

Networking

Unleashed

Mastering The Art f Networking
Discover the 7-step path to effective
networking designed to help everyone
achieve their networking goals



MICHAEL A FORMAN
PUBLIC SPEAKER

By Michael A. Forman

Forward

This book, born from persistence and nurtured by love, holds the promise of transformation. It's not merely ink on paper; it's a bridge across chasms, a handshake in a crowded room, a whispered secret shared over coffee.

It's the art of networking—the alchemy of souls connecting.

It was a labor of love, with continuous additions and refinements. My wife, April, played a crucial role in its completion by formatting the content and designing the cover. I believe this book will significantly enhance networking and communication skills for readers.

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INTRODUCTION

Like any goal in life, clarity of purpose serves as the initial step towards success. Beyond merely identifying your goals, educating yourself becomes imperative to pave the path towards achievement. A well-defined plan of action, coupled with a comprehensive understanding of the requisite steps, forms the cornerstone of progress.

Welcome aboard! The following information is here to equip you with the essential insights for your exciting journey towards becoming a proficient Networker. Through the nurturing of meaningful business relationships, my aim is to help fuel the expansion of your business, fostering sustained growth along the way. Let's embark on this journey together!

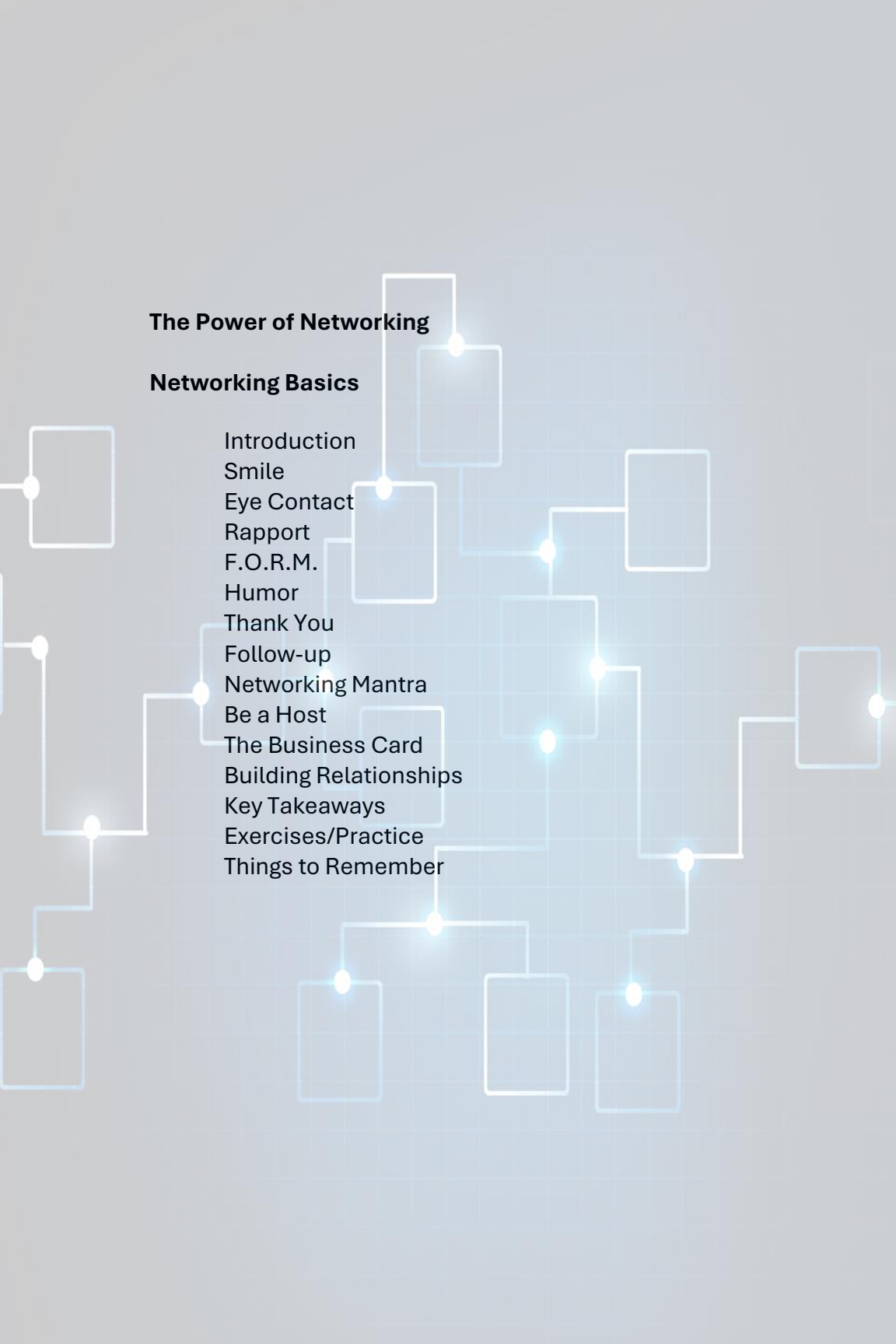
What is Networking?

