

NETWORKING TIPS

Business owners as well as employees wishing to expand or further succeed in their careers need to spend considerable time in developing relationships if they wish to accelerate opportunities, rather than simply relying upon good luck.

The foundation for relationships in our view is based upon trust.

As such the process of networking is an investment of time and will take many years of hard work to ensure the relationships are developed and remain productive.

That does not necessarily mean each party will directly derive an increase in sales revenue or income from the relationship. Each party brings a myriad of benefits to the table and often these relationships provide indirect benefits such as an extended referral or the benefit of mentoring or the sharing of an experience.

By keeping an open mind and looking for positive outcomes in these relationships, we can all achieve a benefit or find improvements in our performance.

One trick with networking is to become proactive.

Some of us might find this process difficult and or uncomfortable but with regular contact and the sharing of ideas, we believe you can achieve an improvement in your personal development. Showing an interest in someone else who is leading a conversation is something we all find relatively easy to do.

Here are just a few tips.

1. Take control of your circumstances rather than thinking or doing nothing about it. Networking requires going beyond your comfort zone and challenging yourself if you seek improvement. Don't just say you will do it, actually do something!
2. Establish a goal to meet more people over a defined period. Attend several events for your industry or profession/trade and get to know a few people by mixing during the breaks. This may not always result in an ongoing relationship but will develop your networking skills and confidence.
3. Consider attending or joining a network group. This is an additional means of meeting more people who are likely to have a similar mind set for development.
4. Relationships operate on a two-way street so don't expect new or existing contacts to instantly want to help you. Be prepared and in fact be actively thinking about all your relationships and consider how you can help them. Generally you will get something in return over time and accept that the "scorecard" will never be even.
5. A referral is an opportunity to discuss business with someone who might be in the market to use your product or service. You should respect the opportunity and do not assume it is a guarantee to do business. People appreciate help. Demonstrate that you can assist them and go that extra mile if the opportunity has been referred to you by someone who has placed their trust in you.
6. When someone is talking, make sure you listen. Most people participate in a conversation but do not listen as they are keen to express their own viewpoint.



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7. We often say we are too busy, what a great excuse. Make the time and find a way to get consistency in your schedule. The inability to find the time is often based upon a lack of desire or if you are not clear about what you want to achieve.
8. There are often interactions where questions are being asked. Try and be creative in your response rather than give a simplistic reply. This will generally lead to further dialogue with the other party who is then likely to be engaged in the conversation and with you.
9. Think of questions in advance to ask someone while in a networking environment. Once again that is likely to create an interest and extend the conversation, which in turn may set you apart from others.
10. Be approachable and find out what brought them to the event. Try and introduce them to others once you have established a rapport.
11. Create a clear understanding of what it is you hope to obtain as new business. This can entail developing a pitch about your business and the value add that you consider can best describe you and your business. We suggest a summary of around ten to twenty seconds should suffice otherwise people will become disengaged in what you are saying.
12. Make a list of people that you believe might best be able to assist you in your endeavours and make a time to meet up with them and ask them for their opinion.

Please feel free to let us know if you have any tips that have helped you over the years so we can further pass these on to others in our next newsletter.

