

WORKPLACE  SERIES SUCCESS



NETWORKING

for a **Better** Position *&*
More Profit

KAREN HINDS

Networking

for a

Better Position

&

More Profit

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DEDICATION

To those who understand that no one makes it
alone.

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INTRODUCTION

The ability to meet new people and build a solid, productive, long-term business relationship is an art form and an essential business skill that few people master and sustain. However, successful people have figured out that success comes when they have a team working with them and for them. Successful people have also figured out that they must commit to nurturing, protecting, and expanding their team as they get to know, like and trust the team.

Unfortunately, many people network, but few get optimum results from their efforts, usually because their aim is to get a quick fix for a problem or because their approach repels people. *Networking for a Better Position & More Profit* teaches techniques to find and build professional relationships that will help you build and sustain a meaningful and profitable professional and personal life.

CHAPTER 1

UNDERSTANDING NETWORKING

What is Networking?

When I started my training and development company in 1998, I had big dreams of making millions by my third or fourth year. I was bright, I knew my material, I had office space, equipment, supplies, pretty marketing material, and a big dream. But one thing was missing: a strong network. I had told everyone I knew that I was striking out on my own, but that was the extent of my networking. My first few contracts came from former colleagues, so it took me quite a while to really appreciate the value of building and maintaining strategic alliances through networking.

Networking is a way to connect with people to gain skills, influence, power, advice, and general information. It is not a guarantee of a job or contract; it is a means to an end. No matter who you are, you need to network. You probably already do network. The next step is to make your networking activities

more structured, focused, and results-oriented.

If a business associate came to town and wanted to go to a really great restaurant, wouldn't you check around and ask for a few good recommendations? Networking is that simple. It is about relying on the expertise of others to help you achieve your goals. And networking is a two-way street; others will also rely on you to achieve their goals.

Think back to all the jobs you've ever had. How did you hear about them? Were they advertised in a newspaper, a career journal or a website? Did a friend or colleague tell you about an opening and suggest that you apply?

Except for one position, all the jobs I ever held were obtained through referrals. And during the first five years of my business, I obtained all my contracts because someone recommended me to a friend, a meeting planner or a key decision maker. I used my marketing material very rarely, mainly because the sale was already made or

partially made by the time I spoke with the client.

The Benefits of Networking

Throughout my working career as an employee, I absolutely despised networking. I saw only the surface activity of networking and the pain of having to be out in public talking to strangers. I did not fully grasp the true impact of effective networking beyond the first steps. To me, networking required me to be pretentious. When I was asked to attend networking receptions, I visualized people standing around with plastic smiles, forced conversations, and fake politeness. I did not like it at all. I would usually get a soda, a plate of food, and make polite conversation with people I knew and liked. Unfortunately, that attitude hindered my career progress and even my business later on.

For Employees. Your networking skills need to be sharp. Keep in mind that no job is permanent or secure, even if you are well established within your career or close to retirement. Because the job market is so

competitive and companies are always looking for the next best thing, you have to stay current and on the cutting edge in your field.

You need the expertise of others to grow. It is important to constantly transform yourself into an indispensable employee. You must always be aware of opportunities to move across the organization or even up and out. You don't always have to take advantage of every opportunity, but you can make yourself more valuable.

Share information and help other people achieve their goals. Your experience is vital to someone else so that person can accomplish goals in a more timely and effective manner.

For Job Seekers. Popular websites tout their enormous job banks, so submitting a résumé has become a common form of job hunting among the computer savvy. But it is not the most effective way to hunt for a job.

Many companies advertise job openings just to comply with company rules. It's a formality. The hiring authorities already

know who they want for the position but company rules may stipulate that the position must be made public. In that case, managers advertise, conduct a few interviews, and still choose the person they wanted for the job originally.

If you've spent any time job hunting, you will quickly learn that many positions don't quite fit what you are looking for. The openings at the beginning of the career section in the newspaper usually require highly skilled, highly educated candidates. Then there are a few positions that you think may fit your qualifications. Following these is a general section that is usually bursting at the seams. But you are overqualified for these jobs and, in addition, they pay poorly. So where are all the good jobs? The good jobs are waiting in a hidden market. A company may have a vacancy but lack the manpower to conduct a concerted search for a candidate, which is often costly and time consuming. People in human resources departments dread sorting through tons of résumés, many of them from applicants who are unqualified for the position or do not fit the organizational culture. So, instead of advertising, many

companies will rely on their internal network of colleagues to help them find a person to fill the position.

Networking gives you access to this hidden market. Your responsibility as a job seeker is to infiltrate this hidden job market so you can learn of the positions that are available. This is not a simple task, but it will be the most effective and profitable for you.

Unfortunately, most college graduates, and even some seasoned professionals, are not savvy enough or bold enough to step up to the plate and pursue a job through the art of professional relationship building. An additional goal of successful networking is not just to get the job but also to forge connections that will last you throughout your career.

For Business Owners. Imagine getting inside information about an upcoming project that could benefit your company tremendously. Every business owner wants to have those connections. No matter how great a product or service you offer, you cannot build a business by yourself. Many businesses go under because no one knows

they exist. A business may have a better business model, a better service or a superior product, but if no one knows the business exists, what good are these virtues?

The Know, Like, and Trust Factors

Business transactions occur when the parties involved believe they can know, like, and trust each other. Business and networking is all about relationships and your ability to connect with colleagues. When one or more of the know, like, and trust elements is missing, the relationship will quickly derail or become strained.

The Know Factor. You get to know people by being visible. I once asked a senior business executive how to really get to know people in a particular organization, and his advice was to just show up. Obviously, there are different levels of knowing people. However, just being present regularly at certain functions can give others the impression that they “know” you and open the door for easier and deeper conversation.

The Like Factor. How do you know when you like someone or when someone likes you? Sometimes that decision just can't be expressed in words. It's a quality about someone that makes others feel good around them. People learn to like a person by the way that person treats them. Keep things simple and just practice the Golden Rule.

The Trust Factor. Everyone talks about trust, but trust takes time to build and only a moment to erode. People learn to trust you by your actions or to mistrust you by your lack of action. If you tell someone you will send the documents immediately and you do so, trust begins to build. If you promise to make an introduction and you do so, another feather goes in your cap. It is not enough to talk a good game; you need to back up your promises.

Places to Network

Building a network can seem like a daunting task. This is not a sprint but a marathon. A good, solid network will take years to develop and nurture, but once it is

established and maintained, it's worth more than a million dollars.