Networking is an art – and like any art – it requires practice to hone the skills necessary to succeed.

Whether you are just starting out, have been networking for a while, or even consider yourself a networking maven, this book will help you focus on refining your skills and increasing your expertise.

Welcome to the Rules of Networking.





The Power of Networking

Networking Basics

Introduction
Smile
Eye Contact
Rapport
F.O.R.M.
Humor
Thank You
Follow-up
Networking Mantra
Be a Host
The Business Card
Building Relationships
Key Takeaways
Exercises/Practice
Things to Remember

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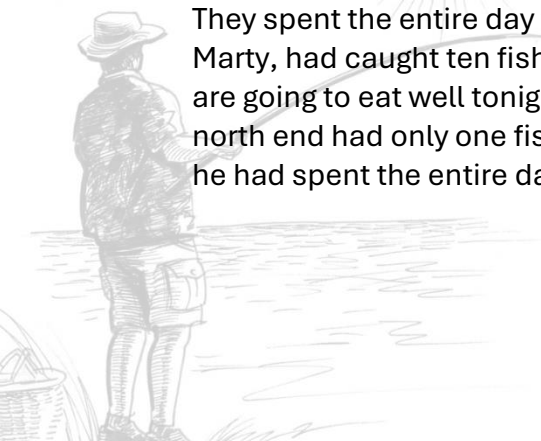
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Connect. Learn. Grow

Before we begin, I'd like to share a short story.

Two friends, Fred, and Marty were out fishing. They knew of a lake where the “fish were biting.” They set up camp and each took their gear to a different end of the lake, agreeing to meet back at camp at 6 o'clock that evening. Fred went to the north end of the lake and Marty went to the south end.

They spent the entire day fishing. When they returned, Marty, had caught ten fish. He smiled and said that “we are going to eat well tonight!”. Fred, who went to the north end had only one fish. He was a little upset that he had spent the entire day for only caught one fish.



So, they agreed that the next day, they would switch, with Fred going south and Marty going north. Well, 6 o'clock rolled around and again, Marty caught ten fish while Fred only caught one!

What was going on, Fred wondered? "What are you doing when you get to your spot?" Marty asked. Fred quickly replied "I set up my gear, get my music ready, play it at a reasonable volume and then start fishing. When I want to have lunch, I stop, get out my pots and pans, cook a little, eat, and then go back to fishing."

"Well, that's your problem" Marty said – you are scaring the fish away with all your noise.

Going fishing in a lake is just like going to a networking event. The whole idea of Networking is to create the opportunity to build relationships with new people and businesses that will then help you grow your business. But – *you must know how to do it properly* or you are just scaring away the opportunity.

If you follow the steps outlined in this guide, you will have the tools and the knowledge to get the best results by networking properly.



Smile: The Power of Positivity

Smiling—it's such a simple gesture, yet its impact is often overlooked. You likely enter networking events with a smile, but as the event progresses, it tends to fade without you even realizing it. Did you know that about 48% of all Americans believe a smile is the most memorable feature after meeting someone for the first time?

Attitude is Everything

Let me share a recent experience. Upon entering a Realtor's office for a meeting with the Sales Manager, I was warmly greeted by the person at the front desk, who also happened to be a Realtor. Her friendly and outgoing demeanor instantly put me at ease. However, as soon as I mentioned I was there to see someone else, her attitude changed abruptly, and her warm smile vanished. Her entire demeanor shifted, and suddenly, I no longer felt valued by the business.



Shake Hands and Maintain Eye Contact

Once you've greeted someone with a smile, it's time to extend your hand for a handshake. Make sure your handshake is firm but not overpowering—no one enjoys shaking hands with someone whose grip feels lifeless. Remember, you're making a first impression, and you only get one chance, so make it count!



