



The Rapport Superstar

Blueprint for Networking Success

John H. Lee

JohnTheNetworker

The Rapport Superstar- Blueprint for Networking Success
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**This book is dedicated to the memories of
John and Sarah Davis and Charles Getao (RIP)

Author's Overview:

Welcome, and thank you for reading. Throughout my life, I've been able to meet people and develop friendships as most people do. I've always had a fascination and passion for hearing about the various aspects of their lives. It always seemed to be exciting to me. In short, I guess you could say that I'm a people person. I've never really had difficulty approaching a total stranger, extending my hand, and introducing myself or asking questions. I believe it is due to my natural curiosity and genuine interest in what I might learn. They didn't always (and still don't) give exciting, adventurous stories or unbelievable accounts of their daily routine or experiences but I found that having that curiosity and providing an active ear opened up the door for a friendship to begin.

After a while I found that everyone didn't share this genuine interest in people and some people were even quite intimidated by the idea of sparking up conversations with strangers. I couldn't have been more incorrect in assuming that everyone shared my enthusiasm about building friendships. However, once I discovered this, I was driven to help. I believe that everyone can build alliances and friendships by simply understanding a few basic principles, overcoming some basic self image barriers, and putting some proven practices into place.

The Rapport Superstar will inform and enlighten you on the basic principles, barriers and practices I referenced above. You will get a new understanding about relationships and how they are built. You will discover some methods for making them more fruitful in causing them to deliver what you want on-demand. You will also begin to understand how important it is to be a great listener and how the power of listening can be your “Yellow Brick Road”, leading you to the prosperity you seek.

Building instant rapport is like opening the door to the possibilities. It begins with networking and positioning yourself in the right places. I couldn’t be more correct when I say “It’s not what you know but who.” The question is; “Who do you know?” If you happen to think that you don’t know the “right” people or not enough people, it’s okay. The Rapport Superstar’s goal is to turn that around, add on to your current network and leverage your relationships positively.

In this book, I will show you how to properly take stock of your network and introduce you to the new “Powerductions”™ (Powerful Introductions) system. Sold separately, the Powerductions™ system gives you detailed instructions and effective actions to take in order to supercharge your contact base. When used correctly, it truly will put you in direct contact with those decision makers and people of influence you seek. It works best when combined with LinkedIn and other Online Business Social Networks.

I believe The Rapport Superstar works best when read cover to cover but skimming and probing around randomly can still be an enlightening and educational experience. However, I

do recommend reading the first section and gaining a better understanding of networking and relationship development. I wish you much luck and success as you gain new insight on business networking and become the next Rapport Superstar!

John H. Lee

JohnTheNetworker

Section 1:

In Section 1 I discuss getting to know and understand networking. You'll start to discover opportunities around you easily obtained through business networking.

Introduction

Networking is all Around Us

We often look at business networking as an apparent means of generating new business and contacts. It is viewed as a sure way, when you have developed the right skills, to firm up good business relationships and sky rocket your career goals. However, we seldom look at the larger picture and how our surrounding world is formed due to so much networking.

These are examples of which I speak;

Major Motion Pictures and TV Shows

I am a huge fan of all types of movies and TV shows. Like millions of other people, I enjoy these forms of entertainment but in reality, I am enjoying a finished product and this finished product, as a result of behind the scenes networking.

Envision all of those producers, agents, actors, technicians, wardrobe companies, and so on, networking with each other to bring us a fabulous finished product. Just notice the credits that go up the screen at the end of these movies and TV shows. That's a lot of networking!

Skyscrapers and Large Real Estate Projects

Just visit any major city on planet Earth and take a look at the enormous architecture. In doing so, you are viewing the direct results of business networking.

Those buildings are full of offices and suites rented by companies and individual tenants. Just imagine all of the networking that occurred to make all of this possible. Can you see the real estate executives, construction company reps, law firms, and government officials meeting one on one to make it a reality?

Major Music Concerts

I recently attended a great old-school hip-hop concert and enjoyed it very much. While it was happening, I was enjoying the results of concert promoters, booking agents, stage and lighting crews, artist, managers, record company execs, etc., networking with each other to produce a memorable showcase.

Relations between Countries

Where ever we live in the world, we must acknowledge where our countries originated from. Of course, there are disagreements among different countries all the time but at many points in the peace keeping process, there is a great deal of networking taking place. There are literally thousands of delegates, statesmen, ambassadors, presidents, secretaries, and more that are networking to try and maintain a peaceful world.

Joint Ventures between Huge Corporations

All we need to do is open up a magazine, go online, or watch TV for a period of time and we will see large corporations partnering with others to bring us a combo product of some sort. An example would be; McDonalds and its Happy Meal toys. Think for a moment about the networking that took place in order for this sizeable joint venture to exist.

It's Not Just Networking Events

When most people hear the term "Business Networking", they envision events with professionals shaking hands and exchanging business cards. This is a common aspect of business networking but it doesn't encompass it all. Yes, there are literally millions of business networking events held every week, all over the world but the ones that are specifically structured for exchanging business cards are not the only ones where networking is possible.

Furthermore, the act of business networking goes well beyond events and introductions. For example; when you contact a person that you have met through a networking event or even walking down the street, what happens afterward, (as far as interaction is concerned), is part of networking.

If you look at all of the things that can happen as a result of you meeting a new person, you'll start to see networking in a much more expanded light. Think about this, all of the interactions that occur after the first introduction can be considered networking. What exactly is it that happens in those following communications?

A common scenario is; one guy meets another guy. They realize that they may have some commercial commonalities that can lead to a profitable outcome. They then speak again shortly after their initial meeting, an in person meeting is set, and the details are discussed. After a few subsequent meetings and conversations, business is transacted and hopefully profitability occurs.

While all of the above was happening, either guy was being exposed to the others involved. As they were being exposed, more introductions were occurring and much more networking and interactions were taking place. This is just one scenario but the many independent points of interaction that were taking place can be considered business networking.

There were multiple things happening through those interactions. There were some business cards exchanged and there were some notes that were compared. Ultimately, people

were working together harmoniously towards a certain objective.

Some of them made stronger connections than others and some may lead to future interactions and even friendships. Once again, from the subtle to the intense, relationships were being born. This is what networking is all about.

As you can see from just the simple examples above, business networking and social networking in general transcend events. Consider how diverse and gigantic the activities and effects of business networking really are.

The Good, the Bad, & the Ugly of Networking

There are pros and cons for everything under the sun and I'd be incorrect if I said that did not apply to networking. Personally, I continue to search for the dull moments that come with networking but fortunately, I have yet to find any. It's always a new adventure in my opinion and I wish that others felt the same way.

Nevertheless, there is so much to it. It could never really be summed up in one word. I would probably have to talk for an entire evening until the sun came up about the good and bad that comes with networking. From strategic alliances to personal friendships, to everything in between, the possibilities are never ending. Throughout all of the possibilities there exists the good, the bad, and the ugly;

The Good

I'll start with my favorite aspect of networking. Maybe it's better that I say, my favorite results from networking. I have made some of my very best friends from engaging in networking practices. These people are lifelong friends, so it's not your typical one night stand, so to speak. I have also discovered and created some valuable business partnerships through networking. Some worked out great and some not so great but my point is that through the process, business took place and profits were made as a result.

If nothing else, I have many contacts on deck and when something is needed like resources or simply advice, I've got people. Another good thing is that if I don't know someone, through networking activities, I can. This is a result of being active in the accumulation of business contacts and letting myself be seen.

Many people complain that they are just not meeting enough of the right people to help in their career direction. When you are actively involved in business networking, you are increasing your chances of meeting those "right" people. Furthermore, if you are networking correctly by sharing referrals, introducing people and following up with those you meet, the rewards will speak for themselves.

In time, your 1 on 1 people skills will slowly develop into expert status. This is a benefit that is not immediately obvious but through trial and error, building great relationships will seem effortless. Consider the fact that when your 1 on 1

people skills are adequate, you will see a phenomenal increase in the positive results you get using all other communication methods, for example; telephone, e-mail, etc. After being consistent, you will notice your own center of influence will expand. If you are engaged actively in meeting, communicating, and generally helping many individuals, you will be liked as well as respected. When these types of things occur your center of influence grows and you will become well-respected by default.

Networking regularly gives you the opportunity to speak a lot about your profession. You will have the opportunity to educate many people about what you do when you meet them. This situation causes you to be on your toes and more knowledgeable about your profession. While networking for better business returns, you will meet an abundance of individuals who aren't directly connected to your goals. Meeting individuals like this can benefit you in other ways like; finding a good plumber, helping you to get hired at a new company, or help you to locate any other specialist in a particular field. A personal referral usually holds more merit.

The Bad

The bad that can be associated with networking is no different from the bad that can be associated with many other things. For example; have you ever had a relationship go sour? Have you ever had a business deal tank? Yes, these can be the results of networking. It all comes with the territory so, it must

be taken with a grain of salt. You may find several events that may not be to your liking. This is an occupational hazard of business networking in which you attend networking events with high expectations but are disappointed by the outcome. As with anything, this is not justification to give up but it does happen. Some things are just unavoidable but, on an optimistic note, you live and you learn.

An unruly, undesirable individual may enter your life through networking. I know that this is an aspect that's not discussed too frequently but I must be honest. Sometimes you can attract individuals through your friendly networking activities which could prove energy draining if not detrimental to your career. Others in your newly found network may not be as receptive as you would like. It is very true that many people talk a good game but in the heat of the moment, when you need them most, they can let you down.

Networking doesn't work for everybody. Yes, there are some individuals out there, as rare as they may be, where networking and building relationships with different people just isn't their cup of tea. A small minority of people will find that no matter how hard they try, it just won't deliver the desired results. If you are an extreme example of a socially inhibited individual, getting out and networking could be very traumatic for you. I'm not saying that it's something you can't overcome but it could very well turn out to be a not so positive experience. This is sad but it is true.

Sometimes there are situations where an individual has already lost the battle before it has even begun. Sometimes it

may not even be obvious to the individual but they may just have an aversion towards being social. In other words, they may just dislike people in general. In this case, it's a pity because they believe that networking is what is wrong when in fact it is really them. Personally, I believe that business networking is imperative to success and can work for most people in a positive way.

The Ugly

As you progress through your business networking experiences, you may wonder if meeting all of these people and creating all these relationships is really worth it. Some of the bonds you have created may not seem to be delivering any measurable value.

This can be a very subjective issue and it depends on what your goals are and how you will use business networking to assist in your goal achievement. So, while confusion and uncertainty are the ugly parts, persistence and perseverance transcend ugly. The confusion that is often associated with networking comes in the form of popular myths like:

- *People won't take me seriously because I'm just getting started.*
- *The only people who go to networking events are Finance Reps and Real Estate Agents.*

- *Everyone will try to sell me something.*

For just about every situation in the world, there lies a set of facts and an equal set of untruths. Facts are facts no matter how you try and twist them. They can't be changed but they can be misunderstood through misconceptions and rumors. These rumors and misconceptions, of course can cause an altering of beliefs. And once beliefs are changed, the domino effect begins. An individual could have been on the right track to achieving all of the success in his/her wildest dreams but because of a misconception that led to a belief, the opposite is what results.

It's always good to get all the facts about anything you're interested in. Sometimes all the facts aren't openly available but through a little research and self initiative, myths and legends are dispelled. In other words, once you personally have the facts, it's hard to believe anything else. However, when you are responding to hear-say, you may proceed to act but those actions are not based on fact. Business networking is not immune to misconceptions, myths, and legends. It seems that everything that is worth something is prone to this evil.

People won't take me seriously because I'm just getting started.

This is a myth because there are others who are networking as well, that are not established either. Not to mention, business networking is about carrying on conversations to build future prospects. Therefore, an

established individual or company welcomes the opportunity to meet rising stars. Any business, established or just beginning, is always fixated on the future and new opportunities. You will be taken seriously by those who are serious themselves.

The only people who go to networking events are Finance Reps and Real Estate Agents.

This is a big myth and I can personally vouch for the fact that I have met people in more industries than I can count at networking events. I will admit that I don't believe I've ever attended a single event without at least a few real estate agents or a financial rep. However, networking events are full of diversity. Typically, you will find professionals from each end of the spectrum and everything in between.

Everyone will try to sell me something.

Yes, there is that particular brand of individual that attends networking events strictly with sales in mind. This person is not there to really build relationships but to make a hard sell. This person however, represents the minority of your business networking population. Many people who attend understand how networking works and are open to conversations and getting to know you.

These are some of the ugly misconceptions and common myths that some have about business networking. I suggest, giving it a shot and gathering your own facts. I must also emphasize giving your efforts time to compound. Then you will

be in a position to accurately measure your results. I'll show you how to do that later on in this book.

Why Be Excited about Networking?

A number of people go about their business lives every day, never truly appreciating that which comes for free. That's right, we as human beings tend to take for granted, those things that are free. It is truly the observant individual who feels grateful for small things.

You may not have viewed simple business networking as a free entity before. In addition to the fact that networking equals free leads, let's explore 3 reasons for being enthusiastic about it.

One Less Business Building Expense

You must admit, on your way to building a successful business, things can get pretty costly. When it comes to business networking, one may simply have to step outside of his home. The right people can present themselves out of the blue, anytime, anywhere. Many times, it's by total surprise that a good connection, leading to new business, becomes visible.

Unlimited Resources

No matter how many individuals you meet, you can always meet and connect with more. Each time you meet a

person, depending on where you take the relationship, you are directly connected to their network. Online social networks show this in a measurable-tangible form.

It's exciting to know that no matter where you are in life and what type of adversity you are dealing with, you can always be one person away from your breakthrough. You simply must continue to open your mouth and get to know some folks.

A Level Playing Field

When it comes to competition, major players can be quite intimidating. As far as business networking is concerned, if your foundations and priorities are intact, no major player or corporation is greater or better at what you can provide at a personal level.

We've all heard the expression "It's not what you know but who you know". This means that making your way into a successful status can easily be accomplished through your associations. Typically, you cannot buy genuine friendships. This is reassuring when you consider what can happen for you as a result of being in the right places and around the right people.

Top Beliefs of a Rapport Superstar

When you view the glass of water that is filled half way, do you think that it is half empty or half full? Some believe that

the optimist would say half full but the pessimist would say half empty. Which one are you?

What would you say your general views of things are in life? Do you look for the silver lining that every rain cloud contains? Are you encouraged that "The sun will come out tomorrow"? Are you an individual who always looks at the bright side of things?

Regardless of your outlook on things, I highly recommend looking at the bright side of business networking. This is good advice. Why? People who benefit from networking tend to have a more optimistic outlook about the whole process.

In other words, it works for them because it begins at a positive place. This causes their results to be favorable. The following, are beliefs of Rapport Superstars;

"Each person I meet is a door to a new opportunity."

This is a profound thought. None of us knows what the next day will bring or even the next second, for that much. Looking at each new individual as a mysterious opportunity not only sets the stage for positive things to happen but allows room for open thinking to prevail. This is the essence of what new ideas are made of.

"As I give, so shall I receive."

This is a universal-balanced concept. One would know that if pessimistic thoughts are put out then pessimistic results will follow. The Rapport Superstar functions in a business atmosphere in which favors are rendered freely and fairly. Why? Because he/she expects reciprocal affects eventually.

“No relationship is insignificant.”

In the world of business networking, many people meet but may never actually work together. However, the Rapport Superstar treats all contacts and acquaintances in a respectful and positive manner.

This results in good karma and positive word-of-mouth when he/she comes up in conversation and thought. Furthermore, when an old, seemingly insignificant contact, reappears later, they are welcomed with open arms.

“Enthusiasm is contagious.”

While Rapport Superstars are human beings like everyone else, he/she demonstrates enthusiasm when around other people. It is their deep down belief that in doing so, others will become as enthusiastic and more positive interactions will occur.

“The possibilities are endless.”

Certainly, they may have a bad day, which includes bad experiences. However, it is never enough to deter their inner belief that better possibilities are available tomorrow. They truly believe that when it comes to people, the possibilities are infinite. Believing this makes business networking circles their playing field. Borrow some of this optimism as we get started.

Chapter 1.

Getting Started

Networking Is So Easy, Even a Caveman Can Do It

If you live in the United States, you are probably familiar with those Geico commercials in which they offend cavemen by suggesting how easy it is to save money using their insurance. As humorous as those ads are, there is an underlying point being made. They're basically suggesting that "anyone" can do something.

I can't help but to put networking into that same category and reiterate that "anyone" can take advantage of business networking. Some would argue that there are people that are just too shy to get engaged or that other people are too impatient to put the time in. Those may be some extreme examples but I still say that "anyone" can take advantage and even benefit from networking.

Why do I say this? It is because of what I know about perspectives. Simply changing the way we think about certain things can dramatically shift our direction and beliefs. As people, we are of a design in which an inspiration or epiphany can suddenly cause us to literally be reborn. Not physically of course, but reborn in perspective.

Stephen Covey refers to this as a "Shift in Paradigm" in his book *"The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People"*. I mention this because if an individual, based on their life experiences, has a negative or fearful prospective towards business networking, then a forced shift in paradigm can turn their business life around.

