

NETWORKING FOR HERMITS, BEGINNERS AND NEWBIES

How to Build Your Influence and Your
Business with Referral Marketing

By [Gregg Sterett](#), Executive & Life Coach

Sterett Enterprises LLC, Lewisville, TX

<http://www.GreatPeopleWorks.com>

Phone: 972-221-3504

TABLE OF CONTENTS

What and Why of Networking?

- Personal and Business Networking 3-7

"Networking is a Supportive System..." 8-15

- Networking Support Systems
- Goal Setting for Networking

"Sharing information & services among individuals" 16-24

- Specific, Strategic and Synergistic Referrals
- 30/60 Second Commercials & Elevator Speeches

Conversations and One-on One Meetings 25-29

- How to have them...
- How to build rapport quickly

Fostering and Leading a Networking Group 30-33

- Things to know before you start
- Considerations and Tips

Understanding Your Own and Others Business 34-38

- Who is Your Market & What are you Really Selling
- Problems-Solutions, Features-Advantages-Benefits

Marketing and Branding Yourself 39-46

- Who is in your mirror?
- You are what you do and say.
- How to rehearse and speak well.
- Be Your Brand.

Conclusion and Other Networking Resources 47-48

APPENDIX 49-55

What and Why of Networking?

According to Dictionary.com:

networking is a supportive system of sharing information and services among individuals

Personal Every Day Networking

When you carefully consider the above definition it means we all have the opportunity to network regularly; at work, at church, across the back fence, at our children's sports and extracurricular events, out on the street in our



neighborhoods. Many of our conversations tend to not be networking when we stick to trivial conversations about the weather, the speed with which grass grows and weeds appear, the new school gymnasium and so on. This does not need to be where we leave it. Instead of these idle conversations, that go on and on without going anywhere, like leaving your car running in park, we could be having better conversations by networking. Women generally network more effectively than men. They tell each other about sales they have heard about or a new shop or store, a special-priced product and so on. Men on the other hand, talk about sports, work, hobbies and their families and occasionally about information and services of value, usually when someone asks. So, here is the key "unless someone asks".

Take this concept further and you can see that you can be a more effective networker simply by asking more questions. Who do you know who...? Do you have any experience with...? Do you know where I can find a good...? I have a problem I'm trying to solve, do you mind if I tell you about it and get your ideas? What do you think about this...?

Since practice does make perfect, in order to become a more effective networker you should practice networking in your everyday, personal life, informally. It is a relatively safe environment to practice and hone your skills into becoming an experienced networker as part of your life.

So, how do you do this exactly? Every day or every week, make a list of three questions you would like the answer to. As you go through your day or week,

ask the people you come into contact with for their help or suggestions in finding a solution. For example, I have a problem with my Washing Machine. Every time, it empties the water it overflows onto the floor unless I stand by the Washing Machine and monitor it, turning it off for 10-15 seconds and then restarting it. I have to do this 4-5 times per load to keep water from running onto the floor and emptying the dirty water and rinse water for every load of laundry. I could simply call a plumber but first I thought I would experiment by asking people about this problem. I described it to four different people and got four somewhat different answers.

Answer 1: "Sounds like it's time to call a plumber."

Answer 2: "I had that problem once and found this gadget at Home Depot that you push down the drain pipe and it picks out any hair or fibers or other stuff that might be blocking the pipe. It only costs a dollar."

Answer 3: "I usually rely on liquid plumber or DRANO or one of those products to clear the pipes."

Answer 4: "It might be tree roots or something growing into the pipes, probably ought to call Roto Rooter or a good plumber".

After each answer I also asked if they knew a reliable plumber they could recommend and surprisingly they all did and two of them named the same person.

This is the power of networking. I now had a list of possible solutions, one of which involved a product I knew nothing about previously and a list of three plumbers who come recommended by my contacts.

How many problems or issues do you have on hold right now which you might resolve more quickly if you could get some free advice from your friends, neighbors and family?

