so that you can ultimately achieve true success.

Takeaways for This Section

- Networking is one of the best ways to increase your business' profitability;
- Every business suffers attrition to its client base over time;
- Networking works to combat this natural attrition by providing your business with a continuing source of new clients;
- Networking allows you to capture a greater share of your market by building a "web of trust";
- There are additional benefits to networking outside of growth and profitability, including;

- o The ability to find and use a more established business in your field as a mentor;
- o The ability to discover and take advantage of new market trends and developments;
- o The ability to use others as a source of continued inspiration;
- o The ability to foster relationships and friendships through your business.

Networking Skills

Effective networking isn't hard. After all, it's all about connecting with people. You meet people, you talk to them and you make a connection that can help your business, now or in the future. What could be easier?

The problem is that many people treat networking as if the normal and expected social etiquette that we all use on a daily basis does not apply. Somehow, because networking involves business, they feel that all bets are off when it comes to courtesy or even common sense. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, if anything, networking requires more courtesy and common sense than the average social situation.

In addition, most advice you get about networking seems a bit nebulous. The usual spiel always tends to revolve around vague suggestions that involve social media, e-mailing and business cards. This type of non-specificity is anything but helpful. Not only does it tend to scare off legitimate business owners who genuinely want to become better at networking, it also does nothing to dispel the somewhat negative associations that can surround the subject. That's because we've all been on the receiving end of some pushy person trying to sign us up for an insurance policy while we're trying to enjoy ourselves at a party.

This chapter is all about letting go of any negative preconceived notions you may have had about networking. It's also about using concrete suggestions and social etiquette to develop the appropriate behavior that leads to effective networking skills. It is less a how to chapter and more of a chapter on strategic social deployment. It's about being yourself and acting appropriately. Why? Because when networking is done correctly the results can be phenomenal. Curious? You should be. Let's get started.

The More You Network, The Better You Get

Becoming a better at networking is easy. All you have to do is get started. Effective networking is definitely a learned skill. So, like any skill, it takes practice in order to

get better. That's why you should set a specific time every day (or every other day) to spend networking. E-mail or social media messaging is a perfect way to practice you networking skills.

Find one person every day online whose work you admire. Reach out to that person in a very simple and social way. Tell them that you find what they do interesting and that you are consistently engaged by their work. Don't be pushy. Don't be flattering. Be honest and be yourself. Project your real sense of respect. Don't ask for anything specific. The tone of your message should be "Hey! I really like what you do and find it cool." You will be pleasantly surprised by the responses you get and you'll be making new connections in your line of work while you develop your skills. It's a win/win.

Know Your Contacts

It pays to know who you are talking to before you begin talking. This point all comes back to honesty and that negative feeling some of us get when the word "networking" is mentioned. You see they are all interrelated.

No one likes to get spam, either in their inbox or in their face. An insincere or dishonest communication with anyone feels like spam, and spam is never a good thing. Do you know why? It's because spam makes all of us feel used and no one likes being treated like a number.

Take the time to get to know the people who you are communicating with. If you find them genuinely interesting then that genuine interest will come across in your communications. Your contact will pick up on that honesty and respond accordingly. The end result is that your networking efforts will be that much more effective.

The Pareto Principle

The Pareto Principle, named after Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto, states that 80% of any effect comes from 20% of its causes. In business, this means that 80%

of all sales come from 20% of its sales force or that 80% of its profits come from 20% of its product line or even that 80% of its complaints come from 20% of its customers.

In networking, the Pareto Principle dictates that 80% of your most effective networking results will come from 20% of your contacts. While this may seem to make networking a numbers game, it does contain an element of truth. You do need to network with a larger group of people to see measurable results. You need to be seen by as wide an audience as possible. Conversely it also means that within this wide group, there will be a select few who become valued connections. So, get yourself out there and network. You need to move a lot of rock to find the gold within. Remember, you don't need to know everybody; you just need to know the right people.

Takeaways for This Section

- Effective networking isn't hard if you take the right approach;
- When networking use common courtesy and common sense;
- Effective networking is a learned skill that gets better with practice;
 - o Set aside time each day to network;
 - o Contact one person during this time via e-mail or social media;
 - o Honestly express your interest in, and admiration for, what they do;
- Know who you contacting before you contact them;
 - o Shallow or disingenuous communication is not effective because it feels like spam;
- 80% of your most effective networking results will come from 20% of your networking efforts;
 - o This means that in order to meet people who will have positive effect on your business you need to network with a larger group of people.

Networking Obstacles

The concept of networking obstacles is closely related to the concept of networking skills. This is because the things that hold people back from effective networking are usually non-developed or under-developed skills that come into play while networking. Another way of putting this is the negative aspects of networking become positive aspects once you begin to network. Let's take a look at some specifics.

I Can't/Won't/Don't Network

This is a catchall excuse that is more common than you realize. You can't/won't/don't network largely because you're afraid that you don't know how to do it the "right" way or because you're shy or because you're afraid. The good news is that this obstacle to networking is easily overcome. All you have to do is get out there and network! As we have discussed, there is no "right" way to network, just as there is no "right" way to socialize. All you have to do is act appropriately and behave within social norms. People enjoy admiration. They appreciate interest in what they do. They react positively to curiosity. Bring these things to the table and you will soon find that your newbie fears will evaporate. Remember, no one starts out as an expert in anything. Practice makes perfect.

I Don't/Won't Know What To Say

This is another common obstacle that stops a lot of people in their tracks when it comes to networking. Shyness or fear of being tongue-tied or saying the wrong thing keeps a lot of people from making the connections they need to make in order to be more successful. Fortunately, there is an easy answer. Be yourself.

