

BizNecessity

"Thinking BIG
for SMALL Business."



No Time to Waste, When Networking



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Networking was all the rage in the 1990's and some would say the word "networking" is now a little passé but it is everyone's dirty little secret that networking actually works. So much so, that thousands of business people still make time in their schedule to take part in networking meetings every week.

But before you run off and join the first networking group that has a vacancy, do your homework and don't waste your valuable networking time with a group that doesn't meet your standards. Good networking groups are hard to get into and sometimes require an invitation from a member in good standing. Always take full advantage of this opportunity because they truly can be hard to come by. But once you get in on that trial basis, analyze what is going on and see if the group meets your criteria. The following are some of the things you should look for when deciding if the networking group is worthy of your membership.

"if nobody is exchanging leads, what good is it?"

Make sure there is opportunity to exchange leads. You can build a network of thousands, but if nobody is exchanging leads, what good is it? The leads should be exchanged openly and there should always be follow-up at the next meeting as to what happened with the lead.

Ask the members one-on-one if the leads have generated sales. It's always nice to see leads being exchanged but if nobody is closing the deal, you need to ask why?

Is the group profiting? At each meeting, you invest time and money in the group and you have the right to know where the money goes. Find out if it meets your expectations.

Check out their web site. A good networking group always has a web site and gives you the opportunity to be found as a member on that web site. An opportunity to link to your web site is even better and that can lead to sales as well.

Will you have the opportunity to present to the group? While it is important that your guest speakers are providing the opportunity to learn and grow, it is important for the members to get a good understanding of your service/product if you expect them to recommend you to a friend. This should be done through handouts, power-point presentations or live

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demonstrations with a predetermined rehearsed volunteer. Trust me, the last thing you want is to ask a network member to volunteer at a moments notice. It could go dreadfully wrong and do more harm than good.

Do you get the opportunity to give your 30 second elevator speech at every meeting? This experience is invaluable! Your elevator speech is your “audio business card” that will get better every time you use it. So when you use it among your peers at the networking group, chat afterward with one or two of the members on how you might improve it.

So before you go to your first networking session, be prepared with a list of things you need to know before you commit as a member. Do yourself a favour and be prepared with a 30 second elevator speech as well so you may come out of that first meeting with a lead too. Don't forget to Google “networking tips” to make your networking experience as productive as possible.

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