Rapport

Establishing a strong rapport with individuals is an indispensable aspect of effective networking. While this notion is widely acknowledged, executing it with precision is not always straightforward. The process of building rapport demands time and attention; it may unfold gradually over a span of 10 minutes or even extend to half an hour.

Nevertheless, I believe, it is the cornerstone of successful networking endeavors.

F-O-R-M

If you can't think of how to start a conversation or even if you do, think F-O-R-M.

F – family

O – occupation

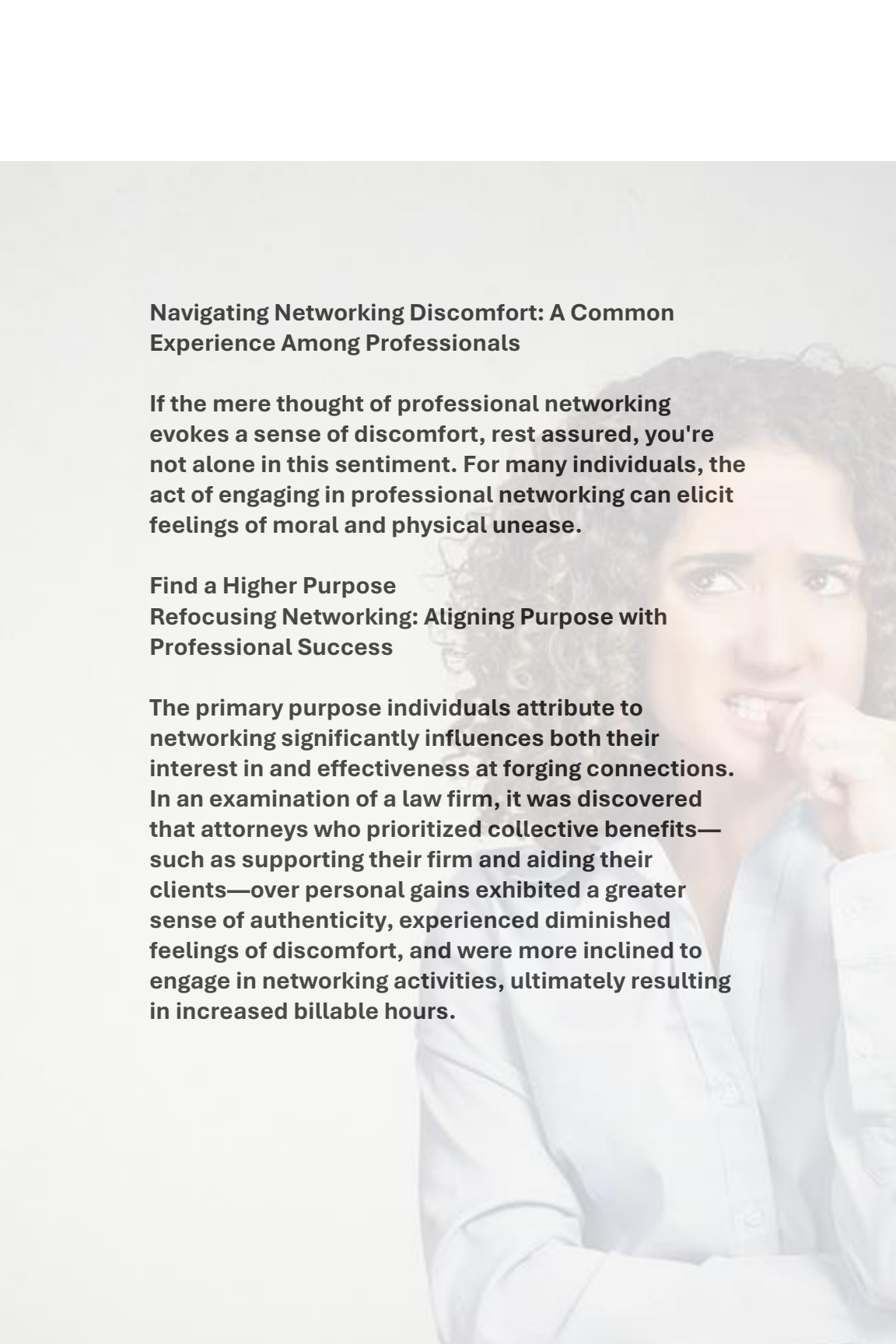
R – recreation

M – message – what they think is important

Inquire about their family, what they do for a living, what kind of recreation they enjoy. Most importantly, *what they think is important*.