People are predisposed to help when asked. Networking is, at its essence, all about asking for help in one form or another. Perhaps you're looking for information. Maybe you're looking for referrals or introductions. It might be that you're simply curious and want to learn more about a particular subject. All of these perfectly legitimate subjects to ask help with.

Put yourself in the shoes of the other person. Would you provide someone who approached you with the information they asked you for? If the request was genuine and legitimate, of course you would. Would you make a recommendation or referral, again if genuine and legitimate? The answer is yes. How about supplying information to the curious? There is no doubt that you would.

When you adopt the view point of the other party you can see that a legitimate and sincere request for help is usually welcomed. After all, everyone likes to help. It makes them feel better about themselves. When you want to say what you want to say before you say it, you never have to be afraid of being rebuffed. In fact, you may be surprised at the results.

I Don't Know Anyone To Network With

If you think that you don't know anyone to network with, it's probably because you haven't tried very hard to start networking. There are a vast amount of people in the world who, right now, are looking to connect with someone exactly like you. All you have to do on your end is to facilitate that connection, which is a very easy thing to accomplish.

Start with the people you know, your friends and family. Every one of them has connections to people you have yet to meet. Those people, in turn, have connections to other people who have connections to other people and so on. It is an exponential process. The more people you network with the more opportunities you have to network. It's the "Six Degrees of Separation" principle at work. Right now, at this moment, you are, at most, only six people away from anyone who you want to connect with.

Takeaways for This Section

- Most common networking obstacles are caused by under-developed networking skills;
- The more you network, the less problems these obstacles cause;

- No one starts out knowing how to do anything well, including networking;
- Bring interest and curiosity to the table when networking and your contacts will respond positively;
- Requests for information, introductions or referrals, when legitimate and genuine, are perfectly acceptable networking subjects;
- Begin by networking with your family members and close friends who can provide you with additional networking contacts.

Face-To-Face Networking Checklist

The following is a face-to-face networking checklist that you can utilize as a “cheat sheet” prior to your next networking engagement. Keep it handy and brush up as needed before you head out to connect up with new colleagues and friends.

- Visualize the goals you want to achieve, alternatively write them out (e.g. connect with # of new people or connect with a specific person);
- Bring a sufficient number of business cards;
- Make sure that your phone is fully charged;
- Bring a pen and notebook as a backup, as well as an extra pen to share;
- Make sure that you have plenty of breath mints;
- If alcohol is being served, eat something before you leave;
- Have your elevator speech practiced and ready (This is what you say, 30 seconds or less, when someone asks what it is you do.);
- Check how you look in a mirror;
- Remember to listen more than you speak;
- Remember to think before you speak;
- Remember to smile;
- Ask open ended questions (e.g. “How do you feel about... or What’s your opinion of...);
- After the event or meeting, make a notation on every business card you collected that memorializes the specifics of that person and your encounter with them;

- Send a casual “it was nice to meet you” e-mail to everyone you connected with and extend an invitation to them to contact you if they need more information about what you discussed;
- Think about what you did and didn’t do and what you could have done differently – incorporate those changes, if any, into this checklist before your next face-to-face networking event.

Online Networking

The internet has definitely changed some aspect of traditional networking. The ability to instantaneously connect with nearly anyone else on the planet has meant that networking has become something of a 24/7 operation. This is not necessarily a bad thing. Being able to reach out and connect with likeminded individuals is the purpose of networking to begin with. However, like everything else in life, online networking needs to be used in moderation. Simply because you can connect with anyone at any time doesn't necessarily mean that you should do so.

One of the first things to remember when online networking is the rules of etiquette that govern face-to-face networking still apply. When contacting someone electronically, use the same techniques that you would use to contact them physically. Be genuine, be honest and be yourself. Know the background of the person you are contacting before you contact them. Express interest and admiration, but don't gush. Most importantly, don't spam them by asking for something during the first round of communication. Let the relationship develop naturally. It's all about common curtesy and common sense really. The problem is that the inherently "faceless" nature of internet communications lulls some people into behaviors that would be absolutely inappropriate in a physical setting. If you keep this in mind, you can use online networking to your decided advantage.

While there are numerous social media sites that offer the potential for online networking, there are three sites in particular that every business owner should be using.

The first is Facebook. Facebook is a great place to nurture new business relationships. It can also be a great place to advertise and promote your business. Your business should definitely have a Facebook presence through its own Facebook business page. Just don't heavily advertise on that page or get into customer disputes.

Twitter is also a social media outlet that bears looking into. It's an excellent platform for promotion of new products, events or business news. You can also use it to effectively demonstrate your expertise in your given field. Again, a little use goes a long way. Avoid bombarding you followers with endless Tweets. Think before you Tweet and only Tweet when you have something important to say.

Finally, there's LinkedIn. LinkedIn is more than just a resume site. It contains numerous groups and blogs that are dedicated to very specific areas of expertise in almost every area of business that you can imagine. This makes LinkedIn the pre-eminent place to develop business to business connections. Again, while you can use LinkedIn to demonstrate you competence and knowledge, avoid being a know-it-all. A little online promotion goes a long way.

Conclusion

We've come to the end of our look into the world of communication and business networking. It is a subject that one can learn quickly and then spend a lifetime mastering. That's because the more that you network the more you learn about networking. This new knowledge then can be put to use to make you and even more effective communicator.

You've taken a look at what networking is, as well as how it relates to the other important building blocks of business success. You've also learned why networking is important to your business. You've looked at some specific networking techniques and you've seen how common networking obstacles can be easily overcome. You've also been given a networking checklist that you can use prior to your next networking event. Finally, you took a brief look into the world of online networking.

Now, the ball is in your court. It's time to take what you've learned and put it into practice. Head out there and make yourself and your business visible. Meet the people who will become your new customers, collaborators and colleagues. The more you network, the stronger you and your business will become!