

# How to Network Successfully



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# Introduction

Did you know that 98% of businesses rely on referrals to gain new business, but only 3% of businesses have a strategy for referrals.

In today's environment, networking is as important as ever, if not more important than ever before.

We live in a time poor society with demands coming in from all areas, Clients, Suppliers, Colleagues, Family, Friends. So making the time to network often doesn't happen. And often the thought of networking turns us off as it seems like a lot of work.

There is also a lot of 'noise' out there that easily distracts us and takes our focus away from the most important thing and that is cultivating our networks so that our business can grow.

The problem is we are not networking effectively. But what does it look like to network effectively and efficiently so that you can maximise your results?

Following are my top 10 strategies to implement to help you be more effective, efficient and intentional around your networking.

# 01 Be Prepared

The first thing you need to do is set yourself up with the right tools to so that you can be ready to network anywhere.

## Name Badge

There are three reasons why you should always wear a name badge

1. People are more willing to approach you if they know they can remember your name, if you have name badge on then they never have to let you know they had forgotten
2. People often start conversation with you around your name badge
3. It is free advertising for your business

## Business Card

Stand out amongst the many business cards!!

Make sure your business card is unique and stands out. It will automatically make you memorable to the new contact you have just made.

## What do you do?

You need to be able to answer the question "What do you do?" in a way that creates conversation and is exciting to the listener.

I am a Marketing Consultant -> I help businesses become known in the community through effective marketing.

## Appearance

It is important that you represent your business well. If you are networking with other business owners, no matter what the setting is, it is important to be well presented. Don't wear your gardening clothes or clothes that are inappropriate to be mixing with other business owners.

# Know Your Business

# 02

We can all talk for hours about what our business does. But can you communicate it clearly and simply to your potential referral sources? If you can't tell your potential referral sources what you do or what you sell, how can they send you good referrals?

## Vision

What is your vision for your business? When someone you have just met asks, what's your vision? Where do you want to take your business? Can you answer them?

## Mission

What is your business's Mission? Beyond simply making a living! If you have established your vision, on where you want to take your business, your mission should include this, but also be about what you do and how you do it. Do you have your Mission Statement sorted? Written? Displayed?

## Products & Services

You must have a clear idea of your range of products or services. You must be able to let people know the following:

- What is the purpose of your product or service
- How would you describe it?
- How is it delivered?
- How much does it cost?

Then you must be able to communicate this in a brief clear way that people you are networking with understand.

## Target Market (Preferred Client)

What is your Target Market? Do you have a profile on your Ideal Client? And let me tell you, it's not Everyone or Someone!!!

- What Industry are they in?
- How long have they been in business?
- What do they come to you for?
- What problem do they have that you can solve?



# 03 Be Intentional

There is no point spending hours and hours networking if you don't understand why you are doing it and if you are doing it 'just cause'. You get way better results from networking if you are intentional around it.

## Set Goals

We all know that goals are important and we probably have goals already set in our business. But do you have a goal that is around how much money you want to earn from referrals in the next 12 months? Do you know how many referrals it will take to earn that money? Can these goals be achieved from your current networking activities? Or do you have to increase what you are doing?

## Block Out Time To Network

Intentional or deliberate networking takes time, but it is worth it as it is more effective than 'random' networking.

Think about the following:

- How much time will you block out each week for networking?
- What percentage of your marketing budget will you allocate to networking?
- How many meals each week will you eat with someone?
- How many new people do you want to meet each week?

## Implement Everything In This eBook

Everything that is in this eBook is a way to be intentional around your networking. It leaves nothing to chance.

If you are going to network deliberately, you need to do it right and if you do not have the correct foundations in place then it will crumble and you will become overwhelmed.

Spend some time working through this book and set yourself up BEFORE you go out there and start networking.

# Use Social Media

# 04

Yes, you can use Social Media for networking and in today's environment it's actually quite important that you do so .

## Why Use Social Media

From a business perspective, the ideal use for social media is to build your brand and your credibility. It is also a great way for them to get to know you better and connect better with you on a personal level, so they feel connected to you.

## Social Media Strategy

The key to success with social media is to have a strategy, that takes into account the amount of time that you can actually dedicate to social media each day. This is time that you dedicate to using social media as part of your online marketing strategies and not just personal use.

## Be Consistent

If you are going to use social media as part of your marketing strategy, then you must be consistent and deliberate. Sit down at set times of the day for a set amount of time and purposefully do what you came there to do. After you have achieved this and in your own time you can use social media on a personal level and get swallowed into any rabbit hole you want, just don't do it in the time allocated for deliberate marketing social media.

## Use Time Saving Tools

There are quite a few tools out there that you can use to leverage your time on social media. Use Canva - [www.canva.com](http://www.canva.com) for designing your posts for all your social media sites. Use Later - [www.later.com](http://www.later.com) to schedule your posts.

