



It's Not Work, It's Network

The Little Red Book of Selling—Jeffrey Gitomer

The 21.5 best places to network (and the secrets to being successful at it)

How important is networking? Real important. What can networking do for your relationships? Build them. What can networking do for your sales? Make them. What can networking do for your success? The right contacts and connections can make or break it.

If you're trying to be successful, it's the difference between mediocre and big. If networking is so important, why aren't you out there doing more of it?

Here are the big four reasons:

1. You think it takes too much time, and you are unwilling to dedicate the time.
2. You have a "they don't pay me enough money to do this" attitude, and you are doomed to negativity and mediocrity.
3. You think cold calling is a great way to prospect.
4. You want to, but you don't know how or where.

If you are #4, I can help you. And this information is vital to making a successful networking plan. If you're #1-3, this information is not for you, but don't worry, you already know everything anyway, so this would just be a review.

It's business leisure conducted before and after work—as opposed to business frantic, which is conducted from 9 to 5 (the exception being lunch.)

Networking is a mandatory function of business for salespeople and entrepreneurs. But everyone in every segment of commerce and career networks. Great scientists, electrical engineers, and surgeons all have their annual meeting of some kind where they get together and "talk shop". Giant trade shows attract buyers and sellers

from all over the world.

What do you need to be a successful networker?

- A GREAT 30-second commercial that engages and asks questions that qualify the prospect, and gets to the next step in the sales cycle if there's an interest.
- Your willingness to dedicate the time it takes to do it and be excellent at it.
- A plan of where and when.

To maximize your networking effectiveness, you must follow one simple rule:

RULE A1A — go where your customers and prospects go, or are likely to be.

Ok, here we go — the 21.5 BEST places to network are:

1. Chamber of Commerce business event after hours. Tried and true. They always net a few contacts and renew old friendships. They are also a GREAT place to try out your new 30-second personal commercial. NOTE: Often at a business networking event everyone's trying to sell—you gotta be able to wear either the buyer or seller hat, and listen for your opportunity.
2. A high level Chamber of Commerce event. Board of directors or advisors meeting. Annual dinner. The Chamber of Commerce is your best local networking resource, IF you take advantage of it.
3. Any Business Journal event. Forty under forty, power breakfasts, seminars. Places where movers and shakers go. The Business Journal reader and event attendee demographics are staggering. They are ALL people who make things happen.

Networking is life skills and social skills combined with sales skills.

What are the principles of networking?

- To get known by those who count
- To get more prospects
- To make more contacts
- To make more sales
- To make a career advancement
- To build your reputation

"Networking is becoming known by those who count, and you can only become known by showing up."

How many life-long friends do you make cold-calling?

