

Networking - do's and don'ts

Do's

- Arrive early and leave late.
- Come prepared. Look your best, bring your business cards, your name tag.
- Always attend functions. Don't expect to get flooded in referrals the first time you attend. You may not see concrete results for 3 – 6 months, because it takes time for people to build trust but when it does happen the floodgates will open.
- Spend around 10 minutes speaking with each new contact at the event.
- Set a goal of meeting 5 to 7 quality contacts per event.
- Set a goal of giving or actively finding 1 referral for a contact per day.
- Remember the key is to "Give. Give. Give."
- Always send a thank you card or "follow up" letter the day after meeting someone.
- Always thank people for their referral.
- When asked what you do, be specific and brief - Prepare an ELEVATOR SPEECH
- Keep in contact with your networking contacts ... at least once every 60 days.
- Web site or referral point
- Process management – at meeting exchange referrals
- Attitude – honesty, loyalty, integrity
- Build a "business purchase culture" with your network group.

Don'ts

- Do not sit in a corner waiting for people to come up to you. Be pro-active.
- Do not try to sell anything during your initial conversation. The meeting is about building relationships NOT selling.
- Don't talk about work unless asked and when you are asked, be specific and to the point.
- If you meet someone who identifies they have an immediate need for your services, don't monopolise their time. Remember, they came to the event to network as well so the last thing they want to do is spend the entire event speaking with you. 15 minutes is a good amount of time.
- Do not follow up your first meeting by trying to arrange a sales consultation straight away ... unless, of course, at the meeting they told you they needed help and they wanted to meet with you.
- Don't linger with or sit with friends or associates. This is wasting an opportunity.
- Don't schedule an appointment for directly before or directly after the networking event. Running from another appointment or having to leave early to get to a meeting will mean you're pre-occupied at the networking function. As a result your networking activities will suffer.

7 Rapport-Building Tips

1. Maintain good eye contact.
2. Listen intently (really listen) to what the other person is saying.
3. Show a genuine, heart-felt interest in what they have to say.
4. Make them feel good about themselves.
5. Allow them to finish without interrupting.
6. Compliment their choices in a genuine way.
7. Offer helpful suggestions if they talk to you about problems or needs.

After the Event

Remember the key is this:

- GIVE referrals.
 - GIVE advice.
 - GIVE your time.
- ... AND don't ask for anything in return. No strings attached.

As we mentioned the key to selling is giving them what they want. People attend networking events because they want to get leads that will turn into sales. They aren't there because they have a need for a particular product or service.

They want REFERRALS so it stands to reason if you can give them referrals or contacts that could lead to referrals, you're one step closer to establishing a trusting relationship.

Then – once that trust has been established, the referrals will flow back to you.

Make sense?

That's why selling is out and networking is in!