



Networking into Great Success

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We have all heard that networking is an integral part to the success of your business. But what is networking?

Simply stated, networking is the ability to establish relationships that can lead to business. Most of the time, the path to business is indirect, such as referrals. The person you know knows someone else who needs your products or services. This is a very important rule of networking. Most businesses attend networking events hoping to establish immediate clients. It doesn't work that way. The goal of attending networking events should be to meet two or three people and find a reason to build a professional relationship. New clients will most likely come from an indirect referral that they know needs your products or services.



Business Resource Network
connecting businesses

Networking means taking those contacts and constructing them into indirect salespeople for your business. Talk to your contacts about what you do and who you are. However, in turn, you must listen to them to see how you might assist them in what they do.

The people you need to know or the people that can help you might be right under your nose. Think about who has taken an interest in you lately or in the past. Ask yourself who have you been good friends with or who do you always talk business with when you get together. Maybe someone has helped you or offered encouragement or advice in your business. The other possibilities are friends, neighbors, former employers, your doctor, banker, accountant and attorneys. The list could go on and on. The idea is we are already networking all around us on a daily basis and the people to build your network are with you everyday.

Another powerful way of building professional relationships and generating new business opportunities is through Networking Groups. There are many of these groups independently organized and through your local chambers of commerce. The more relationships you build, the more you increase your referral opportunities, strengthen your reputation and improve the quality of your client base. Making and maintaining these relationships is crucial to your career and business growth, regardless of whether you have your own business or work in a firm.

When you go to a Networking Group for the first time, it is important to realize that many people in the room attend regularly. There also may be many visitors and guests just like yourself there. Take a moment to get to know everyone, ask if it is their first time there and what other groups they may attend. Maybe their other groups allow visitors as well. People love to take a guest to networking meetings. Sometimes there is extra recognition for the person who brings a guest. When you arrive, be sure to ask the person who brought you to introduce you around. This will create a good association for the members of that group and help you to be more productive.

After becoming a member, be sure you are making the most of your networking group. To be a successful networker, you must have a giving attitude. You are joining to get business, but you really need to find ways to contribute and help other members of the group. For the most part, members will get what they give.

You should also make sure you get to know the other members. Spend some time outside the meetings to become better acquainted. You will gain more respect for the desire to get to know them. Another suggested way of making the most of your Networking Group is try for perfect attendance. The more you go, the more they will know you and your business. It takes time for people to gain confidence, trust and feel comfortable enough to refer business to you. Show you are committed to your members and make your groups a priority.

Everywhere you go, everyone you meet, add their business card into your system to grow your network. Refer your group members as much as possible. Remember that everyone is a potential referral source. The more people you come into contact with, the higher your probability for success. Do not rule out people who are indirectly related to what you want to achieve. They may be a valuable source of knowledge or advice, or may be able to introduce you to others who want to refer you business.

Networking is important, invaluable and an essential activity for every professional. If you are not doing something about networking right now, it is likely that you are limiting your future prospects and ultimately harming your career. Knowing people who already believe in you and your company, people who will recommend you, refer to you and open doors for you, can make the difference between marginal performance and great success.

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