Why Network?

ECCLESIASTES 4:9-12

Two are better than one,

because they have a good return for their labor:

If either of them falls down,

one can help the other up.

But pity anyone who falls

and has no one to help them up.

Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm.

But how can one keep warm alone?

Though one may be overpowered,

two can defend themselves.

A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

The power of networking is simply the synergy of two or more heads working together to resolve the same problem. If I am trying to solve a problem or accomplish a goal I will move more quickly, more efficiently and more effectively towards a solution or achievement if I can rely on the additional resources of others.

Inherent in this approach is the fact the networking is a two-way street, it must involve both give and take to be effective for both or all parties. If you take one strand out of a six strand piece of rope the entire rope is so weakened that it will tend to fall apart or wear out much faster. Practice giving to others as the first step in the law of reciprocity in order to enlist their help and assistance in helping you achieve your goals or solve your problems.

From Wikipedia: In social psychology, **reciprocity** refers to responding to a positive action with another positive action

The key to reciprocity is that you must not do something or perform some action with the idea that you are "entitled" to some return favor or benefit from the other person. This would be a "contract" where both parties have agreed to a relationship based on a "consideration" of money, products or services from each other. Networking is holding yourself out to help others with the hopes that they or others will also be holding themselves out to help you. In this fashion, it all starts with you helping others or asking for someone's help and usually offering them your help in return.

Business Networking

Business networking may be both formal and informal. Many people within the same company regularly network to exchange ideas about problem resolution, companies policies or a variety of other issues. Many people will often network with other people or



organizations through professional and social groups sharing information about problems and issues, barriers and challenges in order to find ideas and solutions that can be adapted to their environment. Process and Competitive Benchmarking is a formal way of networking between companies who want to understand how successful companies become successful in order to borrow or adapt some of their successful ideas to their own company.

Some groups are created exclusively for business networking and to advance the cause of business, commerce and trade. "The original chambers of commerce were founded in 1599 in France and Belgium. The world's oldest English speaking chamber of commerce is that of New York City, which was established in 1768." (Wikipedia). More recently business networking groups include the Executives Association of Great Britain EAGB.co.uk founded in 1929. BNI Business Networking International claims to be the world's largest business networking organization (www.bni.com). Today there is plethora of networking groups for almost any subject or interest. Some of the leading online companies for networking are MySpace, LinkedIn and MeetUp.com which helps people start and manage groups for practically any interest, activity or purpose. The social media site FACEBOOK.com allows people to build their own network of family and friends in order to network informally.

Add to that the thousands of other websites that offer opportunities for people to network in person or electronically, via webcam, chat rooms, tele-conferences and webinars, and unless you are a hermit, living in a cave hidden deep in the mountains of Pakistan many more of these services will become available via mobile phones in the future.

In reality, most day-to-day networking does not happen in a group but whenever two or more people have a conversation. That is the crux of networking, building relationships between people. Once you have begun to build a relationship with one person you have added a new resource to finding information and solving problems, but this person does not work for you. Therefore, you must help them first, "give of yourself to others so that reciprocity may become manifest." Okay, I said that, but it sounded so good I wanted to include it because the key to getting referrals is in giving them. You want to understand what every person you meet has to offer in the way of knowledge, talents, products or services so that you will be able to refer them to others and refer others to them. And, you want them to know you too.

If you are not clear in your mind and dialogues with others about what you offer, what are your strengths, knowledge and talents and what products and services you offer to others then you can hardly expect to be referred to others successfully. If no one knows what problems you have or what problems you solve they will probably not be calling you, so you need to network and you need to do it effectively.

In the next chapter we'll talk about your strengths, markets and services and how you communicate these things succinctly to others in order to become an effective networker.

Keep these points in mind:

Networking is give and take. Start by giving.

Be clear in what problems you solve and what you do. What stands out about your business or service? What makes you unique? Who needs this? Why do they need it? Who might I know that needs it?