## Spend Time Deepening Your Relationships on Social Media

Don't just sell on social media, really connect with people, celebrate their wins, support them through their tough times. Engage in conversations with people. Use it as a way of communicating and connecting.

# 05 Network Anywhere

there are networks everywhere, they are all around you and if you are setup correctly then you have the ability to network whenever the time arises. Following are six different types of networks that are around you.

## Casual Contact Networks

Casual contact networks are general business groups that allow many people from various overlapping professions e.g. the Chambers of Commerce

## Strong Contact Networks

Strong contact networks are groups that meeting weekly for the primary purpose of exchanging referrals e.g. BNI

## Community Service Clubs

Community service clubs give you an opportunity to put something back into the community while doing business, making valuable contacts and receiving good PR. e.g. Rotary

## Professional Associations

Professional associations tend to be from one specific type of industry, such as building, banking, accounting or health. e.g. Housing Institute of Australia

## Social / Business Organisations

Social / Business Organisations are organisations that combine both social and business.

## Women's and Ethnic Organisations

Women's and ethnic organisations were created not as service clubs but as bonafide networking organisations. Use the internet to find one near you.

# Give 06

Zig Ziglar's famous quote - "You Can Have Everything In Life You Want, If You Will Just Help Enough Other People Get What They Want," says it all. Don't go out there expecting people to just give you referrals if you have only just met them and have not given them anything.

## Give to others

Networking is all about building relationships, the fastest and best way to build a deep relationship is to be proactive and positive and find ways to give to your new connection.

## Different ways to Give

You don't have to give someone a referral before you get to know them to be a giver.

There are many different ways to give.

- Refer someone from your network to help them with a problem
- Send them an article that might help them with one of their problems
- Share other resources with them that may benefit them
- Introduce them to someone they maybe wanting to meet

## Be a valuable connection

Provide value to your new connection, most people are interested in what they can gain from the connections they are making. So by being a source of insight can help you make the connections that you are seeking

## Be seen as a Giver

As you build your connections you will have more and more resources at your fingertips. Become the 'go-to' person that people seek out for help.

A few ways you can do this:

- Have business cards of everyone you are happy to refer on display in your office
- Keep with you a copy of all those business cards with you to hand out
- Write an email to your clients letting them know of the people you are happy to refer

# 07 Listen to Understand

Seek first to understand, then to be understood, this is Habit 5, in Stephen Covey's book, the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. And it apply's so much to when you are networking.

## Listen to Learn

When you first meet someone, it's important to have a conversation, but make sure they are talking more than you are. This is the fastest way to learn about the other person. If you are doing all the talking then you wont get to know them as well as if you are letting them talk.

## Be Curious

The quickest way to connect with someone and make a great first impression is to be genuinely curious about them. People will respond to your questions if they feel that you are being genuine towards them.

## Don't Sell

Whatever you do, don't go to a networking event with the purpose of selling yourself or your business. Networking is about building relationships, if you are solely doing it to sell then people will see through that and you will not be able to connect deeply with your new connections.

## Don't just talk business

Although it is great to learn about your new connections business, spend some time getting to know them as well. Ask them about their family, hobbies, interests, achievements, skills, other networks they are part of. Spend time deepening your relationship with them.

# Maximise Events

# 08

When at an event, it is important that you maximise your networking. If you do not be intentional around the event you might as well not go.

## Appearance

It is important that you dress for the occasion. If you are attending a Networking Event for business owners, dress in business attire, clean crisp clothes. If you are a tradie, then make sure you are in a clean uniform, maybe even have one designed specifically for when you are networking and doing quotes. DO NOT ever go to a Business Networking Event in casual clothes!!!!

## Go Prepared

Be prepared, wear your name tag, have plenty of business cards handy, have a pen, be ready to smile.

## Write Comments on the Backs of the Business Cards You Collect

If you are connecting with lots of people at the same time, it is often hard to track who was who and what you promised them, or what you can do for them in the future. Get into the habit of writing on the backs of their business card any relevant information they may have talked about, including their spouses name, children name etc.

## Be Ready with your Pitch

If you still aren't use to telling people 'what you do', then make sure you practice and practice it before going to the event. It is important that when people ask you 'what do you do?' you can answer with confidence.

## Be Genuine

Remember, you will be able to make deeper connections if the people you meet at these events see that you are genuinely a nice person and you are sincerely interested in them and what they are doing.



# 09 Follow Up

The most important of all is that you follow up with your new connection/s as soon as you possibly can, then stay in contact. Have a plan to reach out to them every three months or so.