One of the biggest mistakes people often make when networking is to stay within their comfort zone, among people of similar interests, careers, and aspirations. An optimum network, however, crosses industries and positions and forces you to step outside your comfort zone. Your goal should be to gain access to people with a variety of skills. You increase your value to people in your network when you can reach outside your industry and into a diverse group of people. Remember: You are not networking for yourself alone.

You can build a network through:

- Family (nuclear and extended)
- Friends
- Alumni chapters
- Nonprofit boards
- Religious associations
- Charitable organizations
- Sports teams and hobby clubs
- Sororities and fraternities
- Community service organizations
- Online networking groups

- Chambers of commerce and other business networking groups
- Your children's extracurricular activities
- Guest speakers/presenters to your college, company or conferences

You can network within your circle of existing service providers (your doctor, dentist, lawyer, financial planner, tax preparer, supermarket clerk or mail carrier, for instance), in your company both inside and outside your department, or while traveling. Be prepared to network anytime and anywhere. Always carry your business cards, pen, paper, and ideas.

CHAPTER 2

FACTORS AFFECTING NETWORKING

Many aspects of networking can affect your level of success as a relationship builder. The more you are aware of them, the more successful you will be.

Confidence in Networking

Networking is not an event, it's the process of building relationship. However, events designed to kick start those relationships can seem like a terrifying activity because in many cases you are meeting strangers. You may not know how to dress or what to say. Many other doubts can hinder you from making the move toward a better professional and personal life.

Even after you've met someone, you may still feel doubtful. Years ago, I made a presentation to a group of managers. The CEO of the company liked my presentation and offered to let me use him as a reference. I was pleased that he liked my work, but six months later, I had not contacted him beyond

sending him a thank-you note. In hindsight, I could have asked him for the names of three of his colleagues in order to tell them about my company or I could have even sent a simple Christmas card to maintain contact. The fact was, fear paralyzed me. Even though I was the CEO of my own company, at that time I felt he was a bigger CEO than I was, and I froze. I contemplated calling but I didn't know what to say. I never followed through with the effort.

Articulate, educated, connected, and well-paid executives working in large companies with prestigious names, big titles, nice suits, and big offices are still simply people. Yes, some have rather large egos and they may seem untouchable, but most are not egotistical or remote. The way people treat others is a direct reflection on how they feel about themselves.

If you are too scared to ask for what you want, you limit yourself. You will conjure up all kinds of mental barriers that make it difficult to approach others. Many of the reasons that hold you back from approaching

another business person are non-issues to the people you need to meet.

Self-confidence is what you say about yourself and how you act, especially when no one is watching. Lots of people look and sound confident but their actions betray them every time. Always know what you have to offer and respect it. When you respect and value what you have to offer, others will do the same.

Setting Your Altitude with Your Attitude

It's often said that your attitude determines your altitude, and nowhere is that more true than when you network. Some time ago, a business colleague convinced me to attend a big association gala in New York City. The ticket to the event, transportation, and my evening gown and accessories would cost more than \$500 for just that one event. The stakes were high, but my colleague assured me it would be well worth the expense because the people in attendance would be decision makers from major national companies that were on my prospecting list. When we got to the event, the sheer number

of people overwhelmed me. As soon as we walked in the door, my colleague left me to go network. Indeed, the people in the room were from some of the world's largest corporations. But many were executives, and they seemed to be talking with people they knew. In these circles, it is better to be introduced than to do a cold introduction by yourself, but who did I have to introduce me? This event was not bringing out my winning attitude.

To make matters worse, I was famished and the cocktail reception food had run out, I had a badly situated place at dinner, and the music was loud, making conversation difficult. I thought about my \$500 investment and had to figure out a way to get some kind of return on it. On the elevator to my remote dinner location, I introduced myself to the gentleman riding with me and we joked about sitting in the nosebleed section. We exchanged cards and I promised to call him and stay in touch. He was an editor of a major business magazine. Eight months later, the business editor referred me to one of his writers and I was quoted in an article that brought great publicity and credibility for me

and my business. A second gentleman, whom I met on the way to my table, put me in touch with a company and we began negotiating some business, which eventually resulted in a sale.

It took more than six months for me to see the results of that evening, but none of this would have been possible if I had not decided to make the best of a difficult situation. So watch your attitude; often what you need is simply a decision to see a situation in a new light.

CHAPTER 3

NETWORKING ETIQUETTE

Etiquette is the code that outlines how you should conduct yourself in any given situation. Like other areas of your personal and professional life, there are etiquette rules that govern networking. If you do not adhere to them, the best networking plan will not be effective.

12 Ways to Make a Great First Impression

You never get a second chance to make a great first impression. Everyone has heard that cliché; however, many people still blow a first impression with errors that can be fixed easily.

- Wear an outfit that is clean, neat, well-fitting, and appropriate for the event.
- Practice good personal hygiene. Always carry breath mints, check your body odor, and avoid applying too much cologne, perfume or makeup.

- Learn how to give a strong handshake. A good handshake is clean, dry, web-to-web, and firm. Make eye contact and pump twice.
- Spend most of your time listening and observing. Keep the conversation positive, uplifting, and complimentary. (Choose topics carefully and stay informed on local, national, and international business. A list of other safe conversation starters is provided later in this book.)
- Smile. A smile creates a warm and inviting atmosphere that will build excellent rapport with almost anyone.
- Be confident, not arrogant.
- Be knowledgeable about the person and situation.
- Show interest in others and ask questions, but do not interrogate.
- Arrive on time or even early. Nothing is more annoying than a tardy, disruptive person.
- Use a professional tone of voice. How you speak is as important as what you say.

- Don't attend a function hungry. That way, you can concentrate on networking, not the food.
- Address people by their names and take the time to pronounce the names correctly. Ask the pronunciation if you don't know it. Always place your nametag on your right shoulder.

BONUS: Turn off your cell phone. Do not text or answer the phone while in conversation with others unless it pertains to the conversation.

Your 30-Second Commercial

The 30-second commercial is a fully developed pitch for yourself, company or project, complete with all essential information. You must be able to deliver the speech to a captive listener in 30 seconds, or the duration of a short elevator ride, hence the nickname "elevator speech." In 30 seconds you should be able to tell someone who you are and what you do. The speech should have the following three elements to be successful.

Be clear and concise. Get to the point. Your speech should state who you are, what you do, and who needs your services or products. An example: "Hi, I am Jane. I'm a sales agent for John and Company. We're an insurance agency that works primarily with manufacturing companies offering workman's compensation insurance."