Think Broadly About What You Can Give

Even when interests don't align, there's often untapped value waiting to be discovered through a shift in perspective. However, this task isn't always straightforward. It's been observed that individuals who perceive themselves as lacking power—whether due to their junior status within an organization, belonging to a minority group, or other factors—often underestimate their potential contributions and consequently shy away from networking opportunities, despite being the ones who stand to gain the most from them.



Navigating Networking Discomfort: A Common Experience Among Professionals

If the mere thought of professional networking evokes a sense of discomfort, rest assured, you're not alone in this sentiment. For many individuals, the act of engaging in professional networking can elicit feelings of moral and physical unease.

Find a Higher Purpose Refocusing Networking: Aligning Purpose with Professional Success

The primary purpose individuals attribute to networking significantly influences both their interest in and effectiveness at forging connections. In an examination of a law firm, it was discovered that attorneys who prioritized collective benefits—such as supporting their firm and aiding their clients—over personal gains exhibited a greater sense of authenticity, experienced diminished feelings of discomfort, and were more inclined to engage in networking activities, ultimately resulting in increased billable hours.



Don't forget the Thank You Notes!!

Using humor, expressing gratitude through thank you notes, and showing respect are crucial elements in any interaction. Humor, when used appropriately, can create a relaxed atmosphere, but it's important not to force it. Instead, focus on being genuine and respectful.

Here's a simple follow-up outline:

Send an email expressing gratitude for their time immediately after the meeting.

Later that day, send a handwritten thank you note to further emphasize your appreciation.

About three days later, follow up with a phone call to schedule a casual meeting, such as grabbing coffee. Building relationships rather than just pursuing clients fosters long-lasting connections.



Respect

One of the most valuable life lessons I can offer is the importance of treating everyone with politeness and respect, regardless of their position. Never underestimate anyone because there is always someone higher up the ladder. This principle applies universally: from the janitor to the CEO, every individual deserves equal regard.

Assume the Role of Host, Not Guest

Attending networking events regularly is essential for professional growth. When encountering newcomers or first-time attendees, take the initiative to approach them, introduce yourself, and extend a warm welcome by guiding them through the event. While this may require some effort on your part, it holds the potential to significantly enhance their experience. Remarkably, such gestures can yield unexpected benefits, potentially leading to valuable opportunities.



Join the Conversation

When it comes to joining conversations, it's all about timing and approach: Pause, Engage, Contribute. By waiting for the right moment to jump in with something meaningful, you're more likely to catch people's interest, leading to natural exchanges and maybe even a request for your contact details.



- 1. Remember these takeaways:**
- 2. Initiate conversations actively.**
- 3. Engage with everyone in the group to ensure inclusivity. Encourage participation by asking for their insights on relevant topics.**
- 4. Practice attentive listening; avoid monopolizing conversations.**
- 5. At networking events, prioritize quality over quantity. If a conversation isn't yielding valuable connections, gracefully excuse yourself and seek out more promising opportunities. Respect the value of your time.**
- 6. Focus on cultivating meaningful relationships, not merely collecting contacts.**
- 7. Keep in mind the importance of establishing rapport by fostering familiarity, likability, and trust.**
- 8. Always consider how you can offer assistance to others.**
- 9. And don't forget the power of expressing gratitude through thoughtful thank-you notes.**
- 10. Remember – *PRACTICE – PRACTICE – PRACTICE***

11. Post-Event Follow-Up Protocol:

- 12. Immediate Email:** Send a follow-up email promptly, preferably on the same day or evening of the event. Avoid the common delay of waiting one or two days, or even a week, before reaching out.
- 13. Express Gratitude:** Send a thank-you card to demonstrate appreciation for the interaction.
- 14. Schedule a Follow-Up Call:** Initiate a phone call approximately three days later to propose a meeting for coffee or another informal setting.
- 15. Documentation:** Take notes on the back of business cards, noting the date and name of the event, as well as brief descriptions of conversations held.
- 16. Digital Connection:** Utilize platforms like LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to establish and maintain online connections, reflecting the contemporary networking landscape.
- 17. Keep it Concise:** Maintain brevity in all communications, ensuring that messages are clear and succinct.
- 18. Additional Thank-You Gesture:** Reinforce appreciation by sending another thank-you card. Repetition underscores the importance of gratitude.