## Text Message

One of the easiest ways to follow up your new connection is via text message. We all live in a busy world and sometimes our emails overwhelm us, so texting is a solution. But be mindful that this is not appropriate for every case. You just want them to know that you enjoyed meeting them. Texting them also gives them your phone number in their phone :)

## Email

Sometimes it's not appropriate to text someone, or you feel a longer message is a better option to a text. The purpose of the email is similar to the text message, you want them to know that you enjoyed meeting them.

## Do What You Promised

If you promised them something, make sure you make it happen within 24 hours of meeting them. No matter what it is, a recourse, someones contact details etc., they need to receive this the next day (or the next working day).

## Arrange to have a coffee

If the connection is someone that you feel will become a client or referral partner in the immediate future, make sure you arrange to have a coffee with them, you need to take the next step in building that relationship that you started the day before.

## Social Media

Also use social media as a way to stay connected to your new contact. LinkedIn, and Facebook are pretty important players in the business world. Connect with them on both these platforms as you are sending them the text/email.

# Track Everything 10

In point number 3 we spoke about being intentional around your networking, part of that is actually tracking your networking activities. But we also need to track our connection as well.

## Your Connections

Our phones and computers are all connected in one way or another now, making it easier to track all our connections. But as you increase your networking activity, your connections will increase. So you need a good structure around how you are going to track these connections. Some things you will need to be tracking:

- Contact Details - in your phone
- What they do - so you can send them relevant information if you come across it
- Who they know - they maybe a great referral source for you
- Some personal information on them - people love receiving birthday wishes
- When was the last time you connected with them - remember to connect regularly

## Networking Activities

To be intentional with your networking, you need to be tracking each event that you network at. Look at things like - how many people were at the event, how many people you connected with - how many clients came from the event (eventually) - how many referral sources came from the event.

We do this so we can decide if it's a good idea to go back to that event or not the next time it is on.

## Referrals Received

Then you need to be tracking referrals received. You do this so that you can not only manage each referral received, but you can follow up with prospects and referral sources. Some of the things you need to track, but are not limited to are.

- What was the referral
- Who gave it to you
- Did it turn into closed business.

## Closed Business

The next thing you need to be tracking is the closed business from your networking activity. By tracking this you are able to work out what networking activity was the most profitable and where your referrals are coming from.

# Action Plan

There is no point in knowing any of this information if you do not implement it. Following is your action plan for each different point.

## 01 Be Prepared

- Get a Name Badge
- Evaluate your business card - does it stand out
- Work on your message/pitch - what do you do?
- Evaluate your appearance - how do you appear to other business owners

## 02 Know Your Business

- Evaluate or create your vision
- Evaluate or create your mission statement
- Create a brief clear description for each of your products
- Identify your target market

## 03 Be Intentional

- Set Goals
  - Income from referrals
  - Referrals required to achieve that income
  - Networking activities you need to do to get those referrals
- Block out time to network
  - How much time will you block out each week for networking?
  - What percentage of your marketing budget will you allocate to networking?
  - How many meals each week will you eat with someone?
  - How many new people do you want to meet each week?

## 04 Use Social Media

- Create a Social Media Strategy
- Look at Canva to help create posts
- Look at Later to help automate posts

# Action Plan

## 05 Network Anywhere

What types of networks are around you?

- Casual Contact Network
- Strong Contact Network
- Community Service Club
- Professional Associations
- Social/business Organisations
- Women's & Ethnic Organisations

## 06 Give

- Set up business cards of your referral partners on display at your business
- Have a business card folder with you at all times
- Email your clients about how you like giving referrals and these are your recommended referral partners

## 07 Listen to Understand

- Practice listening to understand
- Practice being curious
- Practice what questions you are going to ask

## 08 Maximise Events

- Evaluate your appearance at events
- Gather a pack together for events
  - Name Badge (spare one)
  - Business Cards
  - Pen

# Action Plan

## 09 Follow Up

- Construct your text message template so you can save time and copy and past it each time (make sure you change their name before sending it)
- Create an email template so that you can save time when emailing your newly connections, make sure you personalise it
- Find a great coffee place you can go to regularly for coffee meets, saves time deciding
- Evaluate your LinkedIn & Facebook pages and make sure they are professional

## 10 Track Everything

- Set up how you are going to track your connections - contacts on phone - crm etc etc
- Set up how you are going to track your networking activities
- Set up how you are going to track you referrals received from the networking activities
- Set up how you are going to track your closed business received from the referrals

# Let's Connect

## Thank You

Thank you for reading this ebook. I hope you enjoyed it and actually take action and put into place everything that it suggests. Below is details of what is coming soon and also how to stay connected to me.

## Coming Soon

This book is the first step in a series. Coming soon is a book based on Networking, then there will be a series of workshops and webinars and courses all around effective networking.

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*A mindful journey towards happiness*

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