In other words, if every time they have tried to use networking to improve upon career goals and they met with failure, a belief was formed as a result. The actions that they took and the overall perspective could actually have been the cause of the failure.

If you are reading with an open mind and accept what is being suggested, it is easy to see that if the same person is somehow indoctrinated with a more positive and realistic perspective, he or she will proactively make networking work for them. This means that a person must literally "change their mind". However, this is best done under their own initiative.

"Anyone" or let's just say, "Just about anyone" can take the initiative to change their perspective if they desire. I'd like to say this is a very difficult task to achieve but it really isn't. The act of doing so is really quite easy. The difficult part might be the willingness of the person to take the first step. We can make networking easy by choice.

The 5 Levels of Progress

I don't believe that anyone starts out as an expert networker but through experience and perseverance, a

champion is born. Just as with so many other things in life, becoming an exceptional business networker consists of trial and error.

There are several different levels that we pass through on our way to gaining expert status. Depending on an individual's learning curve, a person can become well endowed in business networking at a faster rate than others. Those who do can attribute this to strong native abilities and motivation.

If you happen to be in the beginning stages, described below, I recommend that you keep with it. Don't give up as networking is a valuable skill to take with you throughout your life.

Listed below, are the 5 basic levels. Which one are you?

1. The Newbie

This is the beginning stage for many people. This is the stage where a person has heard people say that networking is a great way to enhance your career. Due to this influence, a person is now trying it out to see what all the hype is about.

In this stage, a person might feel very intimidated and awkward. If this is you, be persistent and learn what is necessary to make this a successful business move.

2. Cautious Awareness

Stage two, is when the person realizes that it does take work and requires goals. This is the stage where some

techniques have been learned but haven't yet been implemented. Typically, a person is monitoring themselves very carefully for improvement while engaging.

3. Conscious Growth

This is the middle stage in which an individual starts to realize what works and what doesn't work. He/she begins to feel more confident and they notice improvement in their efforts. They are now starting to see the results and how they can adjust their behavior and actions to enhance the good results.

4. Charge the Gates!

This is like a graduation stage in which strengths are realized and higher goals are set. This is where an individual openly and aggressively seeks opportunities to build their network of colleagues. This is the point where you cannot keep a person away from business networking events and the like. A new ability has now been discovered.

5. Rapport Superstardom

This is a definite high point. It is when an individual has grown their network and continues to do so with seamless effort. He/she does it so frequently; it looks easy to the rest of us. At this point, all social inhibitions are dissolved and a confident professional stands as a shining example for all to see.

However, before all of these things can take place, you must first get started on your journey.

The Journey Ahead

First, you need an attitude that you will openly and to the best of your ability support those individuals who could benefit from your product or service. Support here simply means that you will go above and beyond just customer service in that you will execute all activity within your means to assist the person in getting what it is they desire. A little sacrifice may be in order. Secondly, support also means, having a reasonable expectation that your kindness and sacrifice will not go unrewarded. The reward may not come directly from the people you help but in some form even if it's cosmic. Rendering service in a sincerely humble manner will produce these results. Remember, there are no short cuts.

Networking in the right spirit demands that you express a genuine sharing capability. You must be willing to share contacts, information, resources, and so on with your colleagues. Holding such things secret will only hinder your own growth and expansion into the next level. This is not to suggest being insensible or frivolous, but a healthy exchange of info, resources, etc. permeates abundance and helps to define the fruits of your labor.

Commonality is obvious as you embark upon your networking journey. If you clearly define the goals for your career or business, you will have little difficulty knowing which

people have the potential to help you reach them. Just keep in mind that it is very important to help others to achieve their goals as well.

Consider all of the above as you follow through with your decision to network and get the results you're after. Better clients, a new position, a larger contact base, increased income, and even new friends can be achieved when you network with sound principles and the practical strategies taught in this book.

You must be yourself.

As I explain the basics of getting started, I must put a special emphasis on the importance of staying true to yourself and not changing in order to be accepted. In business networking, the basic objective is to cultivate new relationships and through following up, make them count throughout time. Just like any other relationship, we all know that honesty plays at crucial role in the development process.

Any time we meet someone initially, it's natural that we want to make a positive impression. More so than not, we show our best side and are completely pleasant. Not realizing it at the time, we can cause potential problems. An honest assessment is that we try to appear on the outside, opposite to how we feel inside because of our natural fear of rejection or acceptance issues.

Well, when we do this, it causes us to feel uncomfortable, smiling on the outside while having an internal

conflict. It sounds somewhat ridiculous but a lot of people do this because they think that they will not be accepted.

I have to point out that if you aren't "yourself" when initially dealing with people, later on down the road, the "real you" will be revealed. The consequences are as expected, distrust between individuals.

Are you familiar with the story of the person in a relationship, (like a marriage), where he didn't reveal something in the beginning and it came out later? Nothing good seems to come from that chain of events and the results are usually very damaging.

The same applies to business networking. Be "yourself" in the beginning because you are running a risk not to. It's okay to make mistakes as people are usually forgiving. Just think about how forgiving you are when a colleague makes a small mistake or does something out of the ordinary. Different rules apply if you happen to discover something later, hugely negative, that could have been relayed in the beginning. Furthermore, if you have a networking goal, (and you should), you'll probably achieve it faster without such a focus on making untrue impressions. By you being comfortable, you'll make others feel comfortable as well. This alone will make a good impression and you'll be liked by default. Trust me, it's well worth it.

Shyness and Social Pain

Some of you may ask "What if I am shy or suffer from social pain?" If you are shy, introverted, or suffer from social pain, you must still stick to your guns and be yourself. Furthermore, making an effort to overcome shyness or social pain comes with many advantages.

Any pain, of course, is naturally uncomfortable, unpleasant, and unwanted. It can come at the worst times and is an enemy to most of us.

It can even be a subtle motivator. Many people are motivated by the avoidance of pain, rather than the satisfaction of pleasure. It comes in all flavors; mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional.

Typically, it is instinctual to avoid it altogether, even if it means our success will not be realized once we do so. In this case, it is the pain of leaving a comfort zone in reaching beyond personal-self inflicted borders. It is a difficult hurdle to clear but can open the doors to your destiny. Successfully networking for business can be a dream for some. It can only be imagined by those who experience "Social Pain" and refrain from participating.

Social Pain is the discomfort and anxiety some people experience when involved in or even considering to get involved in social affairs. It includes elements of shyness and false intimidation. Like many other self imposed mental obstructions, it can be defeated and here are a few benefits of overcoming it;

Broader Horizons

When a person is a victim of Social Pain, their options are usually more limited than otherwise. They are reluctant to meet people in person and expand on the art of interacting. There's only so much one can do through online networking.

More people can mean more options, especially if you are proactive and assertive about conquering your fear. If you are dissatisfied with the results that you are currently getting in life and in business, think about all of those people out there who are willing and able to work with you toward success. You should, of course, be open and willing to help others in the same way but the possibilities are endless when it comes to an endless pool of people.

Overcoming Social Pain opens up whole new world. What was not available before becomes available through warm and friendly 1 on 1 correspondence.

An Increase in Confidence

Social Pain can be paralyzing and keeps a person from experiencing all that comes with building fulfilling relationships. This lack of satisfaction tends to degrade confidence.

When Social Pain is defeated, a new type of gladness is achieved and confidence increases. This boost of confidence can cause powerful things to happen in business relationships. Considering this, it has great value all its own.

You'll Have People

An inhibited person suffering from Social Pain, is limited to a small network or possibly none at all, when it comes to satisfying his/her needs. Whether in business or personal affairs, they may come up short many times when needing assistance with certain things. If one can only conquer Social Pain, he/she can grow an effective and credible network of people that can lead them to where ever they would like to go.

Shy people, typically aren't afraid of people they already know, it's meeting the new individuals that causes the fear. Even then, they know that networking for business is important.

However, there is the fear of the details involved, like;

- Having to introduce themselves and thinking of interesting things to say,
- Having to speak at a later time and building a relationship with a stranger,
- Letting someone get to know them a bit better.

These are commonly included traits of Social Pain. There are many ways to overcome these types of inhibitions. Since all of it is in the mind, it can be controlled or eliminated.

People aren't going anywhere.

Unless there is some sort of cataclysmic extinction level event, people are going to continue to exist. That is a fabulous fact if you take advantage of relationship building and conquer Social Pain.

As a matter of fact, the mortality rate of people in general is longer than it's ever been. This means that you have a lot of people to practice your relationship building skills on.

Embracing your fears means triumph.

You will be triumphant and in position to celebrate a victory once you embrace your fear. When you are able to embrace the above described fears and overcome them, you have made a big leap toward putting them all in the past. This should be recognized as genuine progress and is a sign of tremendous growth.

10 Steps to Help You Overcome Shyness and Social Pain

Step 1. Make a firm commitment to yourself that you are going to overcome shyness no matter what it takes. This is an important move because it shows your determination and allows you to conjure up the strength needed. If you miss this

step and fail to make a genuine self commitment then you can't expect to see exceptional results. So, stick to it.

Step 2. Make a second firm commitment for how many business networking or social functions you will attend per month. This is important as well because you will have a schedule to reference as you overcome your shyness. Schedule at least 1 to 2 per week to start with. Starting with a small number ensures that you don't overwhelm yourself.

Step 3. Review your business goals and determine the type of individuals you would need to meet to help you achieve them. The main reason for this is so that you will be focused on your outcome and be able to immediately identify your target when you meet them. Another reason is to keep yourself on course and remind yourself why you are out networking.

Step 4. Create and practice an Introductory Statement, an Elevator Speech, and Conversational Questions. An Introductory Statement is simply a way to introduce yourself to someone. The simplest way is to simply say "Hello". An Elevator Pitch is a simple 15 to 30 second commercial about what you do in your business and how you help people. Conversational Questions are questions you ask to induce a conversation, like; "What do you do?", "Do you like what you do?" etc.

Eliminate your anxiety by practicing these three elements profusely, until you know them like the back of your hand. You can also write all of these things on the back of a business card and reference them as you go through the process. (Make sure you don't give that particular card away.)

You will ask yourself why you didn't do this sooner as you congratulate yourself on your achievement. Just follow the steps listed in this book and your shyness for business networking will be a distant memory.

Step 5. Accept the fact that you need to meet and interact with others to help yourself. You may be shy or an introvert who likes to help others and is actively seeking to do so. You may also be an individual who is really looking to help yourself and knows that you must work with others in the process. In either case, accepting the fact as indisputable will help you to create a stronger belief system.

Step 6. Focus your attention outward at all of the people and things that could benefit you. Up to this point, you may have been so focused on the inside that you have accomplished things and even look forward to doing more on your own. However, if you are escaping the introverted behavior, you must focus your attention outwards and imagine all of the ways networking with other professionals can benefit you. To take it a step further, think of the ways that you can interact pleasantly

and cooperatively with others. You have to start looking at things from a group perspective.

Step 7. Focus on ways that you can help others with your talents and skills. Suffering from Social Pain does not mean that you are not talented and skillful. On the contrary, you could be extremely capable and talented. The key here is to use those skills to help others, while helping yourself. A great way to start is by having a memorized list of questions when talking to people. This way, you will know who can benefit the most from your skill set.

Step 8. If you feel anxious or nervous when speaking to someone, tell them so. When you are conversing with a person and you are shy, you may become nervous or anxious. If this happens, simply mentioning how you feel will induce a feeling of empathy from the other person. This is actually good because it helps the other person to relate to you on a personal level.

Step 9. Smile and breathe deeply. It may seem like obvious advice but a lot of people do not smile when they are out networking. This is important to do. It is also important to take deep breaths and exhale slowly. This is a simple exercise that calms your cardiovascular system and helps you to relax while you are engaged.

Step 10. Put it into practice. This is the hardest step involved in the whole process but you'll never get the results you want unless you are actively engaged in making it a reality. Yes, you will make some mistakes, you will be nervous; you will sometimes feel like giving up. However, if you stay loyal to your commitments, in no time at all, you will see a turning point where you will become a networking stud.

Chapter 2.

Preparation

The Vision Comes First

We all know a visionary to be a person of unusually keen foresight. This is an excellent talent to possess and something that takes years of development to perfect. A true

visionary can look around his/her surroundings and accurately predict important trends and outcomes to be.

Vision has its place, even in the world of business networking. As a matter of fact, visionaries readily seek out those people they feel would be an asset in the future. Whether it is the near or distant future, they have an uncanny gift for mingling in the right circles.

As I referenced earlier, it is a blessing to have natural visionary talent but it is not impossible to develop it for yourself. It is also very possible to engage in visionary type practices to assist in your success. Bearing in mind that a vision is something that is unseen and therefore intangible, proper visualization is necessary to give birth to tangible success.

Visionary Meditation

Meditation is a great way to get yourself mentally and spiritually in the right state to achieve your goals. Networking goals are no different. If you are intending to use networking to help to pave the road to success, visionary meditation is a good idea. I am not an official expert on meditation but I do meditate and believe that I can offer good advice here.

The ideal setting for this type of meditation is to find a place that is quiet in which you will not be disturbed. You can do this in complete silence or play relaxing music if you like. I prefer Zen music. Sit comfortably or lie down and breathe slowly, deeply, and completely in your nose and out your mouth.

1. Envision the perfect individuals whom you believe can help you to achieve the success you desire.

I'll refer to details a few times because envisioning the fine details helps you to make the vision more real. As you envision these individuals, ask yourself a few questions;

- What specific part do they play in assisting you?

- What background and qualifications do they have?

- Could they be people that some of your friends or colleagues already know and can introduce you to?

2. Envision clearly, the actions that will be taken as a result of your new relationships.

Try and see the details of the actions that will take place in order for your dreams come true.

For example;

- Do you see you and your new contacts partnering and doing a presentation for executives in the board room of large corporation?

- Do you see them introducing you to venture capitalist and walking with you through the construction site of your soon-to-be place of business?

These are just a few examples but you have to use your imagination. The sky is the limit!

3. Envision the final results of your new productive union as if it's happening now, in the present.

This can be a very exciting part of the whole process. You may even want to start here. Clearly examine, in your mind, the details of the final results. In other words, when everything is completed and is the way you want, what does it look like, smell like, taste like, feel like? What are you and your new partners is doing to celebrate?

You can describe these things on paper and then envision them during your meditation. At any rate, this will bring you closer to the goal of using business networking to help you achieve success.

The S.M.A.R.T. Goal Formula

Once you have a clearer vision of what you want to achieve, you must position yourself one step closer to making it a reality by constructing real goals. Here is a simple formula to reference when setting a goal, called the S.M.A.R.T. Formula. S.M.A.R.T. is defined as Specific-Measurable-Attainable-Realistic- & Time Frame.

"S" - Being specific is the beginning of the planning process because it determines exactly what you want. If your goal is simply to be successful, it's not specific enough. You may want to clarify your vision by describing in detail what you consider to be success. In other words, what is the exact point you can say you have achieved your goal and are ready to move on the next one? How does your goal resonate with all of your senses? Providing this information will give you more of the specifics.

"M" - Measuring a goal will bestow upon you the ever so important precise size or scale. If the details of your goal include a new car, home, vacation, money, etc., you must determine how much each costs or the amount you would like.

"A" - The next step is to establish attainability. By taking a close look at your friends, connections, contacts, tools, native abilities, imagination, and or whatever you have at your disposal, decide if this goal is within your reach through a practical use of your resources.

"R" - A realistic assessment may dampen your enthusiasm because of the size or scale but don't let this discourage you. What seemed impossible years ago, is not today. If you would have told me back in '88 that I'd be listening to music, sending texts, and watching videos in my cell phone, I couldn't have conceived how. With that said, being realistic

means just being reasonable enough to move from point A to B to C and so on with grounded progress.

"T" - Having a time-frame simply implies a start and end point. You may have many start and end points along the way as your plan is revised through the journey. It is also wise to give small daily or weekly tasks a time frame in order that progress can be tracked and adjustments can be made.

Deciding on the Ideal Contacts

The more detailed you can be in defining your goals and the networking targets within, the better. Since this is a business networking, people will play the most valuable roles and locating the right individuals is crucial. Sometimes however, it can be difficult to determine exactly who needs to be met but once this hurdle is cleared; one can go and seek out the proper parties for the proper positions. A little know-how is the key to this victory. There are steps to accomplish this;

Take a multi directional look at your above goals.

You will need to examine your goals closely and from different perspectives. Depending on the size and scope of your finished picture, it's a good idea to imagine how your perspective partners will interpret your needs. You will also be able to prioritize your networking activities from doing this.

Envision the major activities that are to occur and put the cast of characters in place.

You'll need to envision the basic steps of your plan being carried out and the people who will work with you. It'll take a little thought and imagination but seeing these people specifically assigned to each element will give you more of a realistic vision.

Carefully define the attributes of each person.

Now that you have decided on a virtual cast of assisting parties, you should look at each individual person and add details, like qualifications. You should take these steps seriously but allow your imagination total freedom.

Determine what you can give.

Typically, people will not partner or assist you without getting something in return. In other words, most people are open to do favors but it's only fair that they are rewarded for their participation. It is quite important that you can clearly see how they would benefit from doing business with you. You should mentally put yourself in their place.

