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How To Survive Speed Networking

By Alan Matthews

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HOW TO SURVIVE SPEED NETWORKING

" Speed networking " is a contradiction in terms.

The whole point of networking is to build relationships over time so that people get to know and trust you.

The point of speed networking is to see how many people you can talk to in the shortest possible time. The format may vary but the basic approach is the same, you get 30 or 60 seconds to speak to someone, then you move on and talk to someone else.

You don't have time to ask questions or have a conversation, you just say your piece. Not very good for building rapport!

So should you just avoid these events? No! But I've found there's a certain way to approach them which will be most productive.

Here are my tips to survive - and thrive - in the world of speed Networking.

1.HAVE ONE SPECIFIC GOAL

My own goal at these events is to get people to sign up for the free report which gets them onto my mailing list so I can build the relationship later through my newsletter. Yours might be to get them to visit your website or ring a Freephone number.

Once you know the action you want them to take, follow these steps.

2.TELL THEM WHO YOU WORK WITH AND HOW YOU HELP THEM

Have a short, simple statement that says, " This is who I work with and this is what I do for them ." Focus on the client, not on yourself. For example, " I work with business owners who want to get better results from their networking. I help them to prepare and deliver a compelling marketing message so they get more clients with less effort. "

3.ASK THEM TO TAKE THE ACTION YOU WANT

Most people miss this, they end up saying " Well, that's me, if you're interested please give me a ring. "

You have to tell them what you want them to do.

For example, " I have a free report which reveals the 6 big mistakes people make when talking about their businesses. Here's the address you need to get your copy. Just send a blank email."

4.HAND THEM SOMETHING TO REINFORCE YOUR MESSAGE

My business card has a piece on the back telling people about the free report. I hand them the card, showing them the back when I mention the address they need to write to. This way, they are more likely to remember later when they are going through the cards they have collected.

If your card doesn't have this sort of information on it, give them something that does - a brochure or a specially made postcard.

5.FOLLOW UP

This always amazes me - the number of people I meet at networking events who never follow up. They speak to me for 30 seconds, then I never hear from them again. What was the point?

When you get back, email everyone you met and remind them of the action you want them to take, e.g. " I enjoyed meeting you at the networking event this evening and I hope we get the chance to meet again soon. Please don't forget to order your copy of the free report I mentioned, just click on this link and send an email. "

Even if people were interested in the report when I mentioned it, there's still a good chance they will forget later. A brief reminder works wonders.

Using this method, I always get a fair number of people to sign up for my mailing list at these events. Remember, it's a combination of: single message, call to action, visual material to back up message, follow up email after the event.

I guarantee this is a much more powerful approach than most other people will be using and you will have far more impact on the people you meet.

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Three Key Networking Principles for Women Professionals

By Michelle Goodwine

In order to break through the glass ceiling and reach gender equity, there are several key strategies that women professionals must adopt. One such strategy is networking.

There is no doubt that women, like men, need others' help to achieve our goals. Very few of us have gotten where we are in our careers without someone's assistance. Honestly we must admit that we may have been hired for a job because of whom we knew. And for us women entrepreneurs, much of the business we receive is through our personal contacts.

Networking Defined

So what is networking? According to "The Networking Book" by Jessica Lipnack and Jeffrey Stamps, "Networking is people connecting with people, linking ideas and resources." The book "Power Networking, 55 Secrets for Personal & Professional Success" states that networking is not: 1) Selling; 2) Using people for your gain; 3) Coercing or manipulating someone to do what you want; 4) Putting friends, neighbors, associates on the spot; or 5) Badgering people about your business.

Three Key Networking Principles

Based on these definitions, what should women professionals keep in mind when networking? The following three principles should guide every woman's networking approach:

1. Establish Relationships with Network

When trying to "connect" with people, try to find areas of common interest -issues, ideas or activities that you share in common with the other person. Effective networking is not a "one-shot" deal. True networking requires establishing a long-term relationship with someone. And the best way to do that is

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to find out about that individual on a personal and business level.

2. Be Honest about Your Intentions

State why you are contacting an individual for help. Do not say you would like to conduct an informal interview if you are actually trying to get a job offer from the meeting rather than information. Your honesty will result in people be more willing to assist you.

3. Reciprocate

Networking is a two way street. So if someone has assisted you, make it a priority to help her down the road. However, do not expect something for someone just because you did something for her. Sometimes that person may not be in the position to help you. However, personally I believe that if you help someone out of the goodness of your heart, it is the "order of the universe" that someone will help you one day. And remember, it has been said, that it is better to give than to receive.

These three key principles have one common element - treating people with respect. By applying these principles, we can enrich our lives professionally and personally.

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www.michellegoodwine.net for information about her professional speaking experience or e–mail her at michelle@michellegoodwine.net. Copyright © 2004 Integrated HR Strategies. All Rights Reserved.

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