Be memorable. People must be able to remember what you said. Don't get stuck on industry jargon. Don't present yourself with two business cards, one for your corporate day job and a second for your side business. The listener will become confused as you promote both endeavors at the same time and will end up remembering confusion, not expertise.

Make your speech easy to repeat. If your 30-second commercial is clear, concise, and memorable, your listener is better able to repeat it later. One of your goals is to have people remember important information about you so that they can repeat it to others.

Try composing your 30-second commercial.

Excellent Introductions

As you move up the ranks of the corporate world, your business acumen must be sharp. Everyone likes to feel important, so you need to start off well by knowing how to make proper introductions.

Stand for introductions. Exceptions are allowed only for those with physical disabilities.

Make eye contact. It's a sign of confidence.

Introductions follow a hierarchal system.

Always introduce a junior person to the senior person and always name the senior person first. For example, "Mr. Smith (company president), I would like to introduce Ms. Washington (office manager)..."

Offer information about both parties. "Mr. Smith is president of the award-winning graphic design company Jackman Associates, and Ms. Washington is our office manager and just received our employee of the year award."

Offer a clean, dry, firm handshake. Grasp the other person's hand fully (web-to-web, not at the fingertips). Handshakes should be firm but not a death grip. Shake from the elbow, not the shoulder.

Smile. It shows you are pleased to be in the other person's company.

Introduce yourself. If someone forgets to introduce you, tactfully introduce yourself. "Hello, my name is Jane Browne, manager of operations..."

Remind others of your name for self-reintroductions. If you are meeting someone you've met before who may not remember your name, offer some help, as in "Mr. Smith, good seeing you again. I'm Ashley John from Acme Corporation. We met two weeks ago at the inaugural dinner." Give a little hint about your last meeting to avoid embarrassing the other person.

Always use Mr., Mrs. or Ms. in formal introductions. Maintain a formal atmosphere by using the title. Use someone's first name

only when invited to do so or if the setting is very informal.

Repeat names. "It's a pleasure meeting you, Mr. Smith." Think of word associations to remember new names.

Pre-Event Preparation

Have you ever noticed when you enter a networking event that, except for you, everybody seems to know everyone and they are all having a grand time? Let's expose that little secret right now. People often go to networking events with friends or colleagues from work. This is their safety blanket, and they seldom venture out and meet new people because they are terrified of the process. So what do you do if you are a lone ranger looking to expand your horizons?

Do some homework about the event in advance. Who is the host? What's the purpose of the event? Once you know the host company or person, is there a particular person you might want to meet who is connected to the host?

Wear a jacket /pants with two pockets. One pocket is for your cards and the other for cards you receive. Your outfit should be professional (it is better to be a little overdressed than underdressed).

Map your route. Know exactly where you are going. Carry contact numbers with you if possible and don't forget proper identification. Many public locations now require a driver's license to enter the premises.

Respond to the RSVP. If the event requires you to RSVP, do so by the date specified.

Be prepared. Carry a nice pen with you and some extra paper.

Set a networking goal. Make three to five high-quality contacts in which you and the other person both want to get together afterwards.

Navigating the Event

Small groups bring security. People who gather in small, familiar groups at events do so for purposes of security and comfort. Everyone is just as hesitant as you are. It's perfectly fine to catch up with familiar friends and colleagues, but challenge yourself to meet new people as well.

Start with the food. If you are unable to get a conversation going when you enter an event, look for the people who go to the food or drink line. This is one way to meet another lone ranger looking for a conversation.

Drinks in your left hand. Cold drinks tend to sweat and you never want to offer a cold, wet hand for a handshake.

Nametags on the right side. Always place your nametag on your right shoulder or lapel. This way, as you shake hands, the other person's sight line automatically follows your right hand up to your nametag.

Bring a great attitude. Be upbeat. Do not talk about problems with your boss, your job or your disappointment over that last bonus.

Limit alcohol consumption. An open bar does not mean you need to try all the exotic drinks or load up on free beer. Even at a holiday party, be careful when consuming alcohol.

Eat but don't overindulge. It's always wise not to go to events hungry. Most of your time should be spent mingling, not eating.

Listen more than you talk. Figure out how you can help someone instead of always looking for people to help you.

Holiday events. Holiday parties are perfect networking opportunities, but they can be disastrous if some basic rules are lost. Maintain your professional decorum at all times, which means leaving your weekend personality at home. 'Tis not the time to be overly jolly! You are still representing your company, setting yourself up for a promotion, opening doors for a possible interview, forming new business relationships and solidifying old ones.

Body Language

Your instincts can usually tell, based on an evaluation from across the room, if someone is approachable even before the person utters a word. A study conducted by Professor Albert Mehrabian of the University of California at Los Angeles showed that communication is composed of 55 percent body language, 38 percent tone of voice, and only 7 percent words.

Here is some body language to avoid:

- Rolling eyes
- Slouching
- Folded arms
- Stretching
- Furrowed brow
- Fidgeting
- Hissing
- Finger pointing
- Chewing nails, pens, etc.
- Frowning
- Keeping hands in pockets

And here are eight ways to show attentiveness:

- Stand up straight

- Hold head high
- Smile
- Sit up tall
- Make eye contact
- Steeple your hands while sitting
- Hold your chin up
- Keep your hands behind your back or at your sides

Listening to Learn

Listening can be difficult because almost everyone wants to talk or is too busy putting together the thoughts needed to make a point. But you can't build a relationship if you don't listen and learn about the other person. If you learn how to listen, you will have a much easier time calling on colleagues later because you made them feel important by listening to them.

- Give eye contact.
- Respond to the speaker with affirmative words or gestures. ("yes," "uh-huh," nodding, smiling)

- Allow the speaker to finish his or her thought before you speak.
- Listen with your entire body (practice open body language).
- Do not jump to conclusions before the speaker is finished.
- Don't guess what a person is thinking; allow him to tell you.
- Paraphrase what you understand, and ask the speaker if you captured the point accurately.

Business Card Etiquette

When used effectively, your business card is an important tool in networking, so keep these tips in mind.

- Always carry lots of business cards. Leave stacks in your car, different bags, jackets, coats or your briefcase so you never run out and miss an opportunity to network.
- Your card should have your current contact information, phone, email address, and web page if you own a business.

- Ask politely for someone's card. "Can we exchange cards?" or "May I have your card?"
- Don't give your card to everyone you say hello to.
- Give only one card unless the person asks for a few extras.
- On the back of each card you receive, write the date, location, and a tip to help you remember the person. This makes it easier to input the information into your contact management system later.