Saying that you are the only person just like you doing it, is Okay, if you can share why or rather how "you" you are unique in making that difference.

Someone marketing deregulated electricity or seeking new associates can't sell better electrons, so they better be offering some higher level of personal commitment, customer service or assistance in order to add value to the product or the process.

"Networking is a Supportive System..."

This is the key to successful networking, a supportive system. While it is one thing to informally network which can be done anytime with anyone in a one on one setting to become a master of networking you must have a systematic way of supporting your networking efforts. A good support system will include the following at minimum:



A way to easily capture, retain, update and access information you accumulate about individuals with whom you network, their profession or business and their goals and dreams.

"What, you mean I have to know their goals? I'm not even sure about my own goals. How am I supposed to know theirs? And dreams, how am I supposed to know those? "

The answer is that as part of your networking support system you ask the right questions and capture the right information when you do have an opportunity to network with people. Most of the time, if you are networking with other professional networkers they will tell you what they are trying to accomplish and exactly who they are looking for in ways that you can easily refer someone to them. They will often give you clear indicators when they introduce themselves or provide a 30 or 60-second commercial introduction in networking groups. In addition, having short one-on-one personal or over-the-phone meetings with people you meet is an excellent way for you both to exchange information about what you are hoping to accomplish. Then you have to be sure this information is retained in your support system.

A good networking support system will allow you to capture a personal contact information for phone, email, physical address, business name, website, personal notes and other information that makes it easy for you to refer them to others and to refer people to them. It will also easily let you add and update information about the referrals you have made, subsequent meetings or referrals received from them. An ideal networking support system will also allow you to manage your networking contacts and evaluate progress and even the revenues and profits generated from each networking contact or referral.

"That sounds like a lot of work. Why would I want all that?"

Every good business person knows that you want to continually understand what works in growing your business, where your revenues and profits are coming from and how to replicate, improve and grow these sources. While your customers may actually pay you for your products and services, effective networking is one way you continually fill the 'sales funnel' with new prospects for your business. If David is giving you ten referrals every month and 80% of them turn out to be buying customers, while Nina is giving you twenty referrals per month but only one out of twenty is becoming a customer, then it might seem that David is a better referral source.

However, the next step in an ideal networking support system would be to track how much each successful referral means to you in terms of business. At this point you find that the successful referrals from David are each producing on average \$3,000 in new business which means you are growing your business by (8 x \$3,000 = \$24,000). But, the one referral each month from Nina is a \$50,000 customer, so even though most of the referrals from Nina are not working out, that one in twenty produces twice the revenue of David's referrals. Both Nina and David are important to your business and knowing where your customers are coming from and their potential for purchasing your goods and services is a sound business strategy to help you manage and grow your business.

Even more important, how are you helping David and Nina? While they might have as much faith in the law of reciprocity as you do, if you are not providing important referrals to them how long do you think they will continue to provide referrals to you? Are you thanking them publicly at networking meetings? Are you inviting them to your open house, parties or arranging introductions for them? Are you providing them other incentives to continue providing referrals to you, perhaps giving them discounts or free services or gifts?

Now that we know how much David and Nina mean to your business, why not expand your networking searches to find more people or professions just like David and Nina that you can groom into becoming good referral sources for you. Without a good networking support system, unless you have a photographic memory it will be more difficult for you to become a truly effective networker. If you have been thinking as you read you have probably already realized that you are not just capturing contact information when you network you are actually managing networking relationships. This is what all successful networkers have mastered. They manage their relationships effectively. Below are some resources to help you.

Below are a few examples of good relationship management software tools.

You might want to check here:

<http://sales.about.com/od/leadgeneration/a/freecrmsoftware.htm>

for free online customer relationship management software tools.

The advantage of using some of these which are often free to a single user is that as your business expands or you add personnel, you can buy or expand your usage and link all the individual users into a complete company system allowing you to more effectively manage your sales. This keeps you from needing to reload data history or reenter it a second time, etc.