Mind Map Your Networking Goals

Have you ever used a mind map? It's is an excellent tool to organize just about anything. When I discovered mind maps a

few years ago, my life changed to a more organized affair. It may sound like I am exaggerating but I really am not.

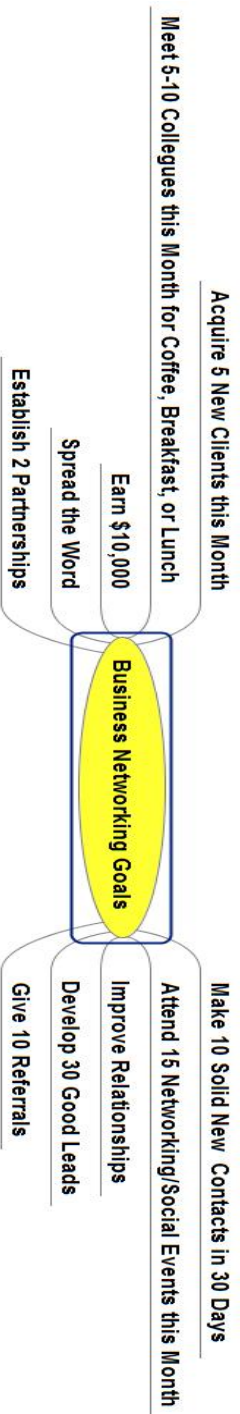
If you have an active imagination like me, you can tame and organize it by using mind maps. If you have elaborate ideas, you can fine-tune them using mind map technology. I use free software called ***“FreeMind”***.

If you are unfamiliar with what mind maps are, simply view the images below or Google “Mind Maps” to get a better understanding. After you know what you're dealing with you will be able to understand this a bit better.

Planning your business networking goals using mind maps is a great way to gain clarity quickly. As a matter of fact, using it to plan any goal is something I recommend. However, we are discussing how to plan your business networking goals so here is a quick 5 step process;

1. Name your mind map "**Business Networking Goals**". Remember, business networking is just a form of marketing to achieve business goals so as you create multiple nodes, simply write your business goals that come to mind inside these nodes. Make as many nodes as you need to. (See figure 1.2)

(Write a few business goals here.)



2. Add additional nodes in order to categorize, for example;

A. Financial goals.

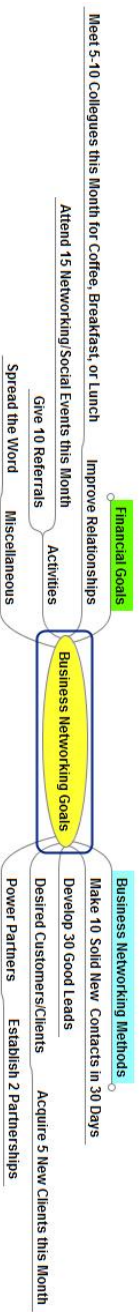
B. Desired Customers/Clients

C. Power Partners

D. Business Networking Methods

3. Now, take all of the ideas that you originally had scattered about the mind map and place them in the proper node category. In mind mapping, you will make child nodes to place each idea into. You will also place any additional ideas you have in the proper child nodes. As you review your mind map, remove any nodes that aren't immediately relevant to your goals or place them in a "miscellaneous" node. Things should start to

look a bit clearer. (See Figure 2.2) (*More notes here*)



4. It's now time clarify your financial goals. Look at your financial goals. Now, divide up the amount of clients you will need in order to meet those goals. In other words, how many clients will you need to reach those financial goals? Make new child nodes and place these numbers in your financial goals node. (See Figure 3.2)



Now that you have a reasonably accurate number, you should know what the natural next step is.

To say it simply, you must communicate with a certain number of people in order to connect yourself to your desired number of new clients. Simple business networking is a great way to do this as it is very cost-effective and will only take a little time.

5. Make sure you elaborate and clearly detail your business networking methods node. Once this is done, you simply need to put your plan into action. It is also a good idea to create another node that keeps a time frame in mind. (See Figure 4.2)



As you continue to think of new ideas and different methods, continue to create nodes and organize them accordingly. The above mind map is just a reference to give you a better understanding of the power of mind mapping. You can design your own any way you wish.

Chapter 3.

People Skills

Rapport Superstardom begins with Basic-Rapport

Having a good basic-rapport with someone is a few rungs down the ladder from solid acquaintance status. Let me explain; an acquaintance is an individual who you know and vice versa. Your relationship has developed to a level similar to a friend. You see each other occasionally and maybe even engage in some minor social activities.

Although basic-rapport is at a lower level than the above, it is good to have and has potentially powerful benefits. Having basic-rapport with someone means that you may not know each other by name but you do know each other by sight, sound, or a past experience with one another.

This means that you are familiar with each other on a positive basis. You can't consider good basic-rapport with someone who associates you with a negative experience when you come to mind. Therefore, basic-rapport is like a lightweight friendship but there are several benefits attached. Below, I will give you 3;

1. You have the option to build.

If you purchased a plot of land and the county or realtor told you that you can purchase the land but you cannot build anything on it, it would greatly limit your options for building a home, an office building, or anything else. The same is true with building basic-rapport that could lead to solid friendships or strong business alliances. When you build basic-rapport, you have the option to build a foundation or to let it be. It's always good to have options.

2. A Strong-Rapport is a few levels above friendly.

Basic-rapport is described above, but a strong-rapport is a few levels above shallow friendliness. A strong-rapport means that positive aspects are associated in your interactions with someone. It means that there are certain specifics that are strong enough to be the foundation for a friendship or the trust that comes with good business relationships.

This is why following up in business networking is so very important. A simple follow-up and extended communication through time keeps a good rapport alive and opens up doors for you.

3. There are perks included.

While having a good rapport is comparable to a lightweight friendship, there are fringe benefits that come along with it. If you have a good rapport and register positive associations with someone, they are more likely to do you a

favor when needed. Even though they may not know you well, when the time comes, a good rapport can prove to be valuable.

Becoming a Rapport Superstar

The first step to be taken is to make a real commitment to yourself to respect everyone you meet regardless of race, creed, political views, difference of opinion, and so on. You are going to need to do this because from the depths of your being, you want to project a feeling of comfort and acceptance to all. You need to carefully avoid any indication of an ill temper or petulance.

Complete this task promptly, correctly and completely. This is extremely important. If it isn't done properly, for whatever reason, the person with whom you are communicating will sense this and your chances of building a basic or strong rapport will lessen greatly.

The 2nd step is to show a genuine and enthusiastic interest in the person with whom you are speaking. Things you'll want to avoid here are;

- Over doing it and projecting so much interest that you seem overtly pretentious.

- Offering hollow comments on subjects you know nothing about. Instead, just ask questions.

- Failure to convince your conversation partner that you are really listening.

Your 3rd step is to be patient and agreeable. This is very important because everyone loves a person who is non-threatening and supportive. The most important thing to avoid is showing tension or resistance. A good attitude to have is to consider yourself to be like a conscientious host at a VIP event.

Top 5 Habits of Rapport Superstars

Knowing how to develop a good rapport is not only important in business networking circles but generally in life. When dealing with everyday situations like, customer service, making new friends, and communicating with people in general, rapport seems to be vital to social survival. As the old saying goes "You can capture more bees with honey than with vinegar." -comparable is the need for developing a good rapport with folks.

Having a good rapport can go a long way. There is nothing compatible to what established relationships can produce. The following, are 5 of the top habits of rapport superstars.

1. They are excellent listeners.

When people speak, it's very important that they are heard. When a person is talking about something they believe to be interesting, it is a compliment to them that they are getting an appreciative ear. A rapport superstar listens very closely to what a person says, even in the most trivial conversations. This causes him/her to be liked immediately and a bond is formed faster.

2. They have an elevated "Agreement Characteristic"

A great habit of rapport superstars is their ability to seem as they are in agreement with an individual. There is a certain chemistry they possess in which they communicate that they are supportive of someone. It could be the nodding they do when certain points of emphasis are made or even their supportive statements to the subject matter. There are more of course, but when a person feels as though you agree with their notions, good rapport follows.

3. They mean what they say

Being trusted is high on the list of a rapport superstar. He/she knows that when they are building rapport and involved in a conversation, the words they speak should be true and well grounded. In other words, when they make comments about

certain things, like their abilities or experiences, it can all be backed up.

4. They add relevance to a conversation

A rapport superstar has excellent listening skills and this causes him/her to add depth to a conversation, no matter how small the conversation is. Because of the fact that they listen well, they ask questions and make comments that are highly relevant to the subject matter. Isn't this what good conversations are made of?

5. They leave a memorable impression.

It's hard to forget a person who related to you on certain levels. When you feel a likeness with another person, especially if you don't know them well, an impression has been left. The rapport superstar knows how to relate to people on a level that is subtle but important.

Effective Listening

Silence Isn't Golden; it's Platinum

In the building of good business relationships, a number of different things can happen. One person may fail to listen effectively to the other, causing the collapse of a transaction which could have otherwise been avoided.

Mishaps like the one above are infinitely more detrimental because it can cause people to lose their livelihoods. No one wants to think about this type of situation. Nevertheless, it is a reality for many. Misunderstandings are real but many can be avoided by the improvement of listening skills.

Effective listening is one of the top, most valued people skills. How else could an individual gather the necessary information to close a sale, supply the correct referral, or get to know a colleague a bit better?

Most people look at the gathering of this type of information as a tiring, proactive-forced type process. Many people like to force their agenda and ideas onto other people, even if it's a potential client. They feel as though they must take complete control over a situation by way of dictator type tactics.

It is commonly believed that, in order to take control of a situation, one must be the loudest and most dominant. One can be loud, loud as hell, but if no qualifying foundation has been laid, then what is being said has no merit and the person on the receiving end is just being forced to hear unwanted information.

In other words, since their opinions weren't taken into consideration and their needs and interests weren't discussed, they have little interest in hearing what is being said as it doesn't apply to them. This is just another item that could have been avoided simply by asking questions and remaining silent long enough to really hear the other person's thoughts. Is this all starting to make sense now?

It's often said that silence is golden but considering all of the above, it's even more valuable than gold. It's platinum. If one can only allow themselves to be silent for so long and make constructive use of the silence by opening up the receiving centers of the mind, much more can be accomplished and more productive outcomes will be available. It may take a special kind of individual or just the adoption of a special skill to put silence into effect constructively.

Why Listening Skills Are Underrated

If you take a look at how communication works, you'll notice that two key things are happening at all times. One person is speaking and wants to communicate something to others. The second is the people listening have to comprehend and understand what is being conveyed. The majority of the 'good communication' doctrine that I have seen, focuses on the proactive side, meaning- how to express yourself and so on.

Being able to express your thoughts effectively enough to gain an understanding from others is one thing but what about the responsibilities on the part of the listener? Listening effectively is just as much a part of business networking as speaking. I am only saying this because I notice that it's not given enough emphasis.

Because of this lack of emphasis, the majority of people, who care enough about communicating correctly, focus on the talking end. So, a powerful aspect, effective listening, is often overlooked. The following, are 3 additional reasons why;

1. The very act of listening is mostly considered a passive task.

Have you ever thought of listening as actively doing something? It is likely that you haven't and most people feel the same. When it comes to listening effectively, there are various actions that take place; nodding in agreement, making eye contact, asking questions, asking the person to repeat themselves, etc.

2. Action steps for success are usually proactive and suggest being assertive and aggressive.

Listening effectively is a key part of success. However, if you take note, most motivational programs and teachings tell you to take specific action steps and suggest that following the steps will help you to succeed. This all may be true but listening to prospects, colleagues, partners, customers, etc. is worthy of more merit than it is given.

3. Listening effectively is not typically discussed by success icons and mentors.

People listen very closely to success mentors and usually hang on every word. I think I am guilty of this as well but through all of the teachings that I have received, very little discusses the art of successful active listening.

Business networking is a humongous part of succeeding in your career/business. An integral part of business networking is to listen and listen well. This is undeniable and is highly neglected in success fundamentals.

Reasons You Should Be a Good Listener

Reason 1. You will have a better understanding of what was said before you make a comment.

One of the best ways to gain cooperation is to convince a person that you have thoroughly heard what they have said so that your responses will be enriched with words that reflect your attentiveness. Moreover, this can encourage the other person to listen more closely when it's your turn to talk.

Secondly, if you are a salesman, you could identify an objection more accurately than if you were focused on delivering more selling points. This is especially important in the sales field because when a prospect knows you have heard them, they become more comfortable and less resistant.

Thirdly, you will gain trust faster. When a person has something urgent to say and someone is open and honestly accepting and or agreeing with their statements, it tends to bring about trust more rapidly. Furthermore, every good relationship is built on a certain amount of trust.

Fourth, you learn a lot more than you would otherwise. When you are an exceptional listener and are involved in a conversation with two or more people, you can hold your silence and listen to everyone's perspective. When you do this, you have learned so much more than if you were to comment frequently throughout the discussion. You can add your two cents in a more educated manner.

And fifth, everyone loves a good listener. If you are known as a good listener, people will seek you out for advice and counseling. This of course, has many benefits. You will be viewed as a more personable person, even in your business relationships. We all know that the rewards, in this case, can be astronomical.

How to Prove You're Listening

Have you ever been in a conversation with someone and were saying something of importance but the person you were talking to seemed to be distracted and not really paying attention? If this has happened you know how frustrating it can be and how insignificant it can make a person feel.

In addition to that, when an individual feels as though they are not being heard, many times they will end the communication immediately. This is not good when you are having networking conversations which can lead to a number of positive things.

However, when a person feels as though they are being heard and what they are saying is being well received, it encourages them to speak more and builds a stronger conversation. This is something that you want to produce when you are engaged in conversations while networking. When you can accomplish this, you're opening up the door to opportunity because you are receiving information that is valuable in building relationships and identifying your ideal contacts.

You can make this happen in your own one-on-one encounters by doing the following;

A. Maintain eye contact and nod when a point of emphasis is being made. If you are maintaining eye contact and listening, it will be easy to nod in agreement to things that are being said with emphasis and interest. This is an important act of communication. Make sure you do this.

B. Participate and interact by asking questions pertaining to the topic. If you are listening closely, it will be no challenge to ask basic questions about what is being said. This also encourages the person to give more information and keeps the lines of communication rolling.

C. Occasionally, ask the person to repeat what they have just said, even if you know you heard correctly. Asking a person to repeat themselves is not necessarily a sign that you are not

listening. On the contrary, it proves to the person that you are interested in what they are saying and want to be sure that you have heard every word.

Be Responsive, Not Reactive

Effective listening includes, proving that you're listening as well as responding in a way that contributes to the conversation and leads it in a positive direction. This is especially important in business networking circles.

Sometimes, a person can say something that may be offensive to you or someone else. Someone may also make a comment that is actually positive but gets misinterpreted. As a result, a well meaning but offensive response is given.

There is no way to always have the appropriate response for all comments but it helps when your response is a response and not just a reaction. Reactions can cause misunderstandings especially if you are meeting for the first time. Be a more responsive listener by doing the following;

Fight the impulse to blurt something out.

When in a conversation with someone, sometimes we feel the need to answer quickly in order to avoid the uncomfortable silence. This is natural but not always what is best. It takes practice but remaining calm and thinking before you speak is a valuable skill.

Think about what was said and make sure that you heard correctly.

When we hear something that sounds offensive, we often react emotionally even when we are unsure. This can build resentment that could have otherwise been avoided. Once again, self-control is being summoned here and some restraint is in order.

If necessary, ask the person to repeat themselves. Not only is it a proactive listening skill to ask a person to repeat themselves but it will help you to understand them more clearly.

Plan your response conscientiously.

Whether or not you are in an offensive situation, listening closely and planning your response is smart business. All of the words that come out of your mouth represent who you are and your opinion. I'm not suggesting to pretend to be other than you are but thinking before you respond has its benefits.

Keep a pleasant outcome in mind.

Business networking conversations typically are designed for a positive outcome. Sometimes, however, they can go downhill fast. Some of the reasons are reactive listening or not listening well at all. As you are molding your skills to be a responsive listener, envision the positive possibilities that could come from your conversation.

Networking with Two Ears and One Mouth

Have you ever heard of a "Networking-Loud-Mouth"? Are you familiar with the person who just seems to talk a lot and doesn't let you get a word in edgewise? How do I describe this person without being too cruel? I also don't want to suggest that an individual engaging in such behavior is just plain rude or uncaring. So, let's establish that right away.

What I am describing is probably a person who lacks experience when it comes to building relationships. Consequently, networking is all about relationships. They simply neglect to use their ears effectively and give you room to express your opinion, which will allow true communication to manifest. Could the excited person described above, be you?

When I discuss the topic of 2 ears and 1 mouth, I must emphasize with great importance, our creator has assembled us in His form perfectly. Please, let me enlighten you on how you can increase your relationship capital by giving your object of excitement the attention it deserves but also using your ears effectively in the process.

Yes, some of us have been completely blessed with the gift of gab and we're not timid or ashamed to talk to people about how we feel, about our products, about our services, and about how we can help them. However, somewhere in between, there has to be an active awareness, where we begin to receive what our prospects or colleagues want to contribute, whether it be a question or comment. There must be a time when we can begin to relax a little and listen closely to what is being uttered

as opposed to just filling up our lungs with air and blurting uncontrollably about anything and everything we are doing or have to offer.