4. A networking club or business organization where solid business contacts belong and participate. In Charlotte it's groups like the Metrolina Entrepreneurial Council, the Hood Hargett Breakfast Club, and the Metrolina Business Council. The more you attend, the more you get known, grow, and succeed in your market.
 5. Someplace where like-minded people belong. The Touchdown Club, your college alumni club, the ACT users club. Having common ground always gets a conversation going.
 6. Any type of class you take to learn more and make yourself better. Toastmaster's, Dale Carnegie, even learning a foreign language. Other people who want to improve will also be there. You will improve and make lifetime friendships.
 7. A civic organization. Rotary, Kiwanis, Elks, Moose, Lions. Any civic animal will do. Meetings are a great place to build relationships with others, and help the community at the same time. **SUCCESS HINT:** Be a leader, not just a member.
 8. Attend a cultural event. The theater and the symphony attract people with class and money. Take in a show and meet them.
 9. Get involved with a charity or be a community volunteer— Everything from the American Cancer Society to the symphony society have people who help behind the scenes. Be one of them.
 10. Your trade or professional association. This is the best place to learn about your product, your competition AND your customers at the same time.
 11. Your best customer(s) trade or professional association. This is the great place to learn more about your customers AND get introduced to your prospects. **SUCCESS HINT:** Be a seminar presenter, not just an attendee.
 12. Trade Shows. Both industry specific and general business shows are excellent places to get known, get sales, and get ahead. Take the success hint from above and add the ingredient of hard work, rather than partying, and you have the formula for trade show success. It may be your best networking venue of them all, and most people waste it on having a "non-stop-whoop-it-up-we're-away-from-home" attitude.
 13. Join a private club. A golf country club, a food and networking club like Club Corp. with branches all over the US, or a small private club. In Charlotte, it's Belle Acres, America's premier private club. Great food (Mike the chef is beyond superb). Great atmosphere (fascinating memorabilia on every wall). Great service (always with a smile and some humor). Great owner (bud Mingles and his dry wit adds to the fun of being there). Oh, and great networking (every Charlotte big-wig eventually eats at Belle Acres).
 14. Meal networking. Invite a prospect to dine. Then invite a prospect for him or her. While in the restaurant, see who else is in the bar. Hop around without being rude. Introduce everyone you meet to whoever you brought. Make it ultra friendly. Compliment everyone in your introduction. **PERSONAL NOTE:** I have my morning breakfast at Einstein's Bagels. I love the food and service. I have all my morning meeting there. I ALWAYS meet other people there. My breakfast meeting is always to do a deal. And often my chance meetings result in business. **SUCCESS HINT:** Own a restaurant or three. Places where you frequent and know the owners or managers. It plays a major role in your meal networking.
 15. Health Club. Exercise and network. Get healthy and wealthy at the same time. In Charlotte, it's the "Y". Join the "in" club and get "in" shape to win.
 16. Sports Events. Both games and tailgates. Everyone eventually goes to the ball game. And for the competitive sports nut within you, play the Networking Game. It's in my book The Sales Bible.
 17. Parents of your children's friends. If you have a big prospect whose kid plays ball in the same league as your kid, you'll have a big advantage to make him a big customer.
 18. Happy Hour. Can be a great place to make a quick connection. Just don't get too happy.
 19. Karaoke. Not only do you have a blast and meet people, you also improve your presentation skills every time you sing a song.
 20. Neighborhood homeowner's association/condo association. Get to know your neighbors and who they know.
 21. The airplane. I don't mean you need to meet every passenger, but get to know your seatmate. You never know who they know until you ask. I always try to sell a book to the person sitting next to me. It's fun, it's practice and it's profitable.
- 21.5 Being ready to network when you get there. Woody Allen says 90% of success is showing up. And he's almost right. Ninety percent of success is showing up **PREPARED**. Having your personal commercial, or cocktail commercial, or one minute hook ready to spin at a moment's notice is evidence of your networking prowess—or not.
- Ok, I've given you the meat.
- Here's your personal action plan:
- List the possible areas—every one of them.
- Figure out who goes there now and who **MAY** be there. Figure out what business enticement you have and start there.
- SECRET:** Get respected by those who count—don't just attend—get involved and lead.
- BIG SECRET**—The key advantage is that networking is relaxed: business leisure. The workday is busy: business frantic. You'll get more done and see more people in the leisure zone.
- BIGGEST SECRET**—Be aware of who is around you wherever they are. The danger of that is not paying attention to the person you are talking to. Another work for that would be: **RUDE**. But the moment you're free, your peripheral vision must be 360 degrees. The more you pay attention, the more it will pay.
- It is important to note that these "best places to network" are not just ideas and suggestions. Every item listed above is something I do personally, and have had **MAJOR** success with. These are things I do, not just things I teach.
- Make contacts, make sales, eliminate cold calling, build your career, build relationships, build your reputation, and make friends. I have met my life-long best friends networking—and I also do business with them—thousands of dollars worth.
- I HAVE A CHALLENGE FOR YOU:**
- Between now and next week, attend three networking functions from the list above. I guarantee you will make more contacts, build more relationships, and maybe even make a sale or two.

“To make the most of a networking event, spend 75% of your time with people you don't know.”

- Jeffrey Gitomer



Get face to face first. Meeting someone on the phone (cold calling them—even from a referral) is not the best way to start any relationship. It can work, I'm just saying it's not the best way. When you meet someone face to face you can see them and hear them at the same time. This is 100 times more insightful. Networking is the best way to create initial face to face meetings. It doesn't just have to be a business after hours type of thing. It can also be a three way lunch, a trade association meeting, even an annual convention. The reason face to face is so powerful is that your prospect can get to like you faster. The more they like you the more they will buy from you. Networking builds rapport that leads to appointments and sales. Lots of sales.

Networking eliminates cold calling. As I've stated 1,000 times before, I consider cold calling a waste of time. Either by phone or knocking on doors you're interrupting someone by trying to barge in and sell something. It works, but not very often. And cold calling (or should I say lack of ability to cold call) is the single biggest cause of job turnover. Consider for a moment your annual convention or trade show. One hundred exhibitors, maybe more, with decision makers milling about. People you couldn't get to see within a year of cold calling are all in the same room at the same time. What could you be thinking? If you meet them first and they like you, you will have an easier time getting your phone call through and making a meeting. And think of it in the reverse. Suppose you cold call someone and then saw them at a tradeshow. What would you say to that guy?

"Hey remember me? I'm the guy that cold called you and you hung up?"

Networking leads to referrals. Not every networking contact is a direct prospect for your business. Through an advanced networking technique called netweaving created by Bob Little in Atlanta, GA (www.netweaving.com), you can help other people find resources at a networking event. When you do this, you will find that other people will help you. In addition, you can go to a networking event where your customers go and they may just introduce you to other people like themselves, who may also be willing to buy from you.

Networking works well
when you employ the two-
word secret: Show Up.

Networking works best
when you employ the three-
word secret: Show Up Pre-
pared.