



Networking Is The Maintenance of Mutually Beneficial Relationships

I saw a great image on LinkedIn the other day. It is a picture of Oprah and the quote is “It’s called networking, not ‘using’!”. Unfortunately this seems to be the approach of many enthusiastic and well intentioned business people who don’t understand why they’re not getting the results from this stream of marketing and brand awareness.

At the BizExpo taking place on Tuesday 19th April 2016 in CityWest Convention Centre, my role will be that of networking co-ordinator. My job will be to introduce businesses for their mutual benefit and perhaps to educate less experienced networkers on how to get the most out of their interactions. Here are some core activities that yield results



1. **Know who you are and what you offer** - have three different scenarios worked out in your head for three different potential clients. The same key doesn’t unlock every door so don’t expect your same pitch to work on every prospect. If it’s not you, then recommend someone you know. Givers gain. Being prepared helps with No 3.
2. **Know who you’re looking to connect with.** Do your homework before you get to an event and know who your target audience is but also be prepared for some unexpected, out of the box connections i.e. the person that you are speaking with has a network of their own that may be of benefit to you. This also works in reverse, you may have a network that benefits them.*
3. **Listen!** to quote Ron Karr, motivational speaker and author accredited with \$500M in sales due to his training - don’t PUKE on your prospect. (Put Unnecessary Knowledge Everywhere). Listen out for the problem your prospect is looking to solve and then apply No. 1
4. **Networking is the long game** - as the title says, the creation of a network takes time and tending. Relationships are organic and need tending like any living thing otherwise they die out. The good news is though, once you have started to create a solid network, the fewer networking meetings you’ll want to or need to attend.
5. **Take and give your business card only to interested parties.** When someone asks for your business card they are expressing a genuine interest - they’ve been listening and would like to connect further. This also creates a more realistic conversion rate of contacts. Coming away with a deck of business cards means you’re sorting through cards to look for the one that specifically held your interest. What often happens here is that people are too polite and afraid that they might offend. Follow up within the following 48 hours by call or initial email and then call. The personal touch.



Part of networking is referral. If you are looking to refer or give a referral you have got to know the person and they you. Remember that it is your or their good name that is on the line, not the person referred. It is so important to get to know the person and their work.

If you follow even three of these pointers you can expect results. Allow yourself months to cultivate these relationships although it is not unheard of for activity to happen sooner. I look forward to meeting you at the entrance on to CityWest convention centre on Tuesday 19th April

City West Hotel Convention Centre

Biz Expo
19th April - 10am to 5pm

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Contact Barbara on 086 411 66 88 or
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