



# Networking for Success

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Networking is an art form practiced by many, mastered by few. Like anything, practice makes perfect. Owning my own company, I get to practice a lot.

My favorite networking example is from the movie, For Love of Money. There is a classic scene where Michael J. Fox, who plays a hotel concierge, ducks into a helicopter owned by a man named Chuck. The helicopter pilot says to Fox, "How do you know Chuck?" Fox says, "I don't know Chuck. But I know Eddie Shackner. Eddie knows Jerry Levine. Jerry knows George Spitzer. George knows Chuck." The pilot replies, "Small world." Really!

In its simplest form, networking is about building a strong web of relationships. Below are some essential tips for successful networking whether your goal is to build your business or simply to establish new professional relationships or friendships.

## DO:

- Bring business cards wherever you go. They are the "currency of networking."
- Have a 30 second elevator speech and practice it. Does it sound interesting to you? If not, it won't be interesting to anyone else!
- Schedule time on your calendar for ongoing networking. Attend association meetings, chamber meetings, business seminars, luncheon programs and other appropriate networking venues. (See the business calendar in your local newspaper for other ideas.)
- Set a goal to meet at least one new person at each networking meeting you attend. Remember, it's quality, not quantity that you are looking for here.
- Ask for business cards. Be sure to note the date on the front and the time, location of where you met and any other relevant information on the back.
- Follow-up new contacts within one week. Schedule a coffee/ lunch or send notes, e-mails, articles or other items periodically to maintain the connection.

## DON'T:

- Sit with your buddies. You can talk to them anytime!
- Arrive late. You don't want to be competing with the speaker or food service for attention!
- Do all the talking. When you speak, you push people away, but when you listen, you draw them in to you.
- Be insincere. If you are not interested in someone, politely move on.
- Collect a business card from every person. Collect cards only from those you plan to follow-up with. It's quality not quantity that counts!

On a final note, remember that networking is not about what you get out of a relationship; it's about what you give. And, as the saying goes, the rest will follow.

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Services include consulting, keynotes, workshops, teambuilding, management coaching, and research.

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