If you are looking for a job, you can have a networking card with your contact information. They can be printed inexpensively or even for free at www.vistaprint.com. Another option is to use pre-cut business cards paper stock from an office supply store that you print yourself. Carry copies of your résumé if you are looking for a job, but do not use it in place of a business card.

Small Talk 101

We all engage in small talk with friends and colleagues, but it seems more difficult with strangers. What do you talk about with someone you've just met? First, it's important to stay up to date on current events locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. In particular, know what's going on in the business world and the sports world.

Say you are at an event and you've spotted someone you want to meet. What do you do?

Introduce yourself. "Hi, Jeff, I'm Suzanne Smith from Workplace Success Group. What company are you with?"

"Hi, Suzanne. It's nice to meet you. I'm a customer service representative for Johnson and Smith, an investment firm."

Not everyone needs a conversation starter. Some people can introduce themselves, exchange some small talk, and land an appointment by the end of the conversation. Those who can use a little warm-up should try one of the following topics to jump start a conversation.

- The weather
- Ask the person where they are from
- Comment on the event, the food
- Talk about the presenter or information you just learned
- Ask the person about his profession and how he got started in the field
- Offer sincere compliments

Conversation Topics to Avoid

- Politics
- Religion
- Age
- Offensive jokes
- Gossip
- Health problems
- Dislikes about your boss, family, and your pet
- Personal information

Entering a conversation. Look for the people who are not talking to anyone and introduce yourself. If you want to enter an existing conversation, stand close to the group and smile; someone will usually invite you to join. If you've waited and no one has acknowledged your presence, it is probably a

private conversation. Don't take this personally; just move on. You'll also sense the conversation is private if the parties involved seem engrossed in their conversation; look before approaching. If you want to talk to someone who is in the middle of a conversation, catch his or her eye, smile, and let the person see that you are waiting.

Ask meaningful questions. Once the ice is broken and the conversation has begun, ask meaningful questions such as the following:

- What are some of the challenges you face in your position?
- What differentiates your company or business in the market?
- What do you enjoy most about your job/business?
- What are you hoping to accomplish today?

Make sure your questions are open-ended so you can actually have a discussion. Avoid questions that can be answered with a yes or no.

Sticky situation transitions. You may sometimes find yourself in a conversation

that is going in a wrong direction. It could be gossip with pressure placed on you to reveal information or other unwanted themes. Do not feel compelled to stay in the conversation. If you feel trapped in a nonproductive conversation, politely excuse yourself, change the topic or simply tell the person, "I'd rather not discuss that topic now" and offer another topic.

Moving along. Never abruptly leave someone in mid-conversation to run off and talk to someone else. If a conversation is getting involved, ask for the person's card and offer to follow up with a phone call or coffee meeting.

Allot three to five minutes, up to a maximum of eight to ten minutes, per conversation. This will give you time to move around the event and meet other people. Think twice before you leave someone standing alone. Try to introduce them to another guest before you move on to your next opportunity. Never make up a story so you can flee. Say that you need to refill your plate or your glass or talk to another person you just spotted and say, "It was good to meet you; enjoy the rest of the

event," and move on. Make sure that the statement is actually true.

Remembering Names

Not many people feel they are good with names. But calling someone by the wrong name or mispronouncing a name can put you on the wrong track.

When you meet someone, repeat his or her name. "Nice to meet you, Susan." Say it again mentally and try to use that person's name in conversation at least two to three times so that it sticks in your mind.

Look for distinguishing features about the person, like a big smile or a hairstyle.

Get creative. Try to think of a little story or word association connected with the person's name. For example, if you are meeting me, Karen Hinds, you might think of hindsight or Heinz ketchup to remind you of my last name. For Karen, picture a *car rental* "Ka-Ren" *agency*. These mnemonic stories need to make sense only to you!

Calling Colleagues

Simple telephone skills still mean a lot, even in the era of high technology. You can never be too rushed or too important to treat others with respect when communicating.

- Answer by the second or third ring.
- Smile.
- Answer in a businesslike manner. State your name and your company and greet the caller. Speak in a moderate, audible tone of voice.
- Laugh modestly.
- Keep background noise to a minimum. That includes not holding conversations with other people in your office while on the phone. This is rude to your caller.
- Sound pleasant.
- Don't take calls right before going into a meeting. You'll arrive late and the caller will have to be hurried.
- Try to return calls within 24 hours.
- When leaving a voice message, speak slowly and leave your phone number at the beginning and end of your message.

- Know how to take a proper message: name of caller, phone number and extension or department, time and date of call, and the message. Write legibly.
- Use speakerphone only with the permission of the other speaker.
- Change your voicemail message to reflect your schedule changes.
- When leaving messages, keep the content professional and brief, and speak slowly when leaving your number.

Netiquette

When was the last time you wrote and actually sent business correspondence by surface mail? Email is great, but as with an old-fashioned business letter, you need to keep your message and presentation professional.

- Don't write in all capital letters; it is equivalent to yelling. Do not write: HELLO MICHELLE, THIS IS JANE IN ACCOUNTING. CAN YOU PLEASE SEND THE FILES?

- Use the right type size and font. For instance, 12 point Times or Arial are ideal. 10 point is too small, and 14 or 16 point are too large unless the recipient has sight problems.
- Make sure that you fill out the subject line and give a clear idea of the email's content.
- Do not forward frivolous email to your networking contacts.
- Do not mark messages urgent if they are not truly urgent.
- Write in a businesslike fashion: "How are you? How can I help you today?," not "How r u? What can we do 4 u 2day?" Do not use 2 in place of "to" or 4 in place of "for" or "u" in place of "you".

CHAPTER 4

BUILDING YOUR NETWORK

If you are serious about building your network, you have to be seen – you have to leave your desk. Remember the old cliché: It’s not who you know – it’s who knows you. You have to be seen to be known.

Breaking Your Cubicle Mindset

When I was an employee, I prided myself on the quality of my work and on getting the job done. I knew nothing about networking. So whenever colleagues would invite me out to lunch, I would say “no thanks.” When they went out for drinks after work, I would decline because I didn't drink alcohol. It never occurred to me that I could still go and drink juice. When the company got reduced tickets to plays or sporting events, I was too busy. I took my lunch to work every day. While I saved a ton of money by avoiding the overpriced sandwiches of the downtown restaurants, I was shooting myself in the foot because I was not building any connections at all. My lack of connections limited my ability to explore new areas.

