BUSINESS NETWORKING TIPS

Who Should Attend Networking Events?

- People Starting Businesses
- People Managing Businesses
- People Funding Businesses
- People Making Business Work
- People in Career Transition

Focus on people as they are introduced to you so that you remember their name and who they are. People like to be remembered and one of the highest compliments you can pay anyone is to listen and remember their name. Memory recall is essential. The greater your ability to store and recall data, the more responsive you can be to the people in your network.

Be gracious and courteous with everyone you meet. You never know if someone you meet is going to be important in your life. Treat everyone with respect and courtesy so that people will enjoy and appreciate being around you.

Nurture your network with calls and notes in a timely and appropriate manner. Staying in touch with people will keep your network alive and well. This can easily be done in the form of notes, cards, calls and visits.

How to Benefit from Networking Events:

- Be forward! Don't be shy. Be approachable and friendly. Smile! Smile! Smile!
- Walk right up to people, shake hands and ask them what they do.
- Have plenty of business cards with a current email address and phone number.
- Always have a pen so you can write notes on the back of business cards you receive to remind you about each person you met.
- Follow up with a phone call or email within a few days while you are still fresh in the person's mind.
- Introduce someone you have just met to someone you already know.
- Thank anyone that makes an introduction for you. It could change your life.
- Never be rude, under any circumstances.
- If you don't want to divulge your business plan, find a nice way to say so.
- Entrepreneurs often don't want to divulge their business plan; please don't press it if they are reluctant! They have a right to be cautious!
- If there are sponsors providing refreshments, make a point to thank them personally.
One of your reasons for attending networking events should always be to meet new people.

Engage everyone in lively, friendly and supportive conversations.

Read newspapers, trade publications and/or topical newsletters that day and prepare at least three conversation starters, or ice-breakers, that focus on current business events. Leave politics out of it.

Try not to spend most of your time talking with people you already know.

Meet and speak with as many different people as you can, but spend some quality time with a few.

Don't monopolize one person's time that other people are waiting to meet.

Never carry or hand out flyers or sales materials.

Dress appropriately, but wear comfortable shoes.

Reciprocate - bring something to the table to offer others at the event - names, contacts, information.

Establish an effective system for organizing and retrieving your network. Devise a system that keeps you organized and effective in building, retrieving and working your network.

Use a time management system effectively. A time management system can be a useful tool to ensure that you accomplish the tasks that will help you reach your goals. Control where and how you spend your time.

Organize your thoughts before making a phone call to referrals, leads, or people in your network. When you organize your thoughts, you will not only be more effective; you will be appreciated for being purposeful, powerful and respectful of the other person's time.