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The Top Ten Rules of Effective Networking

By M.E. Callan

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by: **M.E. Callan**

Many of us are discouraged by the networking events that we go to. We feel swamped by people just looking to get money from us, and we rarely feel as though the event was worth our time.

Yet networking should be one of the best ways to bring in new business. The key is learning to network correctly.

Even those of us who enjoy networking should remember the following tried and true rules of effective networking.

1. Give, then Get.

If you approach a networking meeting with a "what's in it for me?" attitude, you will be just like all those sharks that have kept you away from networking to begin with. Go to a networking event looking for opportunities to help others. When you give this way, your "get" is always bigger.

2. Please, No Fishing.

Don't be that person who offers a cold, limp fish as a handshake instead of a firm grip. Loosen it up just a little for shaking a woman's hand, but never go soft. Otherwise, the people you meet will remember you not for all the great things you had to offer, but for your weak handshake.

3. Direct Eye Contact.

Don't ever stare at someone, but always make sure to meet his or her gaze. A person who continuously averts his will be seen as someone with something to hide.

4. Dress Professionally.

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The old adage about making a first impression is still true. As a rule of thumb, dress one step above what you think everyone else will be wearing. It can never hurt you to look as good as the next best dressed person in the room.

5. Have a 30 Second Commercial.

Have you ever met someone at a networking event, talked to them about their business the whole night, and left without knowing what in the world they do? It happens all the time. Remember to state clearly what it is that you do and who are looking to work with.

6. Write on Business Cards.

As you meet people, write information about them down on their business cards. It's virtually

impossible to remember all those little details about the people you meet, and no one will mind if you are so interested in what they have to say that you are taking the time to write it down.

7. Create a Cataloguing System.

As soon as you get back to your office, file your new business cards in an accessible way. I recommend that clients staple business cards to 3x5 cards and then write down all of the pertinent information you can. Include on the 3x5 the name of the person, where and when you met her, what she looks like, and what you talked about. Next time you see her, she will be very impressed that you remembered so many details.

8. Nice Meeting You Cards.

It is never a bad idea to send a new contact a quick card that says "nice meeting you." Include your business card as well in case they have misplaced the one you gave them at the networking event.

9. Follow Up!

This step is crucial. If you have told a contact that you would help them in any way, be sure to follow up immediately. Do this consistently, and you will be seen as a man of his word. Don't follow up on your promises, and you will be seen as unreliable and untruthful.

10. LISTEN.

The number one rule of networking is to listen. In fact, you should only be speaking about 30% of the time. We all love to talk about ourselves, and if you give your contacts the chance to do that they will think quite highly of you without even realizing why.

Following these rules of effective networking should not only make your experiences more enjoyable, but will help you bring in new business leads time and time again.

M.E. Callan is principal of Commonwealth Marketing, a firm that specializes in marketing for professional services. Recognized as an expert in the industry, Callan has been published nationwide and has been the featured speaker at national seminars. Find out more at Commonwealth Marketing.

Top Networking Marketing Opportunities - Is There Such A Thing?

By Vita V.

Top networking marketing opportunities, also known as multi-level marketing opportunities, run rampant on today's Internet. You've no doubt received some kind of solicitous e-mail or seen some kind of advertisement in the margins of a web site you've visited that talks about amazingly easy ways to earn thousands of dollars with a simple home based business.

The truth behind many of these "top networking marketing opportunities" is that they are using the sign-up fees from new members to pay dividends to existing members rather than actually generating any revenue from legitimate products and services. So no matter how much money they promise to make for you, if you can't see any discernable product or service of value involved in the opportunity, you can assume that this is one of those "top networking marketing opportunities" that is actually an out and out scam.

The truth is that for many of these top networking marketing opportunities, only one out of every fifty or a hundred people who get involved actually make the kind of returns that the opportunity dangles as a carrot in front of you. In fact, the actual numbers might be far less than this. It's never as simple as "pay for the secrets and start raking it in right away." Anyone who does make returns on these so-called top networking opportunities work hard to sign up plenty of other affiliates, many more than the "it's so easy" testimonials make it sound like you need.

When you come across one of the "top networking marketing opportunities" on the internet, guaranteed to help you retire and live easy within a year, be wary. Do your research and find out what people who have been involved in these opportunities actually have to say about their results. Make sure you research these opportunities on objective third party sites, not testimonials on the opportunity's home page. Keep your common sense, and good luck!

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Vita Vee.

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