Sitting at your cubicle or being locked away in your office producing exceptional work will not guarantee you anything but the title of “antisocial workaholic.” You will become the dumping ground for grunt work. Your colleagues, meanwhile, who may only produce passable work, will be out in the real world wining and dining executives, potential clients, and people on the fast track with their excellent people skills.

Three things to do right now:

- Invite two people from your department out to lunch or out for a quick coffee break.
- Volunteer for a new project or get involved in a company-sponsored community service project.
- Ask for an informational interview from someone within your department who holds a higher position but who will not feel threatened by your attempt to reach out.

Do these activities regularly:

- Try to network with someone new every week and maintain relationships already in progress.
- Carve out 10 to 15 minutes daily and dedicate it to networking.
- Commit yourself to attend events weekly or monthly, depending on your schedule.
- Select a few conferences to attend locally and if possible nationally.
- Attend events your company sponsors.

Linking Online

Networking is no longer limited to face-to-face interaction at receptions, conferences or community meetings. Many online sites specialize in providing professional networking opportunities for business people. These sites have both free memberships and fee-based memberships that offer more access. Online networking should be part of your overall networking strategy. Face-to-

face and online networking complement each other; you should do both simultaneously.

The service is rather simple. Thousands of people sign up with an online networking service. Depending on the chosen level of membership, members get access to the other members. Visit the following online networking sites and explore them to get familiar with the process.

- www.Linkedin.com
- www.Ryze.com
- www.networkingforprofessionals.com
- www.eacademy.com

As a rule, you must be invited into someone's network. When you get an invitation, you have the option of accepting the invitation or rejecting it. To navigate this process, here are a few tips:

What your invitation means. Before you send out an invitation, make sure the invitation is going to a person you know and who knows you. This will increase your chances of having your invitation accepted. Your invitation is basically stating that you

trust the invitee enough to share information about people in your database and you would feel comfortable recommending him or her to your colleagues.

Make it personal. How do you feel when you get a form letter? You have the option to personalize the invitation you send out to other potential networkers. By all means make it short and personal. If you think someone may have forgotten you or you want to jog the person's memory, offer a few hints about how you know each other.

Before you say yes. Getting an invitation to join someone's network may seem like a good thing, but that depends on who it is and how you feel about that person. If you don't know, like or trust the person, think about the value they could bring before you hit the 'yes' button.

Say "no thanks" graciously. Some invitations that come across your desk will make you want to run in the other direction. When that happens, first make sure that you have not overlooked any possibility that you really do know this person. If you are sure

you don't know the person, decline the invitation.

Safety in numbers. If you were to make a cold call to a member of your alma mater, chances are that person will also reach out to you once you mention your common connection. Adopt the same policy online. Join networking groups where the people in the group all share a common experience, like an affiliation with an organization such as a high school, university, company or neighborhood.

Writing a recommendation. If a colleague asks you for a recommendation for his online profile, be honest. Do not fabricate a job experience, a title or a company to make your friend look great.

Discussion Group Etiquette

Online discussion groups are excellent networking opportunities for people with similar goals and interests. These are email-based forums managed by a moderator. Interested individuals subscribe to the group and are able to post messages for all other subscribers to read. Messages are sent to the

moderator for approval and then posted. Each discussion group or forum usually posts its own guidelines, but there are a few common guidelines.

Use an email signature. A “sig file,” as it is often called, should contain your name, organization affiliation, contact numbers, email address, and web address.

Keep messages short and to the point. Edit your emails and use proper English. This counts towards your online reputation.

Don't write in ALL CAPS. It's the equivalent to shouting.

Use good manners. Flaming is online verbal abuse. If you are flamed, resist the urge to flame back because it can jeopardize your access to the group.

Sports and Networking

Don't dismiss this section because you are not physically able to play a sport; that's not a good excuse. You have two ways to use sports as an excellent networking tool.

Stay abreast of sports news. Sports can be an excellent conversation starter, especially with male colleagues. I enjoy watching football so I watch the games, but I catch the highlights for basketball, hockey, and baseball to be aware of who scored the night before, who are the champions and the underdogs, and what are the major rivalries. When interacting with international clients, I make sure to know what's happening in the world of cricket and soccer. It may seem like a lot of work, but my goal is to get to know people, to like them, and to trust them. If that means stepping out of my comfort zone to meet them on their terms, that's the price I must pay sometimes.

Join the game. Many companies and communities have organized sports teams. The great thing about organizational teams is that you do not need to be a great player. The most important thing is to go out as a team, try your best, and have fun. If you were an athlete in high school or college, this is not the time to be ultra-competitive. A friendly, competitive spirit is healthy and makes the game enjoyable. Even if you are not the

sports type, consider volunteering to be on the team or to help out in any way possible. Always remember the goal is to meet new people and strengthen existing relationships.

Golf: The Ultimate Networking Sport

Tiger Woods's career increased the profile of golf with people who would otherwise not pay any attention to the game. But for many years, business executives knew the secret power of this game in boosting their businesses and careers. Some people shy away from the game, believing it is boring, time-consuming, and pointless. Actually, it's quite the opposite. Golf is the ultimate business person's sport for the following reasons.

Quality time with other people. People do business with people they know, like and trust. To get to know, like and trust someone, you have to spend time with him or her. Whether you play 9 or 18 holes, you have at least three hours to ride or walk from hole to hole with people you can do business with directly or use as a reference. It's a relaxed environment where you really can become

familiar with your golf mates on a professional and personal level. Isn't that better than a quick 45-minute business meeting or hours spent writing emails and making calls chasing people?

Window into character. When you are playing the game, you are given a glimpse of your colleague's true behavior traits. In unfamiliar surroundings, we all put our best faces forward. In business, we all say the same things about ourselves: I work well under pressure; I get along well with others; I am a problem solver, critical thinker, team player; and on and on and on. That changes for some people on the golf course. All of sudden, when a player is unable to hit the ball just right or when the ball ends up in the bushes or a water hazard, that person might not appear to be as perfect. If the team behind seems to be following closely, will one of your team members be tempted to get creative with the score numbers to hasten the game? Golf can be a window into a person's honesty, among other qualities.

Stress relief. Imagine leaving the stressful environment of your office and escaping to

fresh air and acres of green grass, rolling hills and ponds, even in the middle of a major city. Golf offers a temporary respite from a world that thinks multitasking and 10-to-15-hour workdays are signs of productivity and dedication. No other game allows you to play into your golden years and still have the opportunity to mingle with some of the business world's most creative minds.