Key Considerations:

- 19. Relationship Building:** Approach interactions as opportunities to forge friendships rather than merely exchanging business cards. Cultivating genuine connections yields long-term benefits.
- 20. Active Listening:** Remain fully present during conversations, refraining from preemptively formulating responses. Prioritize attentive listening to comprehend the speaker's message effectively.
- 21. Contribution Mindset:** Offer assistance or resources whenever feasible, showcasing a willingness to contribute to others' success.
- 22. Personalized Engagement:** Utilize a thoughtful inquiry to gauge how best to support the prospect's business interests, fostering a sense of genuine care and commitment.
- 23. Organizational Discipline:** Maintain meticulous organization of meeting details and follow-up actions. As networking activities proliferate, effective organization becomes increasingly vital.
- 24. Value of Memory:** Recognize that forgetfulness undermines the efficacy of networking efforts. Commit to diligent note-taking and organizational practices to retain crucial information.
- 25. Contextual Awareness:** Retain a clear understanding of the topics discussed during interactions to facilitate meaningful follow-up discussions.

- 26. Respectful Boundaries: Recognize cues indicating disinterest and refrain from excessive persistence. Knowing when to gracefully disengage preserves professional rapport.**
- 27. Sustained Connection: Foster ongoing engagement through soft connections on social media platforms. Additionally, consider adding contacts to a newsletter distribution list, if applicable.**
- 28. Consistent Gratitude: Emphasize the significance of expressing gratitude by consistently sending thank-you cards. Regular acknowledgment reinforces the value of relationships and interactions.**

Mastering Business Networking: Essential Strategies for Success

Networking isn't just a buzzword; it's a powerful tool for professional growth and business success. In today's digital age, where virtual connections abound, face-to-face networking remains indispensable. Here are key takeaways to enhance your networking endeavors:

Consistency in actions is also key. Changing course frequently can erode trust and deter others from seeking your assistance or collaboration. Even in times of triumph, it's important to remain humble and refrain from boasting or reveling in victory, as this can alienate colleagues and partners.

Embrace every networking opportunity as a chance to learn and grow.

Incorporating these strategies into your networking approach can significantly enhance your professional relationships and pave the way for long-term success in your endeavors. Remember, networking is not just about transactions; it's about building genuine connections that foster mutual growth and support.



Key Points to Remember

- Make networking a regular activity.
- Stop relying on the internet.
- Know who you're reaching out to
- Use positive language – Positivity.
- Cultivate your Power Contacts
- Don't expect anything!
- Take every opportunity to meet new people.
- Focus on how you can help.
- Go alone.
- Don't forget your business cards.
- Be sure to meet people in other industries, too.
- Make a networking goal and stick to it.

- Outline your objectives and target networking audience.
- Network with your customers.
- Ask for introductions.
- Be kind.
- Attitude – Go in assuming you like them, forget what you have heard.
- They can spot phoniness a mile away.
- Go out of your way to compliment those who are usually uncomplimented.
- Always use Sir / Ma'am. It doesn't matter who it is. A simple thank you or have a great day will go a long way.

Phone techniques

- On phone – Always be the person that hangs up last.
- Smile and say good morning/afternoon/evening.
- Begin conversation on phone by saying “Do you have a quick minute or did I call at a bad time?”
(Show respect – make them feel good)
- Be quiet and listen.

On telephone cold calling – use a mirror. It really helps. Look into the mirror and make sure that you are smiling through the whole conversation

Make a game of it with your staff or colleagues. Try this with your team.

- 5 compliments each day.
- You must give at least five compliments to somebody that you normally wouldn't each day.
- Do that for 30 days. Make it a challenge.
- Make it a staff or colleague lunch. The winner doesn't have to pay (or just make it up. I'm sure you can come up with something).

Conclusion

Follow-Up Magic: After connecting with someone, don't let the conversation fade into oblivion. Send that follow-up email, make that call, or drop a friendly message. It's like planting seeds; nurture them, and they'll grow into fruitful relationships.

The Power of Listening: Effective communication isn't just about talking; it's about listening. When you engage with others, truly hear what they're saying. Ask questions, show genuine interest, and watch the magic unfold.

Be a Connector: Networking isn't just about what you can get; it's about what you can give. Be the bridge that connects people. Introduce like-minded individuals, recommend resources, and watch your network flourish.

Remember, networking isn't a transaction; it's an investment. So, go forth, connect, and let the magic happen!



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