By letting the other people get in their two cents or contribution; you may very well learn something that will improve the conversation. They'll feel more comfortable and when they do, you never know to what great things you could be lead to. Somewhere along my travels I learned the term, as vulgar as it may sound, "Throwing up on someone". Obviously, vomiting on someone is quite disgusting so please understand the metaphor here. It means, talking way too much and not listening enough.

Let me give you some tips on how to be a good listener as well as a good conversationalist when it's your turn to contribute to the conversation. If you like, you can call it prep-work but it will increase your likability factor greatly;

- Finish your sentences with a question that suggests an opinion on what you are talking about.

- Stop talking and wait for the comments to come. Silence isn't as uncomfortable as some think. The other party may just be gathering their thoughts.

- Instead of having an "Itchy Trigger Finger" type of response habit, put your hand over your mouth if you have to

and listen even more closely until the person has really stopped talking.

- Before adding your input or comments, asks the person "Are you done?"

Practice the above techniques and don't brand yourself as a "Loud Mouth". Listen and learn what the person you are speaking to is interested in hearing and really "hear" what they are saying.

Crucial People Skills

I agree with the saying, "Seek first to understand, than to be understood." Seeking to understand is humbling and opens your mind for new-unique information but you must also be assertive enough to communicate your own special details.

When both of the above are in place and equally balanced, harmony in human relations can be expected. This is mega important with regards to business networking. Here are 5 crucial people skills to master;

1. Communicate your point clearly

Sometimes, the concepts and ideas that we have in our minds are much clearer to us than they seem when we begin to verbally express the same. We can often blurt out words which are not descriptive enough for our fellow man to decipher our point.

It is a good practice to think things over and choose our words carefully when expressing an important aspect. You will notice that this is done by many public speakers.

2. Listen closely

Listening, for most people, is considered a passive activity. However, it is absolutely necessary to listen actively and effectively. Listening effectively entails taking mental notes and contributing to the conversation.

As discussed earlier, when you are an effective listener, the person speaking to you has no doubt that you were listening. Furthermore, this suggests that you were physically doing things to prove this; i.e. nodding in agreement, asking questions, asking them to repeat themselves, etc.

3. Make sure you are interpreting correctly.

Have you ever felt insulted or offended by something a person said, only to find out later that you misinterpreted the statement?

This is very common among people and it is in everyone's best interest to ask the necessary questions to get to the bottom of it. Sometimes this is hard because of an emotional reaction but if self-control is used, clarity can be obtained.

4. Show empathy

Showing empathy is similar to being a good listener. It requires actions that normally seem to be passive. When you feel sorry for someone or can deeply relate, it is a feeling but the other person will never know unless it is expressed through action. In business networking, it could be as simple as kind words and a solemn expression.

5. Be encouraging

Just like vitamins are needed to maintain good health, encouragement is needed to provide a high self-worth and motivation. When we are encouraged to do certain things, it pushes us to do more. With the proper encouragement a person can go farther and reach higher than they would have under their own steam. Your networking counterparts will greatly appreciate

Chapter 4.

Shattering the Psychological Walls

Human beings are creatures that naturally set up psychological walls when we don't feel safe. Even if a person is friendly and accommodating, we tend to lack immediate trust. This is actually normal and is to be expected when we first meet someone.

Could it be our past experiences? Could it be a general anxiety? There is also the possibility that we feel we will be harmed in some way. Whatever the reasons may be, trust is something that is earned. Once trust is established, a load of other benefits come along with it;

- Feeling comfortable around a person
- The sharing of personal information
- Maturing in relationships

These benefits are especially important when we are referring to business unions. If all of the above are in place, then a lot of positive possibilities become available. Is there even a

possibility of engaging in a productive business partnership without all of the above existing? The obvious answer is "no".

In business networking, where a lot of partnerships begin, one must learn the skills necessary to help reduce the "walls of fear" that are apparent when first meeting. You can help to significantly reduce those walls so that comfortable communications will prevail by following the below tips;

1. Asking the right questions

There's no better way to find out what the needs and concerns of a potential business partner are than by asking questions. When you ask questions directly about concerns and business goals, you are unlocking a vault of essential knowledge. By responding receptively to their answers, you are also helping a person to lower their walls because of your sincere interest.

2. Making introductions

Once you have made the acquaintance of a new contact in a particular field, introducing them to a person who is in the market for their service, is a fabulous way to show your trust in them and in turn will shatter the walls of mistrust.

3. Asking for expert advice

Giving a person an opportunity to "flaunt their stuff" is a great trust builder. When you do this, you are giving the person a lot of credit and showing that they have credibility as far as you are concerned. When a person helps you in this way, they feel much more valuable and will lower their walls. They will be grateful for your trust and in turn, will feel more comfortable dealing with you.

Asking the Correct Questions

Have you ever attended a business networking event and were at a loss for words when speaking to a potentially new contact? This has happened to a lot of people. Some have even taken a step to do something about it. For most, it's only a passing thought, not really a serious issue, and so they just dismiss it and make no approach at improving these awkward incidents. Sometimes it is because they have excessive inertia to do so. In other cases, it's because they think this is just as it should be. Still other times it is because they think they can't change it.

Well, let's look at this a little closer. Let's explore it a little bit so that you will consider using questions as an ice breaker and eliminate ever feeling that awkwardness again. Here are 3 basic questions to help conversations to materialize.

The first question you should ask once initial introductions are established is; "So, what do you do?" Sure, I know that this seems too much of an obvious or overly simple

question but you have now bridged the gap between awkward silence and potential opportunity. You have now opened up an opportunity for additional questions which will produce more dialogue and could even lead to a full-blown discussion.

Secondly, you should ask; "Do you thoroughly enjoy what you do?" Hopefully they will be honest with their answer. If they love it, hate it, or are somewhat indifferent about it, this will lead you to your 3rd question.

Example: If they hate their job/career, you can ask what they would rather be doing or what it is about their position they don't like. Furthermore, this is great conversation filler and it could even be qualifying this individual as a future client. In sales, we know that the greatest sales tool is your ears. So, listen to see if there is an opportunity for you to help them with your service or otherwise.

Third and lastly, if they love their gig, you can ask; "What is the best way you can help your clients?" This will result in an enlightening explanation which will give you a clear picture of the types of people within your own network that you can refer if you choose to. In addition, you may find a need for their service in your own life and may even see an option to propose a partnership.

After you have had a chance to review the reasons, and think about them, you'll see that a great case can be made in favor of asking questions. Think about this seriously for a moment. Using this simple technique, you will be instantly liked and once you make a person feel comfortable by offering an open ear, they will be more receptive to hearing what you have to offer.

Making Business Introductions

Have you ever been introduced to an individual and then became immediately excited about it? What caused the excitement? I'm talking about a person that you had no knowledge of prior to an associate talking him/her up and suggesting an introduction.

Chances are the middle man had some great things to say about this new individual. These things may have been true and they were just sincerely relaying their own opinion. Or, they may have exaggerated a few things in order to add excitement and assist in making a good impression.

Whichever scenario it may be, you had a heightened feeling about the introduction. From what was said, you expected great things to happen as a result of your meeting. It's not a coincidence that as human beings, we tend to envision and act on the positive possibilities of new ventures and relationships.

Now think back to the time that you were introduced to someone casually. Was there the same feeling of excitement? Did you expect anything besides the usual handshake and friendly exchange of words?

Most likely, you did not and that could have been due to the method of introduction. The way you should introduce a colleague to a referral can make the difference between success and failure for him/her. Here are 3 tips on how to introduce in a way that presets success.

1. Listen to the radio or watch TV to get an idea of how marketers set up a product for your excitement. Listen to the tone in their voice and the way they describe the features and benefits of their stupendous offer. When you are introducing your colleague to a referral, can you mimic the tone and general excitement you hear in a commercial?

2. When simply introducing a colleague to another colleague, you should employ the same tactics but with more somber tone. In doing this, you are really helping your comrade to make a good impression. You really never know where a relationship is going to lead but if you can help someone to make a good first impression, you have contributed greatly.

3. Learn your colleague's features and benefits before making an introduction. If you do this, you can "Talk them up" weeks before making the introduction. This is not hard to do but

does require style and finesse. I'm not suggesting being outrageous, but saying several positive and supporting comments, accenting their finer points, can lead to success for them in the end.

Follow the above tips and help your colleagues to make a great impression on your referrals. When this works out for you, collaborate with each other on how you can do this reciprocally. Soon you will be each other's best sales force!

Asking Expert Advice

If you are an expert in your field, you probably enjoy giving advice. When someone has a question and they don't know where else to turn but you, it has to make you feel a bit more confident. How do you feel when a friend, client, or colleague asks a question and you're able to provide a satisfactory answer? How does it feel when a referral of a client, friend, or colleague comes to you for advice?

It feels good and can also lead to a number of favorable things. You may acquire new business as a result of giving good advice. You may improve upon a relationship. At any rate, your expert status is elevated.

Have you ever thought of using the asking of expert advice as a networking tool? It really is a great way of building stronger rapport and there are a few other practical reasons.

Asking for expert advice gives you a reason to have a conversation. After you have been introduced to a new contact and want to build a relationship, calling and asking for expert advice is an excellent icebreaker. Sure, your introduction went well and you left a great impression but to take it to the next level will take some positive reinforcement. When you're speaking to an expert about their field, there is a lot of content for a good conversation. Furthermore, they will be more than willing to speak.

In addition, the information that you gather during that conversation is of a qualifying nature. This means that you are learning details about what they do and the type of clients they could best assist. You are also learning information that helps you to decide whether they really are an expert and are worthy of a referral.

You also help a person to validate their expert status. As the conversation progresses and you learn more and more, you can show how enlightened you are and how much you appreciate the information being rendered. Doing so will fill them with the satisfaction of knowing that they are helping someone. People typically feel good about themselves when they have helped someone in some way.

It also gives you a valid reason to keep in touch. Down the road, even as your relationship has developed to an extent, continuing to ask expert advice is a valid reason to keep in touch.

In business networking, keeping in touch is vital to the proper maturing of your relationships. It's a commendable thing to have thousands of contacts but what good are they if you aren't interacting at least occasionally? Call them up to ask for advice and opinions and you will stay at the top of their minds.

Chapter 5.

Business Body Language

Business body language and business networking run parallels as they both occur at the same time. When you are out at networking events and generating leads or contacts, there is a language being spoken that is nonverbal.

Just as if you were visiting another country and had to communicate with different people who spoke another language, it is important to speak and understand the language of the body. This has the obvious benefits of better communication which can lead to a number of favorable things.

Business body language, just like social body language, has its subtleties and can't be completely depended upon. However, taking note of certain movements and behaviors can help you in your networking experiences.

We all like to be as prepared as we can for important situations. Knowing what certain positions and gestures mean gives us superior understanding and is all part of adequate preparation. Take note of these aspects of business body language and use them to your advantage;

Leaning Forward

People usually lean forward and "into you" when they are really interested in what you are presenting, saying, proposing, etc. The rationale behind this is that unconsciously, we lean toward what we like. So, the next time you're really

interested in something someone is saying, take a quick second to check your own body language. You may find that you are actually leaning forward and are happily engaged. Furthermore, the next time you are at a seminar, show, or lecture, look around at other people when interesting or captivating things take place. This observation can help you next time you are pitching your product/service or offering a good suggestion to a potential client.

Partially Facing You

Typically, we usually face the direction of our intentions. In other words, when we are engaged in a conversation and are ready to leave in a rush, our bodies will usually start to face towards the door. If this is happening while you are engaged in a conversation, don't take it personal, the person may have an appointment to get to. To your advantage, make the conversation brief and set up a time to talk later.

Not Making Eye Contact

You may even see a minor pattern at this point. Typically, when people are interested in something they will face it, or lean towards it. Not making eye contact can be compared to not being faced. There may be a lack of interest or even shyness involved. You will have to make your own assertion in this situation. It will be to your advantage to observe this and take the appropriate action to move forward

productively.

Raised Eyebrows

Sometimes people are not as vocal in expressing their inner feelings as you would like them to be. Raised eyebrows are a sign of interest. If you are engaged in a business networking conversation and explaining something, raised eyebrows indicate that your conversation partner has an interest in what you're saying. Don't be fooled by the lack of words.

Shoulder Blade Alignment

When a person's shoulder blades are not in line with your own, they may be preoccupied. Ever talk to a person who is conversing with you but their body seems to be facing as if they're set to move past you?

First of all, give them a mental credit for speaking to you while they're really focused on their next meeting, assignment, errand, etc. Remember that they probably mean well but something in the back (or front) of their mind has got them anxious to fly.

Many times this happens if you happen to catch someone who is on their way somewhere and has stopped to have a few words with you. If this happens when at a networking event or during a one on one sales presentation, you may have to use your smooth gift of gab to help them to focus completely on what you are displaying. As you speak, notice their shoulders coming in line with yours.

Two people talking with their shoulder blades parallel.

Have you ever been at a business function and noticed two people talking with their shoulder blades in perfect alignment? This is a good indication that they are involved in a serious or interesting conversation. The aligned shoulder blades say that they are closing the doors to interruption at least temporarily.

Notice that when the same conversation is coming to a close, their shoulder blades and general position of their bodies begin to face away from each other. This happens even before the conversation ends. When you are out at business networking events, it's a sign to now approach without being intrusive.

Arms Folded

This could indicate a person feeling uncomfortable or anxious. A lot of people fold their arms when they are calculating, weighing the facts, and are not feeling confident about the answers.

This could be due to something you are saying, the way you are saying it, or even an individual's general mistrust of you. Not to be taken as offense, you may just need to know each other a little better and establish trust. If the same happens with a person you know reasonably well, it is probably the first reason or just a general feeling of discomfort.

Person is completely facing you but frequently looking away.

Usually when a person is completely engaged in a subject, all elements of their being will reflect this. The same holds true when in conversation. Take a look at the people in your next few interactions. Are they giving you regular eye contact?

Typically, when not looking you in the eye, they will say something that exhibits the fact that they are listening or are engaged. If they are constantly looking over your shoulder or into the background, chances are, they are preoccupied.

Once again, don't be offended, just acknowledge this and pick up the talk at another time if possible. This also depends on the priority level of the talk as well. You will want initiate this carefully and not offend anyone as you cut the conversation short.

Chapter 6.

Personal Space

Have you ever been in the uncomfortable position where a person is talking to you and they are way too close? I mean, close enough that you are literally being spat upon with the pronouncing of certain words. A lot of business networking events are loud and let's face it, it makes us get closer and speak in an amplified tone. Sometimes when it happens it makes simple conversation challenging.

When you are in this setting, it's often hard not to get very close to a person in order to be heard. Many people feel quite uncomfortable when they are not interacting at what they determine to be a "safe distance". Can you imagine how uncomfortable it must be when a person has been drinking or eating something that causes bad breath and the other person catches the unpleasant wind, so to speak?

Everyone has their own rules as far as how close is too close. When another person invades this sacred space, it makes us feel uneasy. You may relate to "uncomfortably close" by thinking back to when you may have been involved in a heated altercation and a person was literally a centimeter away from your face. In that case, how did you feel? Chances are you got more perturbed.

When you are involved in business networking, the distance you keep from others to whom you are speaking should be a focal point. A safe distance is typically about your arms

length. When you are in a conversation with someone at a networking event, make a mental picture of holding your arm out and touching the person. This should give you good approximate distance. Of course, if noise is a factor, you want to move a little closer but should be cautious of how close. Making a good impression entails more than just having a good conversation. When you're speaking to someone, all of the senses are aware and receiving info as well. Keeping this in mind, use the following examples assist you;

If a person seems to be moving away while you are speaking, this indicates discomfort. Before taking offense to this action, understand that the space they are trying to establish may be what they are used to. Respect their distance and continue on with a good conversation. As you continue, just be aware and try not to offend by entering their borders.

If a person is moving closer to you when speaking, it is a sign that they are comfortable with a cozier parameter. Depending on your own space restrictions, you may find this offensive. However, now that you're being made aware that different people have personal space preferences, you will behave differently in these situations. Politely make your own adjustments as you see fit.

If you have been eating, watch the way you pronounce your words. Many times at business events, food is served. We may not realize it but after we have enjoyed a tasty snack, we can share it with our conversation partners accidentally. This is an important point to give attention to.

When we eat, more saliva is produced and the simple utterance of certain words can provide a rather disgusting spray of food onto your colleagues. If you know you will be speaking a lot, you should avoid snacks altogether but if it just can't be helped, be aware of the consequences.

Cologne and perfume can also be offensive. We all like to smell pleasant but can unknowingly offend someone. While we may think we are wearing cologne or perfume that we think is fabulously attractive, another person may disagree or have allergies. Since business networking and socializing is about making good impressions, you must take the other person's opinion of you seriously. Wearing cologne or perfume, when conducting business, should be avoided.

Some people are very touchy. Nothing invades personal space like being touched inappropriately. Once again, everyone has their own idea of what that inappropriateness is. A simple touch on the back or the shoulder can be taken in the wrong way. This is an area to use your own judgment, of course but it can be avoided altogether.