Risk-taking practice. Success comes only when you take risks. For people who have not yet mastered the game, the golf course is a great place to start taking risks. Even if you lose a few balls or miss a few shots, the only real damage may be to your ego. Golf is an excellent training ground to hone risk-taking skills that can be transferred to your career or business.

Conversation opener. No matter where you go in the business world, people play golf. At some point in many business discussions, the topic will switch to sports, and eventually to golf. If you are not a player, you are left on the sidelines as your colleagues continue the discussion and deepen their business connections. As someone who doesn't play,

you must stay quiet and miss out on a chance to not only be included in the conversation but also join a game, which means time to get to know, like, and trust your colleagues.

Be a gracious loser. Our society loves winners and everyone wants to be a winner. But life offers many occasions to lose and golf is no exception. If you are a sore loser, you miss the opportunity to learn how to be a better person; you miss the lesson you were supposed to learn. When you lose a game of golf among friends or business associates, you fortify your ability to bounce back from adversity, especially if you do so in a classy way. In your professional career, you may have many business deals you will not win, promotions and opportunities when you will be overlooked, and new job prospects for which you will not be considered. Why not practice being gracious about setbacks so you can learn how to bounce back?

Builds confidence. There is almost no feeling like the one you get after a really great game of golf, especially if you got a hole in one and you have quite a few witnesses. The

confidence you feel in that moment is transferable to your business performance. **No need to be a pro.** You do not need to be a great golf player to get out on a course and hit a few balls. In fact, some of the worst players still play every weekend they are physically able.

Women and golf. If you are a woman in business with aspirations for the corner office or if you own a business, the game of golf should be a major component in your success plan. Too often, women shy away from the game because they feel intimidated by the predominantly male atmosphere or they have no clue how to play. Many programs across the country offer clinics to learn the game. You will not be a good player after one, two or even three lessons, but with each lesson you will gain a bit more confidence. Take a few of your women friends with you. You may not be welcome in every golf circle, but the ability to understand the basics and play at charity tournaments or invite clients to a round of golf could be a much quicker route to the corner office or your next business deal than you might ever imagine.

Finding a Mentor

Before you embark on your networking journey, it is essential that you seek out a trusted support team. You need a mentor, and no rule says you can have only one mentor. In fact, it will be to your advantage to have a few mentor relationships that can help you grow in different areas of your personal and professional life.

Before you start your search for a mentor:

Be clear about why you want a mentor.

Write down all the reasons you need a mentor and be able to articulate them.

Describe who your ideal mentor would be.

Take into consideration the person's experience, qualifications and current position. Make a list of those qualities.

Make a list of people who might fit your criteria. We all would like a high-profile person as a mentor, but sometimes the best mentors are not high-profile people. Don't get star struck.

Tell a few trusted colleagues you are searching for a mentor. If you see someone you think might fit your description of the ideal person, invite him or her to coffee or schedule an informational interview. During your meeting, ask that person if it's acceptable for you to call occasionally for advice. Most people will say yes, but if the person sounds hesitant, he could be uninterested or have too many other time commitments. Don't take it personally. Thank the person for his time and move onto the next person on your list. If the person says yes, great.

Look in-house. Find out if your company has a formal mentoring program or check the professional associations you belong to. If your company has a formal program, check to see what prerequisites must be met.

Don't be a leech. Although your mentor is supposed to help you, don't suck him dry of his time, talents, and resources. Figure out what you can also offer your mentor so it becomes a mutually beneficial relationship.

Be Persistent, Not a Pest: Nurturing Your Networking Contacts

The biggest mistake that people make in networking is failing to follow up on all levels. As fabulous as you may be, you are probably not a priority for your newest contact. In 2001, I met with a potential client, talked over a proposal, and left the conversation almost certain that I had won the contract. A few weeks later, I learned the deal had collapsed. Needless to say, I was disappointed, but I could not change the decision and moaning about it wouldn't have helped. For years I would make an occasional phone call and send my weekly newsletter to that potential client. Six years later, I got a call from that organization and this time the business was ready to buy; the contract moved forward effortlessly. The occasional emails and phone calls kept my name and the business in front of the client and I provided valuable information that helped them make the decision to use my company. The lesson is: Find ways to stay connected.

Follow up with a quick personal note. As soon as you meet someone, follow up. Email

is quick, a phone call is a bit more personal, but a handwritten note speaks volumes. Your choice of card shows attention to detail. Get a card that is blank inside with a simple greeting on the front. Say it was a pleasure meeting the person, or if you received valuable information at your initial meeting, say thank you. The fact that you took the time to write a note demonstrates to the recipient that you really appreciate what that person did for you.

Ask the question. After you meet someone, always ask the person's preferred method of staying in touch. Many people prefer email because it allows the flexibility of replying any time. Some people prefer a phone call because their email is inundated with junk mail. Be sure to ask; you do not want to annoy the contact or miss an opportunity by using the wrong method of communication.

Be a man or woman of your word. It really is bothersome when someone promises to do something and then fails to deliver. If you do this, you will damage your reputation. If you promise to call, to make a connection, to show up to an event or to take any action, do

it. You don't want to be known as someone who talks a good game but does not deliver.

Record names in a database and track contacts. Technology has made it easy to keep track of the people you meet and to keep that information current. An abundance of simple tools and software is available. Investigate the different options and figure out what works best to meet your needs. Then keep the information current by calling or emailing occasionally.

Send cards for holidays, even Thanksgiving or Labor Day. Everyone is accustomed to getting holiday cards. Keep a stack of special-occasion cards on hand for birthdays, get-well wishes, births, times of sympathy, anniversaries, graduations or promotions. This way, as you keep in touch with your contacts, over time you can celebrate or empathize with that person. If your card is the only one a person receives, he or she will be sure to remember you.

Provide helpful information. The human tendency when you meet someone is to tell the person about yourself. That is a big

mistake. Be a listener. Determine the likes, dislikes and interests of the person you are with but without interrogating. You can use this information later to send the person articles on areas of interest or invitations to specific events.

Ask for an informational interview. An informational interview is not an interview for a job. It is an opportunity for you to learn more about a person and his or her expertise. Ask for 20 to 30 minutes of the person's time and have a prepared list of questions. Know exactly why you want to meet with that person and tell the person your reasons. If you are wondering what to ask, consider the following open-ended questions: Why did you enter this field? What activities go on in a typical work day? What aspects of your job prove to be challenging? What advice would you offer someone interested in this field? What do you enjoy most about your work?