SOFTWARE YOU CAN PURCHASE:

Microsoft Outlook with Business Contact Manager

<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/business-contact-manager-help/>

Microsoft Dynamics CRM Online (offers a free 30-day trial)

<http://crm.dynamics.com/online>

Sage ACT

<http://offer.act.com/2011/>

Frontrange GOLDMINE

<http://www.frontrange.com/software/crm/goldmine/>

SALESFORCE

<https://www.salesforce.com/crm/products.jsp>

Carefully compare and check out any system before you buy.

Network with other people and successful small companies or entrepreneurs and see how they manage their sales pipeline, customer relationships and contacts. Also talk to current users of the software to see what their experience has been, any difficulties, training requirements or other issues. Can you use the system on your smart phone? Will you need other hardware to use it effectively? How easy is it use and update and portability of information.

One of the most effective networkers I know fills his day with contacts, either in person or over the phone. He has a secretary to support him and an office which puts him in the center of the business territory he is targeting for his financial consulting business which is driven 100% from networking. He keeps

records of every contact he has made and can sort his contact information based on this. He tracks how much each person means to him personally in the way of investments as well as referrals he has received from various contacts and what those referrals/relationships have meant to his business. He then uses this information to stay in touch with people who are prospective and current customers and continually moves people between lists as follows:

- A Current customers and good referral sources.
- B High Prospect Potential - Will probably be a customer within six months and a good referral source. Also, new referrals*.
- C Medium prospect potential, needs more information and might become a prospect or referral source within six months.
- D Low prospect potential, former customers and contacts who have not been contacted in the past six months.
- E Customers or companies who have gone out of business, moved out of the area, deceased or have little to no prospect potential.

*** Note that new referrals are put in high category until they have been contacted and further qualified as to their potential to become customers.**

Isn't this cold, putting everyone into various categories based on their potential for revenues? No, remember this is business networking. This is managing a business and managing your contacts and customers. Undoubtedly, some of the people on these lists will also become close friends. Some will become de facto business partners because they are strategic referrals or synergistic referrals (we'll define these shortly). Some will become golf buddies or dinner guests at each other's homes. However, from the standpoint of your business, you need to manage all of your business contacts in order to effectively manage your time, your prospecting, your customer relationships and your sales (and your life). This is simply smart business and part of your networking support system. Even if you do not rely on networking or personal referral marketing to grow your business (and that's practically impossible since the growth of the internet means people will be networking online about you and your business whether you participate or not); you will still need to manage your customer relationships if you expect to grow your business.

Goal Setting for Networking

All successful businesses and successful people set goals, even the ones that win the lottery bought a ticket with that goal in mind. However, when you buy a lottery ticket there is little else you can do to improve your odds except buy more tickets and even then, the odds are heavy that you will not win. In the real world you can set goals and plans to achieve them.

To begin business networking without goals is like going to a lot of ice cream socials. You might run into someone who can be helpful to you but if you are talking about ice cream instead of business the only thing you will get out of the event is fatter or Type II Diabetes.

You should set specific goals for networking with the end result in mind and as one aspect of your business promotion. It should fit with your overall goals for your business.

For example, let's say you are starting out in the business of selling behavioral assessments to companies to help improve their talent retention and reduce employee turnover by selecting, promoting and coaching their employees more effectively. To make a living doing this you find that you must sell \$300,000 (retail value) of assessments every year in order for you to make \$100,000 gross revenues for your business. Based on your experience and discussions with others in the business you determined you must sell at least \$6,250 worth of assessments every week on average in order to make a living in this business. This is your minimum goal. You have further determined that to do this you need at least five new paying customers every week, each purchasing an average of \$1,610 worth of assessments.

Starting out you have set a goal of contacting 20 customers per day using a cold calling technique and a cultured list of business owners and HR Manager in your targeted area.