Section 2- Practical Tips

In Section 2, I focus on an assortment of common topics. Practical Real-Life Solutions are given throughout.

Chapter 7.

Business Relationships

3 Things to Avoid in Business Relationships

Please allow me to ask, why would people search for ways to build business relationships?

Could it be because a person knows that building good business relationships can lead to greater financial rewards? Has someone made the realization that building great business relationships can cause one to never run out of prospects and opportunities? Or can it be that building phenomenal business relationships can deliver unlimited options for favors, perks, and resources?

Anyone searching to improve business relationships definitely has a motive in mind. Whatever the motive, it is likely that it is to enhance and elevate rather than damage or disintegrate. Here, we are going to focus on avoiding aspects that can cause damage or disintegration.

There is truly an abundance of information available on how to make business relationships work well. We will begin looking at the strict avoidance of certain actions. Though some things may seem like common sense, one must realize that what is common to some is not common to all.

Okay, now that we have that established, what will we be avoiding and why?

It only makes sense that when you're dealing with building business relationships, the simplest things to focus on are the basics. But just as in the common sense reference above, what's basic for some may not be basic to others. Therefore, here our 3 things to avoid when building business relationships;

First, one should avoid joking almost altogether. The reason being, although an associate may have a great sense of humor outside of work, they may be stern on not allowing that side of their personality to be evident during working hours. When looking to build business relationships, it may only take one bad joke at the wrong time to completely blow your progress.

Secondly, avoid being late for meetings. This includes all meetings; in person meetings, conference calls, and even a one on one phone call. Time is a precious commodity and when you're building business relationships, you want to respect a colleague's time. When it comes to this aspect, the Golden Rule strongly applies.

Third and lastly, return messages promptly. Nothing says "You are not important to me." like not responding to a

voice mail, text, or e-mail. Even if it's somewhat inconvenient or if it's a contact who you are not interested in conducting business with, you're doing the right thing when you respond to a message. Doing so is usually a small thing but it correlates directly with "what goes around comes around". It's better to respond to a call/message than to be branded as an unresponsive-non-caring individual.

Take heed to avoid engaging in these bad traits. They may be basic and common but you'll have to agree that you will build much better business relationships by leaving these things out of your daily activities.

The Value of Keeping In-Touch

Following up after meeting is quite important in networking practices. After making the initial contact, and knowing that things went very well, it's always a good rule to follow-up. As a matter of fact, it's part of the Golden Rule. But it is crucial and just as important to maintain and improve those relationships. Like a fine wine, they can grow better with time. So, what happens after a good follow-up? At the time of the initial meeting and up to the follow-up, you determine a few factors, like whether you can work together and other synergies. But, what about the future possibilities? Not having a plan to maintain relationships and take advantage of the possibilities may cost you money in the long run. So here are some tips for keeping in touch and preserving good will.

One of the easiest ways to stay in touch with a new contact is to simply send an e-mail every week or so. Start explaining what you are doing or maybe just checking up to say hi. It may also be a good idea to send your new contacts an email with questions about their business and in doing so you'll get to know them a bit better. Online social networks like LinkedIn and Xing make it very easy to keep in touch by commenting and making queries to your new contact. You can even post updates on your wall. Branding is always important even when it comes to building relationships with contacts. So, posting updates on your wall keeps you in the frontal lobe of your new colleagues.

I also recommend asking for advice. This opens up the mind of your new contact and challenges them to prove their value. I'd also suggest alerting them about special events and industry related happenings that they may find interesting. Keep in mind that you don't have to limit yourself to strictly email as we do have that old invention- the telephone. A good phone call or voicemail left every so often can also gain great points in strengthening the relationship. And never neglect the opportunity to send a holiday greeting.

Doing these few things will strengthen a relationship with you and your new contact. That contact will now become an ally, then referrals can be exchanged and new business generated. Also, an invitation for an occasional cup of coffee or lunch is always a great gesture. It's easy to see how doing these things through a period of time can build and secure effective

responses which can lead to profits in the long run.

What Does “Keep in Touch” Mean?

Often in business networking, we hear the advice, "Keep in touch". It is very important to do so but there is a bit of confusion and some questions that come up when this is discussed. These questions are completely understandable.

"Keep in touch" can mean so many different things and can be interpreted in so many different ways. One person might think that it means to pop by someone's office every week. Another person might think it means to send a greeting once every two years.

It is a very subjective topic. In addition, there is no right or wrong way to keep in touch. It all depends on the person and the relationship. To help add clarity to the overall concept, here are 5 suggestions on the topic of keeping in touch;

1. Contacting each other and having a conversation every now and then.

Once you meet a new contact and it is obvious that you won't be doing any immediate business together, simply having conversations every now and then can help you stay connected. Of course, it shouldn't happen if there is no chemistry between you and it seems as though you are forcing this to happen. This should be a pleasant and enjoyable exchange of goodwill.

2. Sending each other referrals.

Power Partners don't always communicate with each other everyday. As a matter of fact, the exchange of business referrals may be the only communication involved. This is not necessarily a bad thing as exchanges of business are refreshing and wanted.

3. Exchanging useful industry information.

Another way to keep in touch is by a subtle form of information marketing. While two contacts may not be very close or involved, the exchange of useful information to each other, keeps them connected. This is officially keeping in touch.

4. Let's do lunch.

Business and lunch is usually a benevolent combination. It's also a great way for two or more colleagues to strengthen and maintain their ties. Lunches can include; business discussions, current events, or better yet, meeting each other at a networking luncheon. If the latter is done, you can introduce each other to new contacts as trusted sources.

5. Happy birthday or congratulations on your new; business, promotion, position, etc.

Okay, you may not always know the birthdays of your business contacts but through the above methods, you can gather this information through time. Also, if you are doing your due diligence and keeping in touch, you will have the

opportunity to offer your congratulations on any occasion that calls for it.

3 Reasons You Should Stay In Touch with Contacts

Keeping in touch with business contacts after your initial encounter is extremely important. This is important even if you have had a follow-up conversation and decided that your new contact may not prove to be immediately beneficial. It's never really wise to just "write the person off"; especially when there is always the chance that circumstances or fate will cause this seemingly insignificant union to suddenly be vital. Instead of focusing on the many possible negative outcomes of not keeping in touch, let's consider 3 important reasons to continue the lines of communication with even the most unimportant connections.

To start with, on the "Pro" side, I would point out that as said earlier, there is always the fact that a twist of fate or a circumstance like, a career or job change may put you directly in front of a contact. What if this person is a new team member or even your boss? Having kept reasonably good rapport can contribute to a very favorable situation. Of course, the above example may not seem like a possibility at this time and in fact, may even seem ludicrous but I'm merely suggesting being open-minded about the possibilities. You never know who someone may know and therefore the ridiculous could become reality without warning.

Second, consider that you may need expert advice and have no-one you are able to immediately trust to provide it. If you have ever been in a similar bind or situation, like meeting a deadline or even locating a good surgeon, you can understand the significance of an individual seeming to come to the rescue by providing a valuable resource when the situation arises. How relieved and surprised are you, not only when it comes, but where it came from?

Likewise, how many times where you able to provide something of value to a "friend in need"? To you it may have not been a big deal because it is the norm in your life to have access to something that literally saved someone's job, business, or maybe even life. Plus, did you take note to how thankful your friend or colleague was to have received your assistance?

Third and lastly, you will, through time, realize that your network of real contacts has really grown beyond what you could ever have expected and that's going to result in strong business and personal relationships, being respected as a valuable resource to others, guaranteeing a certain bright future, broadening career opportunities, only being one person away from answering an important question, and I could go on. In addition, you can take time now to check your list of connections and send them all a quick "How's everything been going?" email or even a phone call just to let them know you're still here and available. All of them won't reply just as you may not reply to every email you get from a vague past relationship

but those that do will be readily open for a continuation of communication.

Within all of the above data lies a pretty good set of reasons in favor of staying in touch with your contacts. What do YOU think? Think about this seriously for just a moment. Perhaps you really, in all seriousness, should keep those lines of communications open for a rainy day or perhaps even providing some sunshine to those in the rain.

Best 3 Tips for Turning Cold Contacts to Warm

1. Upon your first follow-up, suggest a meeting for lunch or coffee. When you set these meetings up, make sure you tell the person you would really like to learn more about their business.

You may or may not be able to assist this person by way of referrals but it can be a pleasant and bonding experience nonetheless. This is a good opportunity to get to know one another on a one-to-one basis, essentially warming up your union.

If you fail to do this, you may be missing the opportunity to get your foot in the door with a potentially warm contact. Please, don't miss this important step as it brings you quantity which becomes quality over time.

2. Take full advantage of any opportunity that you have to see this person face to face. You may know of upcoming events in their industry or a possible hobby that they are involved in. You will strengthen your connection if you have the opportunity to "hang out" from time to time.

I don't mean to stalk, obviously, but simply to take advantage of bonding opportunities. It also helps if you have an interest in their hobby if that's the route you choose.

3. Be sure to send birthday greetings, positive comments, and kudos when those opportunities present themselves. Warming up a relationship, many times entails complements and admirations. Nowadays, especially with online social networking, this is very easily achieved.

This step is accomplished through simple repetition over time. This can encourage your new colleague to take special notice of you and greatly improve your relationship. This is not a step to be taken lightly. In fact, it may seem less powerful because of its subtleness but it's importance is paramount.

If you do the above exercises repetitiously and with the goal of having a strong-broad contact base, you will enjoy solid success. Follow the steps above and warm up your cold relationships one by one.

3 Reasons You Should Visit Your Business Contacts

Firstly, for the positive side, allow me to point out that it gets you out of the office and doing something positive for your business. I can almost hear some objections already that there's just not enough time in the day for this. It is a valid objection, I agree. However, let me bring to your attention the fact that if you don't have time to simply "pop by" and see people in the flesh, I don't believe you have serious time to make your business work. Did I mention it gets you out of the office?

Second, you should consider that by being present and observing, you can get a real handle on what their days are like. This can help you greatly at times when your business relationship calls for you to be empathetic. You'll have a realistic visual of what they may be experiencing. Also, this generally builds stronger bonds as well as adding that personal touch to an otherwise strictly commercial exchange.

And third, you get to separate yourself from the other hundreds of connections they have that they never interact with in person. This means that when referral time comes around, psychologically, you will be comfortably branded in their mind. And on top of that, you will turn some of these business relationships into real friendships by default.

How to Firm-up Relationships through Visitations

There are several ways to maintain communications with your contacts. You can send them a text message, e-mail, or give them a phone call but nothing strengthens bonds like in person interaction. Face-to-face has no real substitutes.

You should make a personal visit to one of your important contacts on a regular basis. As you meet new potentially powerful contacts, you can rotate your visits between different ones weekly. This will, of course, take time but simply organizing a schedule and fitting it in, will make this possible. An organized schedule will be your best asset to successfully accomplishing this.

Making in person visits is officially entering someone's world. It's like conducting business with a subtle and personal touch. Once an individual experiences this "personal touch", they are more likely to refer people to you through the course of time.

It's always a good thing to pay your contacts a visit and make your bonds stronger. However, while you are making these visits, there are ways to make them a bit more meaningful. Examine these 3 tips to do just that;

1. Ask questions to determine the perfect prospect for your contact.

Your contact has probably already given you a profile of their perfect client but now that you are in close proximity, it's time to dig a little deeper. This is your opportunity to ask a few

more questions about their ideal market. By the time you leave this meeting, you should have an even more accurate description.

2. Interview your contact as if you were writing a short book.

This technique gives you valuable information and warms up your relationship further. You should ask your colleague questions as if you were writing a story about their business life. You can find out the different experiences they have on a regular basis and also tap into the more unique happenings in their profession. You should also find out their opinions on their industry as they are probably an expert.

3. Invite your contact to visit you.

The above tips should help to form better business relationships. This is all part of advanced business networking. Before your visit concludes, you should invite them to visit you on a specific day as well.

When this happens, you can provide them with the same information and, once again, warm up your bond. This type of interaction is what long-term business alliances are made of. If you measure all of the benefits that come with visitation opposed to saving time by not visiting, the visits will outweigh the alternative.

3 Ways to Passively Build Relationships

The above relationship techniques are mostly proactive. There are specific things that need to be in place in order to cultivate good business relationships over the course of time. There are various communicative aspects that need to be considered and acted upon as relationships grow stronger.

For the most part, it all seems like a givers game. You performing acts and watching the response. You offering favors and awaiting cosmic reciprocity. We are also instructed to "go for it" and firm up relations.

All of the above are effective and do their parts in making better relationships. I am not one to argue with what works, however, there is the other side of the equation. It is just as important and contributes to the strengthening of relationships just the same.

It is the art of receiving. Most people are not aware that making relationships work requires being humble and grateful recipients. We are very quick to say "no thank you" or "really, I'm fine". Doing this unintentionally disarms the giver from fulfilling their position.

Maybe we somehow feel that if we accept, we will then be indebted to the individual. This is an incorrect and potentially destructive perspective to take especially in business relationships.

Most of the time, if we don't see an immediate benefit with a contact, we will reject and refuse all that is offered. We should know, you never know who a person is connected to that

could prove beneficial to you or someone you would like to help down the line. Therefore, all relationships are to be considered worth the time of day.

Furthermore, the above doesn't take much effort but can be powerful. Below, are 3 ways to take the passive stance that build relationships, nevertheless;

1. Accept calls and return e-mails from ensuing colleagues.

The next time you receive a phone call or an e-mail from a new contact you would rather avoid because of their sales offers, take the call or respond to the e-mail. Put your fear and annoyance aside for a second and politely give an open ear. This show of respect has reciprocal rewards and you may be positively and directly affected later on.

2. Honor invitations and respond to RSVPs.

You are busy. We all are but you should take time to accept invitations to lunch, events, and otherwise. Also, if you do not intend on attending an event, RSVP that you will not be able to make it. You can also add something personal to this message. This is a relationship builder for sure.

3. Accept gifts and respond politely to sales pitches.

Sales pitches can be an annoyance to our day. I will not condone them here but I will suggest taking the opportunity to give an open ear and politely decline. Take this opportunity to

create one more leg in your business network.

5 Little Things that Count in Networking

Are you familiar with the saying "It's the little things that count"? It applies to life and especially applies to business networking. Some might say that people are petty but that just depends on the perspective one takes. Instead of thinking that people are petty, maybe we should embrace the aspect of different levels of sensitivity.

Each person has a different threshold on just about everything. So, it's really a judgment call when deciding to perform or act in a certain way, especially when you would like a particular result. Doesn't that just make sense?

In general, when relationships are built, either business or personal, there are several bricks to be laid in the wall-of-bond. Each brick has its own individual size and weight. However, most of the bricks are small or "little". Thus, here are 5 little things that count in business networking;

1. Thank people for the smallest tasks.

We can all be absent minded at times. When a little favor is done, we may say to ourselves, "If I did that for someone, I wouldn't even expect a thank you." Be forewarned, the shoe is not on the other foot. Offer sincere thanks, even when it seems trivial.

2. Ask a person are they completely finished speaking before giving your input.

Our professional conversations can be pretty intense at times. We may also want to move along because of our individual agendas. These things can cause us to be abrupt and distracted as we speak. We may not always want to give the other person time to finish before we are ready to reply or add input. Patiently waiting for the other person to finish and asking them if they are finished adds a certain validation to the speaker.

3. Get a person's permission before you start e-mailing them your newsletter.

Have you ever exchanged business cards at a networking event and suddenly started receiving weekly e-mail because your e-mail address was on your business card? This has happened to the best of us and you can't blame a guy/gal for trying.

However, this can be considered spamming. Furthermore, how much more of a warmer bond would you form with a person if you ask them if they would like to receive your e-mail alerts?

4. Acknowledge any possible minor miscommunications when you haven't spoken for quite some time.

Sometimes when we have contacts for a long period of time, missed calls or never replying to an e-mail can cause a

small amount of tension. Time passes and wounds heal but there comes a time when you speak again.

It's always good to acknowledge those little things that you missed through time. Apologize if you have to. This little action scores big points.

5. Give a person an update on a referral they may have provided.

Time can pass after a good referral has become a great client. It will do you well to contact the referral source at a much later time and let them know how great your relationship is going. Thank them again.

5 Human Aspects to Put in Business Conversations

Making a lasting impression, (when networking), is crucial to your success. When engaged in “business speak”, many different things can be discussed in a variety of ways. It is important that when the conversation ends, that you have penetrated a bit below the surface.

This is what lasting impressions are made of. The last time someone made a lasting impression on you, did personal elements have anything to do with it? Chances are, they did and these personal elements forced you to make mental associations with them the next time you communicated with the person.

If the nerve they touched was sensitive enough during your initial conversation, it caused you to relate and may have worked in their favor. As a result, partnerships, referrals, or business alliances resulted.

These are just a few examples but inserting the human element into your networking conversations makes a big difference. Below are 5 examples of attaching human-like aspects to business-speak;

1. Personal experience

It's always smart to talk about the positive points of your business, company, or services. Unfortunately, unless it has a unique twist, it is just like thousands of other similar descriptions people have heard before.