Call and ask for an opinion. Times will arise when you are working on a project or need to make a decision, and the expertise of one of your contacts could be an invaluable asset. Call or email and ask for an opinion. That

person might be able to offer some insights that you have not considered.

Invite contacts to coffee, lunch or events (conference, gala, networking, etc.). Because time is money, not many people are willing to meet for lunch, which can take up to two hours out of a person's workday. Ask instead for a quick meeting for coffee. If you want to build a relationship, think also of bigger events, such as a conference or a gala where your contact will spend time with you and other people who can be networking sources. Identify the people of interest before the event and let your invitee know who you will introduce him or her to at the event. Don't pretend to know important people just to look good; this strategy always backfires.

Offer referrals. One of the best parts of networking is the joy you feel when you help someone else achieve a goal. As much as you can, look for ways to connect people you know to the resources they need. Don't just make an introduction; go the extra mile and follow up to see how the referral worked out.

Volunteer to help. One of the best ways to be seen and known is to volunteer. Look for projects that need your time and efforts internally or outside your workplace. If you would like to meet or know a certain person, observe what projects interest that person and make yourself available to pitch in. Politicians rely on strong networks to run their campaigns. They can't know everyone, but they thrive on the ability of others to build bridges to new communities, champion many causes, and help the politician win election. For non-politicians, community service is a way to make connections through nonprofit boards, community projects, sports leagues, and youth programs. These efforts can buy you the status of a VIP: a Visible, Involved, and Persistent individual. You'll be amazed that once people identify you as a VIP, opportunities will seek you out because you have proven yourself to be reliable.

Touch base for no special reason. It's perfectly fine to call and talk with someone for a few minutes just to catch up, but don't talk about yourself. Ask the contact how he is doing, what new projects and goals are in the works or if any major changes have occurred

lately. If you learn of a special occasion like a recent birth, marriage, promotion or death, by all means send a card. E-cards are great, but a handwritten note is more powerful.

Always say “thank you.” If you are given a great idea, a referral or some valuable information, always say “thank you.” We’re all in such hurries that we often forget to say thanks, especially for the little things. Call, email or send a card. Always express your gratitude immediately.

The rule of three. If you've called, emailed, and sent a card to someone you met and the person has not responded to any of your communications, chances are it is time to move on; the person is probably not interested, doesn't remember you or doesn't want to connect at this point.

Grouping Your Contacts

A savvy networker has to consider that not all networking contacts are equal and that all contacts have different functions.

Some contacts can give you what you want, while others may have access to the

information you need. Still others can refer you to the right people. As you get to know each person, you will need to categorize them.

For the Employee

Allies. The main job of allies is to put you in touch with the people and information you need. An ally will speak for you in circles where you would ordinarily not have a voice. If an ally is to do the best job for you, the ally must be aware of all your qualifications, your aspirations, and your abilities. This means you must stay in touch. List the people who are your allies. qualifications, your aspirations, and your abilities.

Mentors. If your company does not have a formal mentor program and you have not taken the initiative to seek out a mentor on your own, you are way behind the eight ball. A mentor is someone who is able to spend time with you and guide you in your professional development. That person should have more experience and be more accomplished than you are. It is important for the mentor to have a genuine interest in helping a less-experienced person navigate a

professional career. The mentor must possess good interpersonal and listening skills and must treat the relationship and all information confidentially. Make a list of your mentors and the areas they are helping you to work on. Then list the other areas of your professional life that still need guidance, and begin your search for trusted individuals to help.

Colleagues. Never underestimate the power of networking with your colleagues and junior associates. Everyone strives to constantly move up the corporate ladder, so the colleague that you don't get along with now could be running the department or owning the company in a few years. Take the time to get to know people and stay in touch when they change positions or companies. Today's junior associates are tomorrow's senior executives. Strive to make a good impression now.

For The Business Owner

A business owner should have all of the previous mentioned categories of allies, mentors, and colleagues, but should go a step

further and include a category for the business' clientele. A business owner needs to have an even stronger network because daily business survival depends on these connections. Here are a few ideas:

Circle of influence. You should have people in your network with whom you are in constant contact. I have 10 to 15 people that I speak with every month. I call them my “circle of influence.” People in your circle of influence should know your business. They should even be able to sell your services for you because they have a clear understanding of your business, they are confident in the quality of your work, and they respect you as a person.

Clients. Stay in touch with your clients personally with phone calls, emails, newsletters or some other form of communication.

“Target 50” or pipeline. These are potential clients you stay in touch with to keep abreast of new company developments, products or programs. You're constantly educating them to get them to know, like and trust you so

they can eventually be buyers of your products or services. It could be more than 25, depending on your business.

CHAPTER 5 NETWORK KILLERS AND WAYS TO SOLVE THEM

You need to watch out for some common mistakes that are made daily by people who are not aware of what they are doing or who are simply manipulative or inconsiderate.

Nine Ways People Abuse Their Networks

Here are some unwritten rules of networking that you should try your best never to violate:

Offering someone else's expertise for free without asking permission. Nothing is more annoying than to get a call from a stranger telling you she was referred by a colleague who agreed to requests you are not prepared to accept. Worse, your colleague never gave you any indication to expect the call.

Asking for special personal favors too early. Wait until your relationship has developed over a period of time before asking for a personal favor. Even in that case, be careful about what kind of personal favor you request. It is wise to keep the relationship on

a professional level and to get personal *only* if both parties seem to show an interest in extending the relationship outside of a purely business realm.

Pretending to know the right people. Being introduced to an influential person does not mean you know that person. Do not tell the people in your network that you know that person and can get in touch with him or her.

Connecting only when you have a need. Don't make contact with people only to get a favor or information. We all know people who get in touch when they have a need and then disappear until they have another need down the road.

Inconsistent follow-up. Networking is all about follow-up. If you are trying to sell a product, you may need to invest a few weeks, months or even years before your network really begins to work for you at optimum speed. If you are looking for a new job or just want to have different expertise at your fingertips, you must be consistent. Lay out a networking plan and outline ways in which you can stay connected consistently.

Getting upset when people do not respond immediately. People have busy lives, and in many instances you are not their first priority. Even when you do invest time and energy into a relationship, getting to know someone takes time and effort. Be patient and persistent, and keep in mind that the people in your network are not your employees; they are volunteers agreeing to help you and vice versa.

Ignoring your network. Have you ever remembered the names of colleagues you kept telling yourself you should be in contact with but that you have neglected? When you do that, you are being selfish and depriving others of the value and expertise you bring to the table. Other people have needs that you can fill. You must also consider these opportunities as planting seeds that might someday feed your needs.