You found that out of every 20 customers contacted this way you were able to arrange a personal appointment with two, which is ten face-to-face meetings per week. Out of every ten customers you visit with in person, you are able to close six trial sales of assessments and out of every trial sale 50% of these customers became a regular customer, or three per week, which is two short of your minimum goal.

At this point, you can increase the number of cold calls per day or you add other ways of bringing customers to you or introducing you to customers. Networking is one way. Advertising, internet marketing, seminar and speaking engagements, etc. are other ways you should also consider but right now we are only going to discuss networking goals.

Networking takes time and resources, commuting to/from networking locations, buying lunches or dinners, arranging one-on-one meetings with people, giving referrals and following up on referrals you get. Therefore, you should set networking goals for yourself to make sure this is a productive and useful effort. And then, use networking time wisely.

Following our example above, you are now setting a Networking goal of having a face-to-face meeting based on a warm referral with at least ten more customers per week in order to generate three more paying customers per week exceeding your minimum weekly goal by one. If you are relying on networking then you find that you must get at least twelve warm introductions to people every week or 2.2 per day, in order to get ten appointments, close six trial sales and get three more customers, one more than the minimum you need to stay in business.

So, how would you do this? One way is to find a networking group to attend everyday in a different part of your geographic target area. This allows you to meet more people, promote your business in more places and have more one on ones with new people and give and get more referrals. So you find the meetings and you set a goal of having one-on-one meetings with at least three people per day from each networking group every week and giving and getting at least twelve warm referrals per week.

If you don't have a goal in mind everyday and a way to hold yourself accountable and measure your progress you might be spinning your wheels going to networking meetings while you go out of business.

In order to succeed in business you must want to do so. Your networking goals must line up with your business goals and they must line up with your personal values and goals for your life. If they don't you will be experiencing goal or value conflicts and find it difficult to move in any direction. So, start

with your life goals and what you value most. If you need help get a Life Coach to get you started. Also, check out the **VALUES** exercise in the APPENDIX. You are never too old to reassess your life goals, where you are and where you would like to be. Many people don't realize that when they leave one job or retire or go through a divorce that they should reassess their life goals. Major changes in your life require you to reassess things and establish new goals. It is a healthy process but if you don't know where you are going, there's no telling where you'll end up.

Why not set a goal of becoming an expert networker?

Start here by reading this book:

"never eat alone" by Keith Ferrazzi with Tahl Raz. "The Ultimate Networker Reveals How to Build a Lifelong Community of Colleagues, Contacts, Friends and Mentors, Published by Doubleday, 2005.

Here's a few other ideas to make those networking meetings effective and help you meet your goals.

Tips: Take coupons, Specials, Brochures and plenty of Business Cards and ask people to pass them on to their friends, vendors or other contacts who might have an interest in your service or to their referral partners.

Always thank people publicly and in person for referrals you receive.

Always follow-up on all referrals as soon as possible. A warm referral turns cold very quickly and reduces your chances of getting another one from that person.

Remember to give in order to receive. Use information learned from those cold calls and customer meetings you had to refer others. This is another way of staying in touch with prospective customers, showing them that you are still thinking of them and demonstrating your ability to network with others for their benefit. It increases your value to any potential customer as a business connection, plus it helps someone else expand their business. It's a WIN³ arrangement.

Use the telephone to stay in touch with people, conduct one on one meetings and make warm referrals. Even if you provide an email introduction

exchanging business cards and so on, give the people a quick call to make sure they got it.

Be assertive and outgoing in your networking. Go out of your way to meet people, greet people as they enter the room, shake hands, ask them about their business. Arrive early, stay late and meet as many people as possible. Find out what they do and arrange one-on-ones.

Be prepared for meetings and to participate in order to leave a positive impression on the group.

Don't be afraid to ask for a referral or give a referral. Sometimes, you just need to ask, but be clear in who you would like to meet. We'll cover that more in the next section. You need to make it clear so most people will easily have a name come to mind.

