



“Life is a sales call!”

Networking and Building Business Relationships

People are constantly telling me that “networking” doesn’t work for them. They go to their association meetings faithfully, are members of the local chamber of commerce, and even purchase event tickets or tables or tickets, but all they have to show for their efforts is a big stack of business cards. Networking is not going to building your business. The secret is to turn your networking efforts into building long-term business relationships. It is essential for creating new business opportunities. Don’t allow it to intimidate you. Maintain a positive attitude, and enjoy the success it will yield you. After all, life is a constant ongoing sales call!

The “How to’s” for Effective Relationship Building

- Always remember that people like to talk about themselves, not about you. So, ***be interested, not interesting!*** That will be the best tip you will EVER receive.
- The more you discover about individuals, the easier it is to engage them in helping or recommending you and your services. This will allow you to tailor your recommendations to best meet their needs.
- Play to their egos. Don’t say, “I’d like to talk about doing business with you. Or, I’m looking for new business.” That offers the perfect opportunity for them to say, “No!” A much more effective approach is to say, “I value your advice as a successful business person. Would you allow me a few moments of your time so that I can learn from you?” Very few people will say “no” to that approach.
- Don’t ever appear to be pushy or aggressive. That equates to desperation. Be upbeat and confident in yourself in a subtle but friendly fashion.
- Ask lots of questions about them. Keep their interests in mind, so that you can always be looking for articles or opportunities to share with them.
- ALWAYS be looking for ways to help them. Ask if you can introduce them to certain people or recommend that they call _____, using your name if appropriate. Be a solutions provider. The law of averages proves that most people are compelled to reciprocate out of gratitude.
- Don’t “bug” people. Accept the fact that not everybody is going to warm up to you. Just write those individuals off, and move on.

- Always remember to say “thank you” whenever you receive a referral, and keep your resource advised of the progress you make. A note or e-mail expressing appreciation is suggested. And, if a referral becomes a client, a tasteful thank-you gift or a donation to a favorite non-profit cause of the person who gave you the referral is most appropriate.

Networking Events

- When in a large networking environment, don’t cling to one person or group. Move around. And, don’t sit with other people from your company – pick a table where you don’t know anyone. In other words, mingle!
- Don’t give your entire story at a networking event. Practice your very brief elevator speech. Ambiguity stirs the curiosity and creates an opportunity to meet again for a scheduled appointment. Remember, if you focus on them, they will like you, but they really won’t know much about you. That’s exactly where you want them.
- It is always fun to meet new people, so make sure you go with the attitude that you are going to have fun.

Follow-up Process to Achieve Maximum Success

- Prepare yourself to manage multiple disciplines for networking: letters, e-mails, phone calls, and one-on-one personal connections.
- Follow up on every new person you meet with a letter or note – and be sure to personalize each. Suggestion: On every business card received, jot a redeeming fact about that person.
- Create a series of letter and e-mail templates that will appeal to the recipients so that you can quickly send them out.
- Keep a good database of all your contact information. Using Outlook, set up a record for each of your contacts, and keep notes of connections made. Enter birthday, spouse, assistant, etc. on the Detail tab.
- Set up on your Outlook task bar dates to reconnect with prospects and associates.