Breaking promises. "Let's do lunch" or "we should get together" are empty words from some business people. Your reputation is the only currency you have to spend in the business world. The minute you develop a pattern of not calling when you said you

would, not showing up or failing to send the information you promised, you devalue your reputation. This makes it harder to spend your reputation as a currency when you need something done.

Self-absorption. Some people are simply self-absorbed. When they meet people, they spend most of their time talking about themselves, their business, their career, their family. They often drop names to make themselves look important and to be the life of the party. This behavior will limit how far they rise in their career.

Cliques Cause Chaos

Are you part of the "in crowd" or are you one of those people who never gets invited to any of the in-crowd gatherings? Being part of a clique is not a good long-term networking strategy, no matter how advantageous it may seem now.

What is a clique? A clique is a group of people who share something in common and choose to spend time together almost exclusively. On the job, it may be a group of

people who take a smoking break together, have a common sporting interest or were part of the old regime in a company. By itself, nothing is wrong with a group of people spending time together. The problem arises when cliques become exclusive in the workplace and shut out others.

Cliques become dangerous and downright destructive when workers in the clique are given preferential treatment in assignments, opportunities for advancement or responsiveness of complaints.

Obviously such behavior lends itself to chaos and animosity within any company. Teams cannot function effectively when cliques exist. Cliques contribute to low self-esteem, defensiveness, low morale, unhealthy competition, backstabbing, and more.

If you are not part of the “in crowd,” going to work can sometimes feel like going to war with almost no ammunition. In this kind of environment, no company can achieve peak performance, and that ultimately is detrimental to the bottom line.

If you are a happy clique member, it is time to wake up and realize you are stifling your career. While it is fine to have a few close colleagues at work, it is detrimental to your career success to be perceived as exclusively associated with a certain group of colleagues. Like trends, cliques come and go. A good networker will weather the storms of all the cliques and remain on neutral ground, but that skill takes time to develop.

Unfortunately, if you are new in a department, you might be excluded from cliques that are already established or different cliques could be vying for your attention and participation. Make every effort to diversify the types of people you connect with, even though sometimes that may be difficult.

Rebuilding Burned Bridges

At some point in your career, you will commit a faux pas and cause someone to be upset with you. The way you handle the offense will determine if you mend a bridge or burn it to ash.

The rule of thumb in business is to never burn a bridge because you never know when you will need to cross back over it. People change positions and companies frequently. Even if you are fired from a position, hold on to any remote possibilities of maintaining a few relationships with former colleagues.

Apologize. A simple, sincere "I am sorry" (be specific about why you are apologizing) is sometimes enough to get things moving in the right direction. It also means you will not repeat that offense.

Be sincere. Apologize to the person that you offended but be sure you mean it. The offended person probably will be even more annoyed by insincerity on your part.

Take responsibility. When you say, "I am sorry," take full responsibility. Don't say "I am sorry, but..." The "but" cancels out the apology. Don't pass the buck or blame someone else.

Be proactive to mend fences. Look at ways to remedy situations. Can you make a call,

send an email or organize a face-to-face visit to smooth the conflict?

Move on. If you've done everything in your power to repair a relationship and you can do nothing else, move on. Leave it alone and be more aware of pitfalls in the future.

Be polite. If the person you offended still holds a grudge, you must work with him or her. Don't be rude or sarcastic, even if the other person also may be at fault. Be the bigger person and maintain your professionalism and courtesy.

Be open. It takes time for someone to get over an offense. An offended person may return months or even years later, a little wiser and ready to rectify the situation. Be mature and prepared to start fresh.

Rejuvenating Your Network

Say at one point or another you had a very strong network, but then you got busier, your networking activities come to a halt, and you lost touch completely. How do you restart the process?

Make networking a regular part of your business life. Even when a physical meeting is not possible, don't let a week go by when you do not make an effort to reach out to at least three people through a quick call or an email.

Identify individuals who have been instrumental in your growth. These people seem to know everyone and everyone knows them. They may have never directly given you a contract or promotion, but they know all the people who can positively affect your life. Make a list of those people and reach out to them regularly, no matter what.

Cut the fat from your network. Not everyone you have listed in your database needs to be there. In fact, over the years several people may have turned into just a name and a number. You don't know them, they don't know you, and neither party has done anything to build the relationship. Toss them out of your database or make an attempt to resuscitate the relationship.

Diversify your contacts. Look at the people in your network. Are you meeting the same

people at the same events all the time? Are most of them in the same profession or industry? If you answered yes to those questions, it is time to think outside of your box. What kind of people do you need in your network? Where can you meet new people who can be beneficial to your network? And why will they fit in your network?

CHAPTER 6

BEFORE YOU HEAD OUT

Before you head out to attend lots of business functions and meet the right people for your network, let's devise a plan by posing a few key questions.

Impression Management Challenge

Networking is also about mastering impression management. Do you really look as good as you feel? Are you dressed to impress?

Take a picture of yourself in your best outfit and critique your photo with a friend. Could you use a haircut, a manicure or pedicure, new clothes, new shoes or clean updated anything else? Go through the photo point by point. Then make some changes and take another photo.

Go through your wardrobe and donate clothing that is too tight, too short or otherwise badly fitting, outdated or revealing.

Questions To Ponder

Why are you choosing to network now?

What are your networking goals?

Who is your ideal networking lead?

Where will you find the best people to help you achieve your goals?

What will it cost you? On average, how much will you need to spend per event?

How often will you attend these events?

What associations and clubs will be beneficial? Where are they and how much do they cost to join?

How will you maintain contact after the event?

How will you stay on track when you feel unmotivated?

How much time will you allocate daily, weekly or monthly to networking?

Networking Essentials

- A clean, high-quality business outfit
- Business cards
- A good pen
- A small pad of blank paper
- Mints
- Cell phone (turned off or placed on vibrate during conversation)
- Thank-you notes
- Stamps
- Tissue
- A budget for gifts, lunches, and coffee appointments
- A great attitude and follow-up strategy
- A convincing smile
- A good electronic database system

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Networking Groups

Toastmasters

www.Toastmasters.com

Business Network International

www.bni.com

Society for Human Resources Management

www.shrm.org

American Business Women's Association

www.abwa.org

National Association of Women's Business
Owners

www.nawbo.org

International Association of Business
Communicators

www.iabc.com

Executive Women's Golf Association

www.ewga.com

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