As part of your self-marketing plan, you should include a personal experience with your own brand. It should be something that reaches down to personal levels that others can relate to.

2. Client case study

As you are speaking about the finer points of your products or services, a subtle transition into a client story is wise. Tear jerking experiences are even acceptable as long as you don't over-exaggerate.

3. Crusader Compassion

It is one thing for a person to enjoy their job or career but it is another when they have compassion for its mission. If you are deeply moved by the cause of your organization, don't hide this when having business conversations. It's okay to make your love apparent but you of course must maintain professionalism.

4. Honest mistakes

Sometimes when people speak about their companies, they tend to make them sound immaculate. Even if a company doesn't have a blemish on their record, they still make small mistakes. You may or may not have been directly involved in these tiny mishaps but mentioning them in an "honest mistake" sort of way, can add a human feel to the firm.

3 Questions You Should Avoid

Inquiries about business networking are going on all the time all over the World Wide Web. There are numerous tips, techniques, and methodologies available at clicks-length. In regards to doing the right thing when networking for career advancement, there's a lot of good and practical information to be found online. You can find out the proper phrases to use in order to break the ice and begin to build relationships. You can find guaranteed techniques for gaining instant rapport. You can even find psychological miracle cures for shyness.

As one seeks, he will surely find something. Hopefully, if it's an extended search, wrought with a lot of effort, he will find the proper information, which will actually help. The right information, like knowing what questions to avoid when business networking are located below.

Of course, there are a lot more things you can avoid when having a professional conversation. Below I've only focused on 3. Review them briefly but keep them in mind as you continue to build your business networking equity.

First of all, always avoid questions directly or closely related to political opinion. I know that when we had such a controversial campaign going on like that of President Barack Obama's, it was hard to avoid, even in everyday conversations. However, when avoiding possible offense and looking to positively build business allies, I'd leave out any opinion about politics that wasn't completely insipid.

Failure to keep this in mind can cause you to brand yourself as critically opinionated and even worse, labeled as some sort of extremist. We both know that people tend to take things out of context and we don't want that happening when our goal is to create favorable bonds.

Secondly, avoid any questions that delve too deeply into religious beliefs. Sure, it's quite alright, if you are asked, to state the faith you follow. It's even okay to state the place in which you worship. (And that's even borderline!) But asking questions

which can induce the deliverance of a mini sermon or insinuating that a person question their own beliefs, cannot only open up heated discussions but end a potentially productive relationship instantly.

The opinions just described have their place in all appropriateness but when we're talking about business interactions, there's no room for them. You could be walking on a slippery slope once those doors are opened. So, I'd avoid those questions.

And third, avoid questions with a sexual orientation context. Sexual orientation is a controversial issue for sure but asking questions that can make a person feel intimidated and even embarrassed is no way to start a business relationship. While there are Gay and Lesbian business networking groups, they are just that, "Business Networking Groups".

It is wise to stick to the focus of your business relations and not ask questions which could provoke strong opinions. If you open this can of worms, you could be inviting an uncomfortable situation between you and your potential business partner.

Of course, just avoiding these questions will not guarantee that you will have an outstanding business networking experience but it will help you to keep the waters calm and friendly during your conversations. Keep the above tips in the front of your mind when you are out building business relationships and pursuing the results you wish for.

Show Gratitude for Favors

It's always refreshing when a colleague or friend comes through on the promise of a favor. It shows that they stand by their word and are responsible and caring enough to do so. It feels great when you are the recipient of a favor that was done out of sheer kindness and nothing is expected in return.

However, even if nothing is expected in return, I believe it is still our duty to show appreciation and gratitude in the best ways possible. Of course, I don't mean to offer favors or pretentious type gratitude simply because you receive a favor. I don't believe it should be done on a 1 for 1 basis.

When people attempt to operate in this way, they can lose touch with the spirit of genuine giving and the humility of receiving. In other words, these attributes should be in effect already. If not, it can be a task to perform either action on both ends. It would be hard or difficult to freely give and to gratefully receive. This doesn't apply to prearranged agreements to render favors on a 1 to 1 basis. In that case it would be considered a business transaction not networking.

If you apply the above principles to business networking, you can see prosperous results. The following are 3 ways to show gratitude;

1. Look for 10 ways that you can give back realistically.

As I stated above, it should never be a 1 on 1 favor exchange basis. That shows a lack of substance and is quite shallow. If you think of 10 ways to give back, you are just being

practical in your methods. It is your choice to offer these things freely before another favor is even rendered.

2. Contact the individual intermittently as a sort of wellness check.

A wellness check is something that should be done regardless of a favor but doing a favor does show a certain character in a colleague. It makes sense to keep in touch and check up on your contact, especially if it's to see how you can offer your assistance.

3. Show relentless support.

It is good conduct to never forget that a favor was done. If you see a need for support or an endorsement to your colleague, don't hesitate to give it. Relentless means, never ending. So, even if it is years down the line, your support should still be strong. As I mentioned earlier, there should be no pretentiousness, just a sincere agreement to offer your blessings. The golden rule also applies in this scenario. “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

Chapter 8.

Self Marketing

Marketing Yourself Through Networking (The Superstar Plan)

Any company creates a marketing plan to sell their best products and services and it should be no different when it comes to marketing your own best attributes. With just a basic understanding of marketing, self promotion can be a slam dunk.

From the start, it's fundamental to know your market. Who is in need of your product or service? A general marketing practice is to know your target's habits and how they will best use what you have to offer. It is good to know where they are and as far as networking is concerned, how to meet them directly. This can be any number of places including a networking event.

Once you have identified your target and key people to meet, it's time for the marketing plan. Since you are marketing through networking, the basic phases of the plan are reasonably simple; Meet key people, Follow-up, and Continue Communication (Re-Networking).

Upon meeting key people, a good image is paramount. You must convey professionalism, trust, and credibility. Dress for success and let a smile, sincerity, and open ears be your tools. I should also mention to keep in mind that while your

services may be top notch, the person buys YOU first. Your product or service is secondary. It is essential to project a favorable image to your potential clients that goes beyond conversation. It can consist of voice mail greetings and messages, email signatures, and personalized letters.

If you continue to have a results-based mind set, the follow-up portion of your plan can lay the foundation for years of productive activity. Initial following up includes a phone call, email, or even a visit which can lead to the ever so important, first official meeting. Based on the desired outcome of your plan, that meeting may include an interview, a presentation, and sometimes a proposal. Follow-up includes all correspondence leading to the objective. We constantly hear that following up is mandatory if we expect to get anywhere networking. I must emphasize that follow-up is one thing but following up as a part of your Self Marketing Plan will be much more effective because specifics were established at the onset.

"Closing" is often viewed as the final step in follow-up but is actually "Opening". After the sale is completed, the door for Re-Networking has just opened. Knowing that meeting key people is the initial step of your marketing plan, your relationships with satisfied clients should lead to referrals and introductions. This is known as Re-Networking because you are deriving new contacts and prospective clients through continued communications with your network.

How to Get Attention from Business Networking

In marketing, there is a popular acronym known as A. I. D. A. This stands for Attention, Interest, Desire, Action. Typically, all of these elements need to be in place before a person makes a purchase. That purchase could either be a product or service but the purchase is usually a result of A.I.D.A. being established.

For example, if a person is to buy your product or service, they must first (to be consistent) know that it exists. This calls for gaining their attention. Next, once a person sees what your product is, you'll have to generate some interest in order to keep their attention and build up to the next step.

If enough interest is generated then the desire to make the purchase is the natural next step. Once the desire grows and expands, it reaches its height and action comes into play. This is quite a simple process in theory and holds its ground firmly but we will focus on the first aspect which is "attention" and 3 tips on how to use business networking to generate it.

1. Host your own live event. This event could be strictly a business affair, like a networking mixer or a charity function. If your business is primarily B2B related, a business networking mixer is a great way to go. When you hold a business mixer, many people will come to take advantage of the networking. At the center of the event, you can hold a brief presentation showcasing your product or service.

When you're promoting the event, you should brand your company logo all over it. You will also gain greater attention if you charge for the event and give all of the proceeds to a popular charity.

2. Start an online social network related to your industry and product. It's not impossible. In fact, you can use your business connections to populate your network. Start by contacting your prospects/connections and asking them intriguing questions that they won't be able to resist replying to.

Whatever you do, avoid the usual industry speak. Your key is to gain attention so being too normal will hurt you. You know your own boundaries when it comes to damaging your image but I still emphasize pushing beyond those boundaries a little.

3. Attend every business networking event within a 25-30 mile radius. You will have to take a few hours and plan out a realistic schedule to accomplish this but in doing so you will come into contact with thousands of people.

As you attend these events, bring something with you that will staple a brand into the people you are meeting. This is also an excellent way to make new contacts and as you do, stay in touch with them and invite them to your upcoming networking event. This method is best done over the course of 90 days.

Now that you have their attention, interest, desire, and action should flow through as a natural part of your sales process. Try this and succeed.

3 Self Marketing Tactics to Avoid

Because of the fact that colleagues and clients do business with you largely because they like and trust you, self marketing is of the utmost importance. Business networking affords you many opportunities for self promotion. These are valuable opportunities that should not be abused, ever!

Self-promotion Gurus recommend a variety of things to enhance your image. Many of their recommendations are credible and can work well, depending on your industry. However, some sound good but in practice, can end up tarnishing an image instead.

As we go around conducting business networking, we want to make a great impression and maintain it for as long as possible. The last thing we want to do is start strong and then quickly plummet in image points. Furthermore, we don't want to start off on the wrong foot.

It is in our best interest to communicate what we want simply and clearly. Sometimes, when we are not willing to put in the people-skills-work, we try to substitute it with objects and methods. The cold hard fact is that there is no substitute for the time put in, especially when it comes to successfully marketing yourself.

This is not to suggest that there are no rational sub-methods to include in your efforts. Simply, use good judgment and watch out for gimmicks and such, that don't apply to you or your proposed brand. The following, are some examples for your clarity;

1. Oversized or abnormally shaped business cards

I've gotten quite a few of these and they don't make me call or contact a person any faster than I would with a normal-standard business card. Furthermore, they don't fit into my business card binder so; they may go into the trash.

2. Over-The-Top Elevator Pitches

Sometimes, when a person is told that an Elevator Pitch is supposed to be interesting and attention grabbing, people tend to go overboard. From the "too abstract" to the "not very funny", I've heard my share. Once again, if you concentrate on what you want to communicate, your Elevator Pitch will follow suit.

3. Trinkets with Your Name and Number

From refrigerator magnets, to coffee mugs, to computer monitor dusters, I have tons of things with business people's names on them. Okay, who's to say that a person won't look at their computer monitor duster and call the personal fitness trainer they received it from? I'm only suggesting that the ROI

on these types of mini promotions are hard to track and probably cost more than the investment put out for them.

3 Reasons You Should Market Your Value When Networking

This notion gives justification as to why a prospect would spend money with you. Some have actually done it while others have gotten bogged down and continue to shake hands and “elevator pitch” themselves into oblivion.

First of all, I will mention that people usually buy in direct proportion to what they believe something is worth. Yes, it can be well argued that people have certain buying habits that they stick to and never seem to change. This thought may be absolutely true but no matter what their buying habits are, they will buy according to their comfortable belief that they're getting their money's worth. So, the argument does have validity but regardless, if something is perceived to be expensive/valuable, it's more likely to be purchased. Please don't miss this very relevant fact!

Secondly, consider that while networking is a way to introduce yourself and start new relationships, it's a good idea to indicate, even subtly, how valuable you are during the process. Also, you really should consider that although you are extremely knowledgeable and skilled in your profession, it may be hard to put a monetary value on your service. Plus, when

someone hires you, the exceptional service you will render is extremely valuable and worth many times its price. Isn't it?

Third and finally, you'll get better and more satisfied-appreciative clients when you have this level of confidence in what you do. And that's going to mean that your business will sustain itself better and happy-satisfied clients attract others. Furthermore, your true value will increase by default as you journey through the process.

Whenever you think about the reasons and evaluate them, I expect that you will have to admit that a compelling case can be made for always marketing your value when networking.

3 Tips to Back up Your Self Marketing

Business networking is all about self marketing. If you consider the things that you can do to expose your personal value, networking have to be at the top of the list. Whether the exposure be to communicate with a fellow colleague or a potential client, it is a necessary evil. I use the term "evil" very lightly. Maybe it's better to say that it is absolutely necessary in order to market yourself effectively.

We all know that marketing is simply the means of reaching a certain target market and making them aware of our products or services. In the case of self marketing, we are making people aware of our ability to accomplish certain tasks in a way that is more than satisfactory. If we can do a fabulous

job in convincing people that they should use us instead of our competitors, the mission to obtain new business has been achieved.

However, once we are chosen, we now have to back up our initial promise. The following, are 3 ways to do just that;

1. Know your limits.

This statement is due to a lot of subjectivity. It's one thing to know your limitations but it's quite another to stretch yourself beyond what you think those limitations are. You have to know the balance between the two. You absolutely should do the very best job that you can at all times but it could be a problem when you over-promise and under-deliver. I suggest being blatantly realistic but always giving yourself room to surpass your previous accomplishments.

2. Over-deliver on your word.

This is an expansion of the above idea. Now that you have attained new business, the real work has begun. Hopefully, you have promised to deliver a believable amount of service to your new client. It's now time to employ a smarter and more extensive plan of action. Is it possible to deliver the same result using a different or better method? If so, it can be done faster and you can supply more benefits to your client which he/she will be grateful for.

3. Have a strategic back-end plan.

This bit of advice could have been the first step but all of them are equally important. Having a back end plan simply means to have more options set up in a sort of sales funnel. When a new client's business is obtained, there should be additional self-marketing strategies in place to enhance their experience. Your self-marketing doesn't stop with the attainment of the client. It is to continue and evolve as new products and services are offered throughout the term of your relationship.

How to Let New Contacts Know You Mean Business

Is there a fine line between the serious and the mediocre? I would have to comment by saying that the line is rather thick. When you are engaged in business networking do you notice a difference between the "Players" and the "Spectators"? Maybe the thick line I just described isn't as apparent during the initial encounter.

Perhaps it is only later that the real seriousness is recognized. Of course, it is through the actions of an individual that one can truly tell the amount of dedication to their objectives.

However, if you have been networking long enough, your experience will allow you to detect early on, who's the real deal. It can be likened to what some call a "gut instinct" but that can take years to develop.

The above is referencing the receiving side but what about the projection end? How does one show that they are serious and either a "Player" or a highly potential one?

This is somewhat of a double edged sword. On one side, it is good to reinforce your own beliefs and give yourself a self check, regarding your seriousness. On the other hand, in order to attract the right people, your seriousness must be very obvious. Here are 3 tips to keep in mind;

1. Make your word your bond.

A bond can be known as the glue or centerpiece that holds two or more things together. Legal contracts and agreements hold things together in our business world but there is an unwritten rule that a man's words should do so likewise.

This means that anything you say regarding a business transaction, goal, or anything that is defining of your trust, can be backed strongly by just your word. Only serious people can uphold there end of this rule.

2. Everything must be consistent.

Being consistent doesn't just mean being able to continue with a certain thing. It means that whatever you have discussed or described to a new contact regarding yourself or your business, holds true without any exaggeration. In other words, there should be no holes in your story.

3. Show and prove.

As the old saying goes "Talk is cheap". When you are showing a new contact that you are a serious contender, you should be able to represent all you have verbally presented. When the time comes, you should be able to prove your position on many different levels, even if you are just beginning in a certain field. If you cannot do this, and that is the case, you should never over-extend your abilities. Once you do, you have proven that you are definitely not serious and don't really mean business.

Building Your Expert Status

Are you considered an expert in your field? Does your circle of contacts think of you as the person to contact when an inquiry arises and expert counsel is needed?

If you are new in your field, this may not be the norm for you. After all, it does take time to develop expertise in a particular field. However, training and schooling does account for a lot. You may not have gained experience points yet but intense study over a period of time, does qualify you as more of an expert than otherwise.

Being knowledgeable in a certain category usually denotes a passion. If you're passionate about your field of endeavor, building expert's status will be that much easier. When you are involved in business networking, your expertise will be a valued commodity. As a matter of fact, many times it is expected that you are an expert at what you do.

In addition to that, it is good to have a strong handle on your profession and be able to offer advice, tips, and valid information that can only be derived from an expert. This helps to create credibility and generates a certain level of trust in your abilities. Below, are 3 tips to help you strengthen or create your expert status;

1. Write articles about your field of expertise and share them with your contacts.

I've heard it said by my mentors, as well as some leaders in certain industries that writing about your professional field is a great way to gain credibility. You don't have to be an expert writer in order to write about your field. You only need to speak about important things and communicate your opinion on certain topics. You can stress urgency and the relevance it has to those you will be sharing your articles with.

2. Write a short informational booklet about your industry and share it with your clients and contacts.

With today's technology and affordability, you can write a short booklet about the importance of your products or services. It doesn't have to be super long, and you can simply write in the same way you talk.

If you envision yourself talking to a group of clients who are interested in your products or services, you have a

writing style to use. Simply, record yourself and then send the recording to a transcription service or use voice recognition software.