Networking is

"... sharing information and services among individuals"

If anything could be described as the heart of networking this is it. It's all about sharing both information and services. "You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours", so start scratching backs. There are almost limitless numbers of networking groups but here are some ideas to help you find a networking group that works for you.



First, decide who is your ideal customer and ideal referral. Who do you want to meet? I've been to hundreds of networking group meetings and almost always hear someone say I want to meet somebody with money or somebody with kids. Sometimes, they make the biggest mistake most new networkers make and try to sell to the roomful of people present. Networking is not about who in the room might become customers. If any of the people in the room have an interest in your product or service they will probably tell you without you trying to sell them something on the spot. Making a sale in a single 30 to 60 second commercial successfully is very difficult unless you are offering something so full of value or heavily discounted that people begin to wonder if it will really work. Think of the "RONCO" ads on TV for Japanese cutlery or bamboo steamers, where they keep adding more stuff to the basic purchase if you call NOW. They usually air hundreds of times before the "gotta-have-that" gene is stimulated to make an impulse purchase.

Specific Referrals for Potential Customers - When you are looking for referrals you need to be very specific and describe your likely referral in a way that people will be able to instantly think of someone who fits the description. For example, if you are a pool maintenance company you might say you would like to meet "your friend or neighbor who has a swimming pool so you can clean it out for free". Then, people will think of who they know who has a swimming pool in their neighborhood or from their mental list of "friends" and provide you a referral. The "clean it out for free" is simply that you will offer their friend or neighbor from this referral one free pool cleaning or something of

value. This is a further encouragement for them to give you a name since their friend or neighbor will be offered something for free and be grateful.

If you were a financial planner you might be looking for friends and relatives of someone who will be retiring within the next ten years or has recently changed jobs from one company to another. Putting your desired referral in these easy to relate to words will make it easier for people to supply you with a name. Who do you know who was recently laid off, fired or quit a job?

Strategic Referrals for Your Business - A strategic referral is someone who is often selling some other product to the same people you would like to have as a customer. For example, someone who is offering pool maintenance services to a customer might be a good strategic referral for someone from Ignite/Stream Energy who is offering a discounted electricity program as a result of energy deregulation since people with pools are often also paying higher electricity bills for filtration and lighting systems in their pool.

If you were a CPA specializing in helping seniors transition into retirement and minimize taxes you might find that a Financial Planner is a good strategic referral, or perhaps a referral to a specialist in Reverse Mortgages could be helpful for some clients and as a referral source.

Who sells other products or services to your ideal customer? First, you must understand what an ideal customer looks like so be sure to read the chapter on "Who is Your Market and What Are you Selling?"

Synergistic Referral Partners for Your Business - A synergy partner is someone who sells a similar but different product to your customers. For example, the person selling discounted plans for electricity might find someone in a lighting store to be a good synergy partner. Perhaps a better synergy partner would be a company who specializes in installing outside lights, walkway lighting, etc. The addition of new lighting might be viewed as a negative due to potentially higher electricity bills but your discounted energy plan or perhaps completely offset the increased usage.

If you were marketing a high-end water filtration system that not only removed impurities and particulates from the water but restored ph balance, then a good synergy partner might be contractors and remodelers of kitchens as well as others who talk to customers about their health and wellness. Remember the important point is to be as specific as possible in terms that someone can easily understand and relate to. Saying you want to meet health practitioners is much too broad. Saying you would like to meet a "Naturopathic Specialist " or a "Chiropractor who specializes in weight loss systems" might be more helpful.

Sharing information & seeking Referrals

in a 30 or 60 second Commercial

Example of a 60 second commercial:

Do you know how some businesses struggle with finding, hiring and keeping good talent for their business? I help companies match prospective employees to the actual jobs in their company and provide training and coaching services to ensure they succeed.

My name is Gregg Sterett and my company is Sterett Enterprises, where we maximize the Return on Investment of your greatest asset, your people. We are on the WEB at GreatPeopleWorks.com. With over 30 years experience for a Fortune 200 corporation I'm now dedicated to help small and medium-sized businesses become more successful.

