

Effortless Networking
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Did you ever walk into a networking event feeling overwhelmed, not knowing who to connect with or how to begin? Networking is an art. Like any art, there are techniques which enable you to have an enjoyable and productive experience. Here are a few ideas that have helped me experience networking in this way.

1. Set an Intention for the Event And Then Enjoy Each Conversation For its Own Sake.

An intention could be "I would like to meet some new partners for my business." It could be "I'd like to meet some new clients". It is always good to write your intentions down. Stating them aloud is helpful as well.

My own feeling is that after you do this, let it go. Focus on each person you meet with the intent to connect with them in a meaningful way. When you enjoy each conversation for its own sake, without expectations, you naturally attract the results you want. Being fully present is the most important gift you can give anyone. Enjoy each person for who they are and be totally present with them....find ways to help them.....the results will take care of themselves.

2. Find Ways to Help Each Person You Meet.

If you know someone or have information which can help someone you meet, make a special effort to give them a name and telephone number or resource information. This may be just what they need to move forward.

Go out of your way to make a phone call on their behalf. When appropriate, make the introduction for them by telephone or in person. Or, try a three-way conversation. Watch your business expand - as you give, so shall you receive.

3. Follow The "Flow".

There is a "flow" to every conversation. When your mind starts wandering or you are restless, this may be a sign to complete this conversation and move on.

One person can make a major difference in your life and work...and you in theirs. Don't miss this opportunity because you stayed in a conversation which should have ended ten minutes earlier.

4. Leave Each Conversation Gracefully.

When it is time to leave a conversation, leave it gracefully. For example, you can end with “I am interested in meeting a few more people. Let’s exchange business cards and continue on the phone. How does that sound to you?”

If you don’t want to continue the conversation later on, say something like “I have enjoyed meeting you very much. There are a few more people I’d like to meet now. Best wishes in all of your endeavors.” If appropriate, shake their hand and go on to the next person or group you want to meet.

When you leave a conversation in this way, you leave the door open for fruitful future contact.

5. Find 3 - 5 People You Want to Do Business With And Follow Up With Them Within 2 Days.

For networking to work its magic, you need only connect with 3 - 5 people you like and want to do business with....and contact them 2 days after the event.

These people are the ones you feel stimulated talking to -- you feel new possibilities emerging and want to explore more. Others may have the “right credentials” but the spark is not there. People like doing business with people they like. These 3 - 5 can become lifelong business partners as well as friends.

Even if you cannot set a date to get together, call them or email them within 2 days. Let them know that you will contact them in a week to set up a time to get together or set up a conference call on the phone. Establishing the momentum for further contact right after the event makes it easier to do business together.

6. Find Topics Of Mutual Interest.

Talk about things you both enjoy - they do not have to be work related. Get to know the whole person. The more connected you are on many levels, the more chances you have of doing business together.

7. Draw Them Out.

Ask questions which draw them out. Use open-ended questions - these are questions which cannot be answered by “yes” or “no”. “Can you say more about that?” is an example of an open-ended question.

Open-ended questions invite people to share their feelings more deeply and to be honest with you.

8. Take Notes.

Take notes on any talk or presentation given. It will be easier to remember. Also, jot down a few notes on the back of each business card you receive. This way, when you contact someone, you will remember a few more things about them.

9. Give a Free Gift.

When you give a gift at a networking event, you distinguish yourself as a professional. Most people do not do it. Be imaginative about what you give away - it does not have to cost anything. You can give away a free consultation, free report, or discount on your products and services. Use a flyer or coupon with complete contact information so that people can contact you easily.

10. Finish With An "Action Close".

Use action closes with the 3 - 5 people you want to do business with.

Here are a few examples of action closes.

"I'd like to continue to get to know you and your business to see if we might want to work together in some way. When is the best time to call?"

"I'd like to continue our conversation more deeply to explore how we might assist each other. Would you like to have lunch or get together after work?"

These simple, effortless techniques will make your networking experiences enjoyable and productive.

We want to hear about your networking successes. Email us at dhimot@yahoo.com or visit <http://www.togobeyond.com> to learn more about our workshops and other programs.

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