3. Study your industry's fine points for one hour every day.

I learned some time ago that studying your industry for one hour every day increases your knowledge and forces you to be an expert. If you stay consistent with this simple activity, you will never be at a loss for answers when the time comes.

As a matter of fact, if you do this, you will have more content for your articles and booklets. You will simply be enhancing your value overall.

Marketing Your Expert Status - 5 Tips

Through many years, you have become overly knowledgeable about your field. Many of your colleagues know it and respect you for your vast know how. However, you feel as though you could do much better in teaching and assisting people if you were only more known. If this is true a marketing strategy could propel you into the recognized expert status you deserve.

Perhaps, when you hear this, you think, "Wow, that sounds expensive". Well, depending on the level of exposure you would like, the price will vary. Let's assume that you would

like to keep your costs down and begin your promotion modestly but with impact. The following, are 5 tips that will guide you;

1. Write Articles.

If you are seething with knowledge in your field and want to prove that you know your stuff, writing articles and posting them to online article directories is a great place to start. If you know what people want to learn about, those are the topics to write about. Just make sure you provide a way for people to subscribe to your RSS feed or join your e-mail list.

2. Write an Ebook.

With technology being at its current level, an e-book is a great way to show your expertise. Once again, you must write about things that people will want to know about.

You can sell your e-book or you can give it away for free. In the way of promoting your expert status, a free version is highly recommended.

3. Do Seminars.

There are probably plenty of people in your local area that would like to learn more about your field. Holding local seminars that address those topics that people want to learn about, can boost your expert status like nothing else.

You, of course, must know how to properly promote your seminars so that you can get a good turnout. You can also hire professional marketers to do this for you. If you feel that the marketing will become costly, you can recoup those cost with an admission fee to your event.

4. Optimize your expert status for the search engines.

Search Engine Optimization is a valuable marketing tool but implementation is best left up to the experts. However, there are many things you can do yourself and if so, optimizing your expert status through search engines is brilliant.

If you have a webpage or an in-depth article that complements your expert status, it would be great if people can find it when they type in a keyword relating to your area of expertise.

For example; if you type "Expert Networking Coach" into Google, you will see my article as the top result.

5. Self Publish a Book.

Along with your e-book, you can put similar information into a physical book. You can seek to be published or publish the book on your own. This is not a bad idea as you can sell it at your seminars or give it away. The choice is up to you.

Chapter 9.

Follow-up

The How's and Why's of Follow-up Networking

Because there are vast understandings regarding what "Follow-up" is and the subjectivity of this topic, let's clearly define what it means pertaining to this writing. Follow-up is, all correspondence after the initial contact leading up to the objective. Post communication can be considered "Re-networking" or "Bond Building."

Assuming that the first impression went well, following up is the next natural step. If favorable results are what you're after, you were reasonably prepared during your introduction and set the stage for a potentially productive juncture. Setting the stage may have included a line of questioning designed to qualify, and listening closely while envisioning the possibilities.

Proper networking suggests always having a spirit of servitude and generosity. Be sincerely willing to first give before you receive. You may or may not have a belief in karma or reciprocity but I can personally attest to the Golden Rule. Keep this in mind as you begin the sequence of expanding communications and give close consideration to the progressive cycle of relationships. Good follow-up talk, written or spoken,

should not be unreasonably assumptive or suggestive. I will define the relationship cycle in future writings.

The content discussed in the first conversation is of major importance when following up. This includes, not only that synonymous with business but any other point that appeared stimulating. If you discussed recreational activities, hobbies, or mutual interests, it is wise to mention such things in subsequent talks. This not only rekindles the pleasantries of your prior encounter but helps to lay the foundation for the comfortable evolving of a bond. Do this, of course, keeping the desired outcome of your union in focus. It is true that you never get a second chance to make a first impression but that also holds true for the second, third, and so on. While the first may be the most important, it is very possible to cause deterioration of your good standing during the growth process. So, please be mindful.

Follow-up is not to be considered strictly proactive. There is also the aspect of congenial behavior on your part when receiving contact from an ensuing colleague. You may have little to no interest in what is being offered or presented but lending an open-ear where consideration is possible may uncover hidden possibilities and broaden your contact base. Expressing generosity in this way can suffice as a follow-up communication even though it is of a passive nature.

Of the many components to networking, follow-up is of the highest priority. To be good takes trial and error, experimentation, and practice.

3 Ways to Know You Are a Follow-up Procrastinator

I think everyone on earth is a procrastinator. That's right, everyone is. The difference between some procrastinators and others are the things they procrastinate about.

If a person procrastinates about getting sufficient exercise, they may not feel very energetic and will probably gain a few pounds. If a person procrastinates about filing their taxes, on April 15, they will be frustrated and moving in a fever pitch to be done by the deadline.

If a person procrastinates about getting out and networking for business, they will notice that their contact base is fairly low if not nonexistent. If a person procrastinates about starting a business that they know they can...well, they could be working at their 9-5 until retirement.

As I stated above, everyone is a procrastinator but it depends what they are procrastinating about. For example; a person may be very active in getting out and networking for business by meeting a slew of new contacts. However, if they are procrastinating about following up with those contacts, valuable time has been wasted. Potential opportunities have been overlooked. Are you doing this? If so, it can be corrected by reversing the behavior. Here are a few ways to find out;

1. You have a large stash of business cards in which you don't know who most of the people are.

Has this happened to you? If you look at your business cards, do you wonder who most of the people are? There are ways to document each person; by taking notes on their card or in a database but the best way, is to take it a step further and follow-up with them. A mini relationship is better than no relationship.

2. You have run into the same people several times at different business networking events and still don't know very much about any of them.

Has this happened to you a few times? This is a sign that you are going out and making yourself known and familiar; but what of those people who you meet constantly? Can they be hidden doors to your next big career advancement? You may have had their cards for over a year but have never spoken outside of networking events. It is time to bridge the gap.

3. When you call new contacts for the first time, they barely remember when you met.

Okay, this is a sign of good effort, but lack of timing. Yes, at least you contacted them but to make a good impression and begin a relationship, typically, you should contact the person in a reasonable period of time when you are still fresh on their mind.

Strategies to Overcome Follow-Up Fear

When it comes to business networking, not following up adequately is more than common and if you are not doing so because of fear, opportunities are being thrown to the side haphazardly.

That being said, I give you kudos for seeking out to reading this book which will help you in overcoming follow-up fear. Once an effective follow-up rate is increased, you'll see positive changes in your career. Let's examine 3 strategies;

1. Use a simple e-mail template that ends with a question. Upon returning from a networking event, e-mail your new contacts a simple "Very glad to have met you." message but ended with a question. For example, "Regarding our brief conversation, is there anything I can help you with right away?" This could induce a response to which further conversation and meetings could be based on.

2. Have a friend or colleague who may be interested in their service, give them a brief call and ask questions. All you are doing here is simply connecting the dots of possibilities.

When your friend calls them they could receive better information based on their interest. Furthermore, you are giving your new contact a poke to contact you with a thank you. You can also call your friend and ask how the conversation went. Afterwards, you can call your new contact and ask them the same. This builds relationships.

3. Send them a contact/friend request on an online social network, like Facebook, LinkedIn, or Twitter. When doing so, use the same strategy that was suggested in the first idea; write a message saying that you are glad to make their acquaintance but end it with a question. Using these online social networks, once they accept your contact request, you can follow-up effectively from a distance. I suggest this subtle method for different circumstances;

- You are very anxious about getting back to someone you just met.

- You would like to continue your relationship but don't see any immediate benefits.

- You want to broaden your contact base in general.

Finally, taking a look at the above strategies removes all excuses for not following up with a new contact. Do these things keeping your business goals in mind and you will open up a whole new world of possibilities? Ignore them and continue down the road with unsuccessful results regarding your business networking. Some of us are a little shy and less aggressive but the methods above allow you to not only follow-up effectively but make new contacts become interested in you.

The 5 Taboos of Follow-up

You can do tons and tons of business networking, meet potential contacts and connections, and introduce yourself to thousands of people but without following up, it can all be a terrible waste of time. After all, what is the purpose behind your business networking efforts?

Is it to practice your people skills? Is it to build a stronger contact base? Is it to gain new clients? Whatever it is, following up will bring it all home.

There are several meanings to the term "follow-up." One meaning is; Proactively communicating with new and prospective contacts or clients. Another meaning is; Communicating with a person to gain a conclusion on undecided business.

The above are 2 basic examples but the one we will focus on here is the first. When one takes a step to continue communication with the intent of favorable results taking place, there are some things to avoid;

1. Don't Procrastinate

There are so many times when an initial encounter goes extremely well but is not continued and allowed to manifest into something great because of procrastination. Sometimes this happens because of a person being very busy and slightly overwhelmed with their schedule.

However, this is something to take note of as it could really damage a career. As referenced above, remember why

you are networking.

2. Don't Fail to Plan

It is a good bit of advice to be already planning your follow-up when engaged in the initial conversation. With your business networking goals already at hand, knowing how you want events to transpire should be at the top of your mind. This is just a good element of preparation.

3. Don't Misrepresent Yourself

It is a common mistake among professionals to misstate or over-exaggerate different aspects of their abilities when involved in a first conversation. Sometimes people do this in order to gain acceptance but it has dire consequences. They failed to realize that the person, to whom they were speaking, was hanging on their every word. As result, during the follow-up conversation, the new contact is disappointed and feels misled.

4. Don't Be a Pest

This usually occurs when you have a sales person looking to close a deal. It may be because he or she is new to the field or maybe they are about to lose their house.

In either case, what has probably happened is their prospect is not ready to make a decision or is not interested. They have not realized this and continue to call incessantly,

hoping for a good outcome.

5. Don't Give up

Some sharp professionals give up after not reaching a person after 1 or 2 attempts. This does not mean that an individual has no interest or is avoiding them. It may simply mean that they are just busy.

Following up Effectively

First, you must envision and set up the follow-up during the initial meeting. It will be most essential that you use your imagination effectively. If you choose to do this seriously, you will be in good shape. When you neglect it or forget to pay attention to this, you could be facing awkwardness and a loss of words in that follow-up conversation. If by chance, you happen to do this incorrectly, then it's likely you'll have problems with communicating effectively and getting something out this new relationship.

Second, you should understand that timing is everything. This is essential and will be crucial in determining whether you succeed or fail. It is important for these reasons:

- If you contact that person at a time that is inconvenient, you may brand yourself as a disruption. You should always ask what the best time to be contacted is.

- You should use your discretion to determine whether your new contact is interested but really busy or simply has no interest.

- Following up is the right time to build a relationship and not to close the sale--unless asked for. Failing to establish a comfortable dialogue will in all probability mean you will have some struggles in being productive in this follow-up attempt. Therefore, you may eventually fail at following up effectively.

Third, you have to remember to stay focused on your goals but keep an open mind regardless. Should you neglect this or fail to do this, you really should only be prepared to be disappointed repeatedly.

5 Easy Follow-up Activities

If following up was easy would more people do it? Would there be less excuses and more action? As a result, would more positive and favorable business transactions take place? At least I would like to think so. Great things simply don't happen in business without continued communication and follow-up is just the beginning.

Most would think that it all starts at the introduction but good introductions are merely scraping the surface. Introductions are simply part of the screening process. Therefore, follow-up and all that transpires afterwards is where the rubber meets the asphalt.

Furthermore, if you can get the follow-up process started, even slowly, it can lead to better conditions down the road. Better yet, if it is easier, hopefully it will be done more often. So, here are a few easy ways to get the ball rolling;

1. Send a "*Glad to have met you*" e-mail that ends with a question

Create an e-mail that can be sent to several different people. It should not include anything too specific. You should just add a name to it. This is only something to do if you are filtering new contacts and want to work with those who respond to your ending question. I mentioned doing this earlier but in this case, it helps you to perform a stronger filter.

2. Send a contact request to join you on LinkedIn

This is extremely easy and a lot of people already do this. If your contact request is accepted, whenever you post an update to your wall, they will see it and vice versa. This is a great way to stay at the top of the mind of new contacts until you decide to speak directly again.

3. E-mail a question requiring an expert opinion

This is less generic than the first method. This is a bit more personable and can start a conversation. Where this leads is up to you.

4. Send a "Glad to have made your acquaintance" text message

Of course, you must make sure that you have a person's cell phone number before you do this. This can be a great supplement to an e-mail.

However, I recommend only sending it once and sticking to phone or e-mail for future communication until permission is granted in time. You never know what a person's agreement with their cell carrier is.

5. E-mail useful industry information

This is on a more personable level as well. You may have different intentions when using this method. This is a great continuance of communication and can be useful to your new contact.

How to Create a Follow-up Script

Sometimes we can find ourselves at a loss for words when on a phone call or even sending an e-mail. Therefore, creating a script to reference can help you to focus your energy on more productive things by simply having an outline. Here are 5 steps to crafting an effective follow-up script.

Step 1. Decide the goal and context of your script. In this step, you're going to decide what the purpose of your follow-up statement is.

Is it to set up a future meeting? Is it to say how honored you were to have met a person? It could even be to offer a referral. Whatever it is, you need to have that decided first and then begin to write.

Step 2. Make sure that your message is a general and generic one. Remember, you are writing a script and it is to be used over and over again for many different people.

The correct context is definitely needed but some specifics must be left out. For example, a "Glad to have met you" script would be created with a different name each time. You just need to fill in the blanks.

Step 3. Start writing as if you are speaking to someone specific. You have probably written other e-mails or made similar phone calls to an individual after meeting. Just pretend, in this case, that you are speaking to that person and have a definite goal in mind. You should also record yourself, as if you are speaking directly to the person, with a pocket recorder or you can use your PC.

Once it's all written down, inspect it, fine tune it, and practice it. You may want to break out the recorder again to listen to yourself as you read it. Make sure that it sounds natural, like you are casually speaking to someone. Even when you are writing an e-mail, writing as you speak translates a lot better than sounding like stiff-legal-type jargon.

If you are writing a follow-up phone script, it's doubly important but you should also remember to create scenarios for the different ways a conversation may unfold. Of course, you cannot know 100% what will happen on your call but your script can prepare you for most situations.

Step 5. Put it into effect. Now that you have written, recorded, and practiced it, there's no need to wait any longer. The next time you need to follow-up with 10 people at a time, you will have a template to make the process easier. You should, of course, keep in mind that you do have to make adjustments regarding the specifics of your new relationships but your new template will ease the overall work involved.

Finally, there is no one-size-fits-all solution for following up but you can narrow down your delivery of such and save some time. This is also a good way to train yourself to be excellent as time goes on. By this I mean, you will become a natural and grow to consider using the script a past experience, like training wheels on a bike.

Chapter 10.

Networking Events

Networking Events vs. Events to Network

I was recently asked a question to determine the difference between actual networking events and events in which to network. Believe it or not, there is a distinct difference between the two.

If you are an individual who enjoys the activity of networking, any event that you attend can be considered a networking event. It could be a party, wedding reception, grand opening, etc. It really doesn't matter, as long as there are people to meet and interact with.

This perspective suggests that the world is your platform. Well, for an individual who really has networking implanted in his or her heart, anywhere and everywhere becomes an opportunity to network. This may also suggest that the type of event one might be attending is irrelevant in relation to the perspective of the networker.

However, as mentioned above, there is a distinct difference between specific networking events and all others. For example, I have heard people call seminars and conventions, networking events. It is completely possible to

conduct business networking at these events but they are not, in effect, "networking events".

Specific examples of networking events are; Business Card Exchanges, Networking Happy Hours, Speed Networking Events, After-work Business Mixers, etc.. These are events which are intentionally organized with business networking as the central focus. In other words, there are detailed and specific measures taken when preparing these events that encourage and induce business networking to transpire. Many times you'll find the word "Networking" in the title of the event like; Speed Networking, for example.

It is a person's prerogative whether they would like to practice the act of networking at an event which clearly has a different objective. This may seem obvious but there is some confusion over the different options. This is why explaining the distinct difference is relevant.

There is such a wide variety of events available and the ones that fall into the business category are often confused with networking events. Tradeshow's, Business Expo's, Job Fairs, Conferences, and more, are not specific networking events unless they are specifically organized to be so. In making that statement, I must also re-emphasize that the actual practice of networking is completely a result of the acting parties involved.

The above may also define your inner attitude towards mingling and networking with people in general. If you view a conference or seminar as a networking event, this suggests that you are a socially confident and endearing individual. In other

words, you openly and generously welcome networking opportunities when they present themselves.

4 Events for Great Networking

Seminars and Workshops

These are significant because of the specific targeting factor. You might attend a certain seminar to learn something or you can locate seminars that your target market may attend and sit in as well. During lunch and restroom breaks, you can introduce yourself and have a small talk among the attendees, exchanging contact information of course.

Tradeshows and Business Expos

The reason why these are so great is because, similar to a business card exchange, there are numerous professionals moving to and fro, open for conversation. There are also numerous people stationed at booths who are usually friendly and accommodating. These are also a good idea because of all the free samples like ink pens, gadgets, and free food!

Career/Job Fairs

Can you tell me why this a good idea? Let me help you; tons of people buzzing about, employed or unemployed, openly seeking more information and the right opportunity. You can't tell me that's not a great opportunity to make some good connections.

