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How to Network Effectively to Secure Freelance Work

By Brian Konradt

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When freelancers ask me what type of marketing is the easiest, costs the least, and yields the best results, I don't hesitate to recommend networking. Networking satisfies two primary prerequisites to secure clients. These two prerequisites are:

Creating rapport. Networking has the ability to create strong rapport. When you have rapport you and the prospect feel at ease with each other, and conversation flows. Rapport creates feelings of trust and honesty. Prospects who trust you usually do not have second thoughts about outsourcing work to you.

Establishing a relationship. When you establish a relationship, the prospect develops an awareness as to who you are, what you do, and what your intentions are. Relationships keep your name fresh in the prospect's mind; relationships create feelings of intimacy, trust, and rapport. Relationships have the secret power to turn prospects into paying clients, because the prospect knows you on a first name basis, knows what your intentions are, knows how your skills and services can benefit him and his business. He connects strongly with you.

Networking builds effective relationships faster than any other type of marketing. Many beginning freelancers acquire their first paying clients via networking or through people whom they know (the rapport and relationship already exist). And professional freelancers often expand their existing client-base via networking — asking clients, friends, other freelancers, etc. if they know people who can use their freelance services.

Where to Network Effectively

Professionals suggest you join two types of associations: The first type is a local association that attracts freelancers of your discipline. If you do commercial copywriting work, join a local writer's association. Many local writers' associations offer referral systems and job banks to help you receive work. The other benefit is that you will meet other freelancers who'll ask you to assist on their projects

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or refer their clients to you for freelance or supplementary services.

The second type of association to join is one where your type of clients congregate. Why spend hundreds of dollars targeting your audience with expensive marketing, when joining a local association that attracts your type of clients lets you sell directly to them via networking.

How to Network Effectively

Networking is only as effective as you are: the more visible you make yourself, the better networking works. Always arrive ten to fifteen minutes early for each meeting or social gathering and mingle with people. Let everyone know who you are and what you do. Most importantly, make an effort to establish relationships with people. When people know who you are and what you do, they'll know more about your business, how your freelance services can help them, and that you're available for hire.

Nurture a habit to network on a consistent, repetitious basis. You'll want people to become familiar with your face and recognize your presence at each gathering. Because many people seem passive at gatherings, try to make an effort to become active. Strike up conversations with people; pretend you're interested in what they're saying, even if you're not. Be a good, active listener.

Remember: conversations are the crux of effective networking. Simple one-on-one chatter allows the prospect to uncover more about you, and you're able to find out more about him, his hidden needs, and his hidden problems.

Networking should not be used for personal gain. You should not blatantly promote yourself to people, otherwise they'll begin to ignore you. Instead, strike up conversations with people and subtly sell yourself. When people begin to take an interest in you as a person, then they'll begin to take an interest as to how you can help them.

What You Need to Network Effectively

Business cards are often synonymous with networking: don't leave home without them. Pass your business cards out to any person who seems interested in your services. Business cards give prospects contact information and they keep your name and business fresh in their minds. If prospects are not interested in outsourcing work to you now, they'll at least have your business card on file to contact you in the future.

Networking Essentials

Always bring your business cards. Hand them out to anyone who might be interested in your services.

Instead of being the listener, become the speaker. Prepare a presentation related to your expertise and specialty in your field for a future meeting. Prospects will be impressed with your knowledge and skills and they'll want to hire you for their next project.

Offer a free report to the organization's members. Your free report should relate to your specialty that

offers professional advice. Again, prospects who'll read your free report will find you informative and insightful and will think about hiring you for their next project. See if you can get your free report mentioned in the organization's newsletter.

Distribute promotional and informational material. If you know that a certain meeting or workshop is related to your specialty, ask the speaker if he/she would like to distribute some of your free information to the audience at the end. This may include a free report, or an article that you've written, or your own business newsletter that contains useful tips and advice.

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Brian Konradt is a former freelance copywriter and graphic designer, and founder of

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business and creative sides of freelance writing.

Dish Network Smart Card

By Frank Johnson

In researching Dish Network as a satellite TV provider, you may have asked yourself...

Just what is the Dish Network Smart Card?

In an effort to combat signal piracy, satellite providers have faced quite a challenge: keep their broadcasting secure from unauthorized users while providing uninterrupted service to their base of subscribers.

For Dish Network, the result is the Smart Card.

In the past, Dish Network satellite receivers used a blue access card to assist with activation and programming setup. Those old blue cards have been replaced by new, yellow smart cards. And quite smart they are.

Already popular in European applications, the Smart Card is now starting to take off in the States as well. Used in credit cards, wireless communications and sensitive personnel identification, the Smart Card is becoming more prevalent as our dependence on technology grows.

The Dish Network Card is similar to the size and shape of a credit card. But that's where the similarities end. Unlike the magnetic strip on your credit card, the Dish Network Smart Card has a microprocessor

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inside. Where magnetic strips can be easily damaged, erased or worse, read, the microprocessor is much harder to crack, keeping sensitive information secure from prying eyes. The card reader in your satellite receiver actually talks to the microprocessor to determine what programming access you should have and make sure that programming is delivered to you on schedule. It also checks to see that the programming you're receiving is done through the receiver you purchased. This prevents any signal theft in the event your Smart Card is lost or stolen.

Another interesting feature of the new Dish Network Card is that it improves Dish Network's ability to manage your account through more accurate billing. The microprocessor keeps up with any premium programming you might purchase so you're only billed for what you actually watched.

To protect your Dish Network Card, keep it away from magnets and static electricity. The Smart Card should be inserted gently into the receiver ensuring the card is correctly positioned and free of any foreign materials.

I am first and foremost an observer of life. I enjoy analyzing and exploring all aspects of life on planet Earth, and expressing my personal perspective on the nitty gritty of it all. As a result of my observations, I have become a freelance writer.

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