

Networking –

Starts when the event is finished

Networking isn't what you do *at* a meeting; it's what happens *because* you were at the meeting. Here are the steps:

1: FOLLOW THROUGH IN WRITING WITH EVERYONE YOU SHOOK HANDS WITH: A quick note or email message will help the people you met remember *your* name – it's easier when they read it. Remember: it's who knows *you* that counts.

QUICK REMINDER: *Make sure your follow through message is about them, their business – never a sales pitch for yours.*

2: START THE ACTION YOU SUGGESTED: It's natural during conversation to have ideas and make suggestions. If you said "I know someone who. . ." put a call in to the person who wasn't there, suggesting a 3-way lunch. If you mentioned that you read an article, make a copy, jot a note and pop it in the mail. If you talked about a service that someone else needed, fax through a flyer with a note of endorsement.

QUICK REMINDER: *One purpose of networking is to build credibility so that people will refer their clients to you. Follow through action makes you credible.*

3: UPDATE YOUR DATABASE: The most valuable networking asset is a database. Whether you keep yours in a Rolodex, on the computer, or on 5x7 color coordinated index cards, update it after each event. I include the date and function where we met; info about children, pets, vacations; and how I followed through.

QUICK REMINDER: *Don't add anyone to your email newsletter who hasn't asked to be added – that's spam.*

Do good... Network... Make Money - W!

Wendy Kinney gets people in shape to do great business. She is a voracious reader and distills the best of her knowledge and experience into programs full of audience "Ah Ha's! Ask for Wendy's Networking Booklist by sending an email to Wendy@WendyKinney.com with " Networking Booklist" in the subject line.

Use a Referral Activator

If you have ever had a friend miss an opportunity to give you a referral or found out that a client used a competitor for a service you offer, you can benefit from a Referral Activator. Here are the rules:

1: KEEP IT SHORT: It's unreasonable to expect anyone to remember a three paragraph mission statement when a referral opportunity for you pops up. Referral Activators are short – generally a few words, or a phrase. Darrel Israel says, "I get the facts." During a conversation about prospective employees it's easy to bring Darrell into the conversation by saying "Call Darrell. He'll get the facts."

2: IT MUST BE POSITIVE: Neither self-deprecating or sarcastic humor instill the confidence that is required for referral generation. Confident competence creates referrals.

3: USE IT EVERYWHERE, ALL THE TIME: Frequency and repetition are the keys. Where can you use a Referral Activator? On your fax cover sheet, when you write a letter, in your InfoMinutes, on your web site, in your voice mail message, in your email signature. . .

Cindy Miller, Bedrock Concepts, "rocks the web". How do I know? A friend of hers told me while we were talking about web designers. That's referral activator success!

Ready. . . Set. . . Start your 'net' working - W!

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Networking –

Three ways to build a credit balance

Life happens. There are times when we can't perform as promised. People who know that's 'just not like us' are willing to make allowances. To build a credit balance:

1: ONLY TELL NON-PROVABLE LIES: When building a credibility bank account it is important for people to believe everything you say. While it may seem expedient at the moment to tell someone what you think they want to hear, it is more credible to have a reputation for always telling the actual facts. (*Excuses and blame don't build credibility either.*)

2: SET YOURSELF UP TO DO SOMETHING: You can create the reputation of doing what you say you will if you often say that you'll do something, and then do it! Make a habit of saying "I'll call you with that", or "I'll mail that to you," and set up systems so that you always do – immediately. When something falls through a crack people will give you the benefit of the doubt, if they have several previous positive experiences.

3: GIVE OTHER PEOPLE THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT: When someone has established a credibility balance with you, and you hear that someone else has experienced them differently, it is easy for you to say "That's just not like him. I'm sure something must have happened." We get what we give. When you are generous with others, people will be generous with you.

Bad word-of-mouth travels even faster than good things. Build a credibility account for yourself; it's an important part of your brand.

Do good... Be Credible... Make Money - W!

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Networking – Working the Numbers

Salespeople are often taught that sales is a ‘numbers’ game. Master Networkers have some demographic knowledge too. Use these numbers to gauge your success at an open networking event:

1: SPEAK WITH SIX TO TEN PEOPLE AN HOUR: After a two-hour open networking event check your pocket. You win if you have at least twelve, but not more than 20 business cards. If you haven’t met at least twelve people in two hours you were schmoozing with friends, not networking. If you collected more than 20 cards your conversations weren’t long enough for people to remember you when you follow through with them. Speak with each person you meet for six to 10 minutes. Long enough to have a conversation and find out what you have in common.

2: HALF OF THE PEOPLE YOU SPEAK WITH ARE PROSPECTS: It is unreasonable to think that you will sell your product to everyone you meet. Some people may want it, but are unable to afford it; some people may need it, but don’t want it. Know that about half of the people you speak with are prospective clients. If you have 12 cards, six of those people are waiting to hear from you. Follow through quickly.

3: HALF OF THE PROSPECTS ARE IN THE IMMEDIATE MARKET FOR YOUR PRODUCT OR SERVICE: If you met 12 people, and half of them, six, are prospects, then know that half of the prospects, or three of the people you met, are in the immediate market for your product or service. If your closing rate is 50% that means you’ll net one or two new clients from the two hours you spent meeting 12 new people, and following through with each of them.

Two new clients in two hours? That’s networking success.

Network and prosper - W!

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Lurking is not Networking

In the on-line world it is easy to sneak around the edges, learning, unobserved. But business networking is high touch – and that means participation. These guidelines ensure your networking success.

1: JOIN THREE DIFFERENT TYPES OF BUSINESS NETWORKING

ASSOCIATIONS: Maximize your networking time by participating in one weekly and two monthly groups. Plan to benefit in different ways from each of them: industry education, business referrals, community involvement, social recreation, personal growth and public relations are distinct and valid reasons for participation.

2: BE AN OFFICER OR AN ACTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER: It is possible to join and still lurk. Guarantee your networking success by serving in a visible position. You benefit when you show other members that you are a reliable and responsible participant.

3: SHOW LURKERS HOW TO NETWORK: As a member, you know how difficult it can be to join a group in progress. That is often why we lurk. It can be your mission to make it easier for those who come in after you. Invite them to serve on your committee, introduce them to each other, share a podcast, schedule a 3-way lunch, hook them up with a prospective client, subscribe to their newsletter, pass on information, invite them to be your guest at another networking meeting.

Make a name for yourself: Networker.

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