There more significant reasons. For example, many times, the smaller companies will actually have the business owner at the booths. This is a great opportunity for those of you who seek decision-makers to make your mark. And I must mention the prospect of seeing what's available in the job market.

Holidays Business Happy Hours

These holiday events can actually be significant because they are staged at the end of the year and the general mood is cheerful and filled with the joy of the season. The fact that it's at the end of the year gives you the opportunity to make new connections that could be beneficial entering into the New Year.

Events Specifically for Networking

As I stated above, general business events vary greatly in different types and purposes. Business networking specific events are in a category all their own. Below are some examples:

Business Card Exchanges

Business card exchanges are, of course, the most common to come to mind when one considers professional networking. These are events that are set in numerous locations like a company's office, a hotel meeting room, offices of a Chamber of Commerce, etc. During these meetings, there is usually a room full of business people, either in one or various industries, shaking hands in introducing themselves to one

another.

Networking Happy Hours

These events typically mirror the above but with a dimmer, more social-like atmosphere as the setting. They are usually held in a sophisticated bar or pub at a time where drink specials are readily available. These are a bit more relaxed and due to the mellow backdrop and alcoholic drinks, many find it easier to break the ice and start conversations.

Breakfast Meetings and Luncheons

The format of these events is slightly different than the above. There may be a half an hour segment in which the professionals will be able to mingle and exchange business cards. This usually happens before everyone sits down to eat and is exposed to a brief presentation from the sponsoring company.

Guests will usually have the opportunity to stand and introduce themselves to everyone. Additional networking is encouraged after the presentation is over.

Speed Networking

These events are very unique and mirror Speed Dating events. A group of 20 professionals or more are seated at tables, usually in a restaurant, facing one another. They are given approximately 2 or more minutes to introduce themselves and their business to each other.

Afterward, an alert is given and they must switch to the next table and repeat the process with the next individual. This continues until everyone present has met each other.

Researching an Event before Attending

First, you'll want to make a simple phone call to the host of the event and ask questions until you're satisfied. It is most important that you do this adequately. If you do it in this way, you are sure to get your questions answered completely and you will be in a good position. When you neglect it or fail to pay attention to this, you may be facing yet another networking function that really didn't meet your expectations. If you do it wrong by not asking questions about the goal of the event or the host organization's history, then you might have a challenge with knowing whether or not you should attend.

Second, you should get in touch with your friends and colleagues that may have attended a similar event by the host organization in the past. This is critical and could be crucial in determining whether you ascertain good information. It's important for these reasons:

- If they have attended similar events in the past by this host, they'll give you an honest recommendation.

- If they enjoyed an event from this host, they may accompany you there, which could be useful.

- You may get wind of other networking events that may be more suited to your needs

If you don't get this simple but powerful activity completed, you could end up spinning your wheels and giving up on what could deliver great results for you. Therefore, you could eventually fail at the whole endeavor. What a waste of time.

Third, you have to remember to do your own basic research via online search engine like; Google, Yahoo, MSN, etc. In the event you neglect this or get it wrong, you really should only be ready to toss a coin and hope for the best.

5 Point Pre-Networking Event Check-List

It happens all too often, we get to networking events and are ready to make a success out of this activity but have forgotten some important things. Sure, there will always be other events to attend to make up for our mistakes. However, there is no time like the present and we really don't know when certain opportunities will present themselves again.

Therefore, it's always good to be well-prepared to start with. This information may seem rather basic for you seasoned pioneers but it's always good to refresh and review from time to time.

We can trust a lot of what we need to our own memories but with so much multi-tasking going on, as well as the hyperactivity in our lives, I'm not too cool for a checklist. After all, our objective is to succeed and make progress, not

necessarily to be cool. Some of us are just naturally cool (Like the writer of this book)

Okay, before we get out and amaze the business world with our unique self-promotion and fabulous introduction, we should be prepared. Below, is a quick check list and a few reasons to help trigger your memory when you're on the go;

1. Goals

I would be completely out of place and incorrect if I did not mention this first. How else can you start to move towards success without a concise goal in mind? The decision to attend business networking events should be founded with goals in mind.

So many people I meet in these events have no answer when I ask them what their goals for the event are. Depending on your overall vision of success, attending these events should have significance and objectives.

As far as the check list goes, these goals should be viewed before the event and even during, if necessary. This will help you stay on target and avoid distractions.

2. Elevator Pitch

Before you step into this event, make sure you have your Elevator Pitch memorized. It should sound natural and be used in its correct context. In other words, say it at appropriate times when it sounds like a natural flow.

3. Directions

Even if you have a GPS in your automobile, you still should have the address written down somewhere. What are you going to program into the GPS if the address to the event is sitting on your office desk?

4. Admission

Is the event free or is there a charge? Do you have to be preregistered before attending? You had better know this before you get to the door.

5. Business Cards

So, you think that this is a bit of excessive advice? If so, how many times have you forgotten your business cards and then attended a networking event? It happens to the best of us but it would happen less if you only checked first.

5 Networking Event Success Points

You can consider your networking to be on track for "Success" if you are progressing through at least one of these stages. The following are 5 foundational principles that will greatly improve results and lift your networking experiences to a higher level.

1. Set Networking Goals

I'll put setting goals at the top of the list although many of the following principles are of great importance and are difficult to list by order of urgency. When defining your business goals, it should be decided whether or not 1 on 1 networking is the right course of action. Let's assume it is and you will use these goals as a base to assess your progress.

2. A Professional Business Card

Just as you are a representative and physical extension of your firm, your business card is much the same for you. If you are an employee, your company will supply you with standard cards. However, if you are the owner, or compliance within your company/industry allows, a custom card expressing your primary message can help to brand the good impression made on the first encounter while communicating your business's mission.

3. Look the Part

In Neuro-Linguistic Programming we learn that most people are "Visual". Consequently, your appearance must reflect your industry and express your theme. I have been to business mixers and met computer repair men in golf shirts and jeans but lawyers and bank presidents usually wear suits. Golf shirts and jeans are not inappropriate as long as they are consistent with the tone of your industry.

4. An Attractive Personality

This can be the deciding factor of success or failure in networking. It is said that laughter comes from stimulation but a smile represents happiness. It is of the utmost importance to be in a pleasant, friendly, and hospitable state of mind when coming into contact with persons whom you can assist and vice versa. Most of us are attracted to positive, confident, non-threatening individuals. It is doubly so if they seem to be capable of solving our problems. Being polite and expressing genuine interest goes a long way in setting the stage for future communication.

5. Follow-up

Even though it seems like common sense to contact the individuals recently met and express how honorable it was to make their acquaintance, most people don't. Many only contact if they see something of immediate benefit. While there is priority in some of these contacts, it is equally important and good professional conduct to correspond via email or phone call simply to establish realness and availability with a simple confirmation that says "Hi, it was great to meet you and I am open for business."

3 Reasons You Shouldn't Sell at Networking Events

Why do you think you shouldn't attempt to sell products and services at a networking event? Many people attempt to do

this. The majority of them have failed miserably in closing and seem to wonder why. Those who continue to try and make this happen come to the conclusion that networking simply doesn't work. Others just do the same thing over and over again with weak results.

The above examples are sad, to say the least. If you have found yourself or observed others experiencing the above examples, read on and I'll explain 3 reasons why one should never try to sell at a networking events.

To begin with, a networking event is designed for professionals to make business connections and generate potential leads. The individuals within have various reasons and presuppositions about why they are attending. Attempting to sell at the event can confuse and annoy a person who is simply looking to make new connections. Trying to introduce your service to someone and set up a close at the same time is inappropriate and you will brand yourself as being pushy and unprofessional.

Secondly, you are doing a large injustice to your potential prospects as well as your product or service. Networking events, whether crowded or cozy, are open forums for introductions and tons of other disruptions or distractions. Trying to create that "personal atmosphere", which is usually required when selling anything, most likely will be a waste of time. Isn't it fair to give a potential client as well as your service complete attention, absent of potential distractions?

Third and finally, you can really ruin a prime chance for beginning a great relationship. You should consider business networking as a valuable client acquisition source in which sales are made on the back end. If you just focus on making some new contacts and making a good impression on some new people, the rewards that occur due to relationship growth can be phenomenal. Just imagine that each individual you come into contact with has the potential of not only being a client but also a partner or referral source through time. View the attendees as individual entry ways to future opportunities.

As you can see, the above examples illustrate good reason to never try and sell at a networking event. Furthermore, if you take heed to the reasons above and work on relationship building, you'll experience rewards that are far greater than money or sales.

A Successful Journey through a Networking Event

You should have your goal in place before attending and be able to finish the statement "I will consider my attendance at this event to be a success if..." Be prepared with plenty of your business cards and an open attitude to be contacted by anyone and everyone you pass your cards to.

I believe in meeting many and filtering later. However, some have the philosophy of just meeting a few individuals and focusing solely on building those relationships. In a room of 50 people, I usually communicate and exchange cards with 30 to

40 or about 75%. I have developed many quality and productive relationships with this method.

If you use the Abundance Method, be sure to check the time and estimate the amount of people in the room. Your conversations can be brief and still have impact. You can accomplish this in most cases by using a line of questioning and being sincerely interested in what people have to say. Put your ears to good use and listen twice as much as you talk.

For example, approach with a smile, a firm handshake, and an open mind. After an exchange of each other's name and business, direct the conversation via quick interview. If you are at a loss for words use the acronym F.O.R.M. Ask about their Firm, like what they do. Next, ask "If you had the Opportunity, who is your ideal client?" The subject of Recreation is always a great topic at business events as it takes one's mind to a pleasurable place. So it's okay to ask how they enjoy themselves outside of the office. M is for Meeting which can be a simple implication to talk at a later time. Keep in mind when using F.O.R.M. that there is no particular order in which to ask.

It is quite important to take notes as you go through this process. If you have a pungent memory you're acres ahead of the rest of us and follow-up should be rewarding. However, I recommend a pocket recorder or simply writing memorable info on the back of their business cards. It's useful to have memory triggers in that follow-up conversation.

Don't Just Meet People, Greet People

If you want to make great strides in your networking skills and establish stronger-lasting impressions, attend business networking events with the attitude of an attentive host/hostess. Even if it's not your event and you've only come to make new contacts, this approach can plant the seed for better future communications and assist in the ascertainment of a solid reputation. You should proceed enthusiastically but with an even keeled, professional regimen. After reading this, you'll be well on your way.

First, consider some of the attributes of a great host. He/she is usually there to greet guests as they arrive and as the event progresses, he makes sure that you're enjoying yourself. In addition, a good host politely provides introductions and does their part to contribute to your comfort. And let's never forget an attractive personality and sincere smile. Keep in mind that the point of our example is that you borrow behaviors of a great host and use them to your networking benefit.

Arrive early. When you arrive 15 to 20 minutes early for a business gathering, you will have an opportunity to meet and network with the host. Many times, the holder of an event is an individual with lots of contacts and a serious professional. How beneficial could it be for you to have a conversation and make an impression? This center-of-influence may introduce you to your next client, especially if he has a chance to hear what you're looking for without the distractions of a crowded room.

Early arrival has even more advantages. You get to greet people as they arrive and be the first to strike up a conversation as well as making them feel more comfortable and welcome. This is of further usefulness when following up, since you have now branded yourself as the first person spoken to. This alone will assist in forming a stronger personal connection.

As the event progresses and or fills up, you have additional opportunities to introduce some of the parties you've met to others. A good networking conversation provides each individual with the knowledge of the others needs. You can use this information to create the brief introductions of people who may have not met otherwise. Once again, this will get you pleasant remembrance in follow-up communications.

All of the above can help to overcome shyness and anxiety as you keep your business goals in mind and approach events as a greeter and somewhat of a Good Samaritan. Connections will be made, you'll be remembered, and the law of reciprocity will work in your favor.

3 People to Avoid

If you are a people person, the attendance of networking events never seems to be a real waste of time. However, as pleasant and adventurous as they may be, there is always the exception and a particular brand of individuals to watch out for. When you are serious about networking to enhance your career, there are 3 individuals in particular to avoid.

First on the list is the individual who completely lost the perspective of why he/she is attending this event. This is the individual who has taken full advantage of the alcoholic beverage option provided. This individual may be unusually happy and sometimes quite comical but probably not able to give their attention to yours or anyone else's business needs. They have misinterpreted this very important business function as an opportunity to party.

Second, is the individual who has a rather dry demeanor and is attending this networking event "Because the boss told me that I had to" This is the individual who has absolutely no interest in meeting people, doesn't like meeting people, and is only there because he/she felt obligated.

A similar individual, in the same category, would be the person who came to the event because their friend asked them to accompany them. This person will usually tell you that they are there because of that reason and will also show how irritated they are to be spoken to.

And last but not least, the person who walks around and through the event, not really speaking much but passing out their business cards as if they were flyers. This person may or may not be interested in building relationships or forming alliances but by the play of things, I'd say probably not.

I must point out that I love meeting people and continue to be enthusiastic about it. However, if one is serious about advancing their career through business networking, these are the individuals to avoid while you are in pursuit of that goal. I'm not suggesting harsh judgment of these individuals, just preventative measures for your networking success.

How to Speed Network at Slow Events

Earlier I explained Speed Networking events and the way they work. Basically, an even amount of professionals are seated across from each other and given a few minutes to talk before time is up and they rotate to the next person. This happens several times until each person has successfully met everyone in the room. It is a great way to meet dozens of professionals in one sitting.

However, what do you do at the conventional networking event, in which there is a room full of business people who are randomly speaking with one another? Simple, you can employ Speed Networking techniques at a conventional event. You should only do this if meeting a mass amount of professionals is your goal or maybe you are strapped for time. You may have other valid reasons but nevertheless, here are 5 steps for achieving this objective;

1. Have an Elevator Pitch locked and loaded.

An Elevator Pitch is a 15 to 45 second commercial about the better points of your products or services. It should be

designed to be brief, interesting, impactful, and informative. I say "locked and loaded" because it should be memorized and ready to be delivered at any given moment.

2. Have a goal on the minimum amount of contacts you would like to interact with.

In a typical Speed Networking event, it is possible to meet 30 or more individuals in one sitting. In these events, you do not have to set a number because it is set for you. However, in a conventional event, you should set your parameters.

3. Have a method of keeping time.

At a Speed Networking event, all of the interactions are timed. However, in this case, you will have to take this responsibility upon yourself. Simply wear a watch with a second hand or some kind of digital time device will do. Pay attention to your time as you speak to different people.

4. Have a rock solid Conversation Exit Strategy. (CES)

When you speak to so many people very briefly, you want to make sure that you are not rude or abrupt. You should practice a very polite way of ending one conversation and engaging in another.

You should have a few different ones memorized. Remember, you are supposed to be making a good impression. So, make sure you pay special attention to your words and

actions.

5. Make sure you leave a positive impression every time.

This is the most subjective and tricky part of the whole process. You want to attempt to make a positive and lasting impression on your new contacts.

There are many ways to do this. The first thing that comes to mind is to be friendly, professional, and to give a good listen to what the other person has to say. Sure, brevity is your theme but you must show genuine interest in a short period of time.

Conclusion:

I truly hope this book has inspired you to make strides in your business networking efforts and advance to Rapport Superstardom. The experiences are true and all of the thoughts shared are founded in honesty. If you like interacting with new people and being productive about it, you will encounter greater success when using the practical methods described. I attempted to give you a boost in your overall efforts by gaining a better understanding of the whole process and the triumphs and pitfalls in between.

There is so much more to be said and many other aspects were not discussed. However, more than the basics were covered and should be more than enough to assist the

novice in getting started the right way or inspire the veteran to stay on target.

Be sure to come back and review when you forget certain things and if this has helped you please recommend this book to your friends and colleagues. It is vitally important for me to hear your comments, questions, and thoughts. Please contact me here: **rapstar@bizivents.com**



Introducing Powerductions™

Once you have mastered the ideas and methods discussed in the Rapport Superstar, you are more than equipped to explode your contacts inventory. In other words, you can now harness and combine the true power of in-person networking with online business social networks like LinkedIn, Ecademy, Xing, Bizivents, etc. The **Powerductions™** system enables participants to build stronger and more effective business bonds while connecting them directly to the individuals they are seeking to meet. I constantly hear people say that they are just not meeting the right individuals who can help them to advance in their careers or businesses. This system was designed with that aspect in mind.

The Rapport Superstar shows you how to develop good business relationships. It helps you offer your services to your fellow colleagues in a way that guarantees you reciprocal effects. **Powerductions™** moves a step further by showing you how to attain highly qualified introductions from your established network. **Powerductions™** will teach you how to strategically organize your network for the maximum impact on your career.

The methods and techniques are so powerful that it is only available in a limited private coaching capacity for individuals or groups that are ready right now to meet decision makers, people of influence, and anyone who can make a serious difference to their business. In other words, it is reserved for a select few who are ready to properly utilize our greatest natural resource; **People.**

If you would like to learn more or sign up for an upcoming **Powerductions™** seminar or workshop, please contact me at; **powerductions@bizivents.com** or call: 877-663-5476. You may also visit: **Powerductions.com**

To your success,

John H. Lee

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