Today, I'm looking for referrals to your Family Doctor or Specialist. Please write their name on the back of one of your business cards and pass it to me. I'll follow up with you for their details.

For referrals that lead to closed business I am also providing one free personal strengths assessment for you or someone you designate.

Thank you.

Example of a 30 second commercial:

Do you know how some businesses struggle with hiring and keeping good talent for their business? I help companies match prospective employees to the actual jobs in their company and provide training and coaching services to ensure they succeed.

My name is Gregg Sterett and my company is Sterett Enterprises, on the web at GreatPeopleWorks.com.

Today, I'm looking for a referral to your Family Doctor or Specialist.

Please write their name on the back of your business card and pass it to me.

I also provide one free strength assessment to people who give me referrals that lead to closed business.

Dissecting the 30 and 60 second Commercial

There are six parts to every commercial

- 1) Statement of the problem your business or service solves.
- 2) Statement of how you solve these problems.
- 3) Authority by which you provide this solution and your Unique Business Proposition or Unique Benefit.
- 4) Ideal specific referral you are seeking today.
- 5) Who am I and how can you contact me.
- 6) Incentive for referrals, Specials or Announcement. (Optional)

Step One - Your statement of the problem should be stated in clearly understandable terms and easy to relate to by your audience. The K.I.S.S. principles applies "Keep It Simple & Short".

Example for a Physics Tutor:

Wrong Way: Do you know how when the smaller a nanoparticle gets, the larger its relative surface area becomes and its electronic structure changes dramatically which could lead to aggressive chemical reactivity? (This is the Oh Boy, look how smart I am approach. Unless this is network of Physics Professors, probably nobody in the room knows the importance of this.)

Right Way: Do you know how many students struggle with physics and general science courses which are required for many degrees but also want to keep their grade point averages high to improve job prospects? (This is clear and concise and most people can understand the importance of the problem,)

Step Two - Your statement of how you solve these problems and how they benefit the customer should also be short and simple.

Wrong Way: These and other physics properties, issues and laws can be learned more effectively with a physics tutor like me who can help students prepare more effectively for exams and improve their grades. (This basically says you help people become more effective and improve grades; so what?)

Right Way: Well, as a Physics tutor I provide expert guidance and tutelage for these students so they can excel and maintain higher grade point averages which has been shown to improve their chances of getting better jobs. (Here we are not only improving grades but getting better jobs as result. Everybody can identify with that.)

Step Three - Provide a statement about how you are credible to provide this service. What makes you an authorized dealer, franchised-owner, certified, licensed, trained, degreed or experienced to do this. Also, what is unique about your business or your services that provide distinct advantages and benefits to doing business with you. A Unique Business Proposition, or Unique Sales Proposition is exactly that; a statement of what makes you different from someone else in my next networking group who does the exact same thing? This is vitally important to your being able to differentiate your business from other businesses and will be covered more thoroughly in the chapter on "Who is Your Market and What are You Really Selling".

Wrong Way: I have a PhD in Physics, have taught Physics courses over the past fifteen years and have a sincere interest in ensuring your students succeed. (This does not indicate you have actually 'tutored' anyone or been successful in your field, although you are well-educated and experienced.)

Right Way: My fifteen years teaching and tutoring experience on top of my Doctorate in Physics and practical experience in Nanotechnology experimentation gives me both an educational and practical knowledge and understanding of everything a student needs to know about physics to be successful. (The education, teaching and practical experience has been combined to form a synergy suggesting you will actually help the student become successful.)

Step Four - Ideal referral you are seeking today. It is a good practice to often change exactly what kind of referral you are seeking in order to increase your chances of getting more referrals that you can use from more people. Keep in mind, that referrals and closed business will sometimes come from a friend of a friend of a friend, so want as many of these friends as possible. When it comes to networking, you want people talking about you behind your back as long as it is positive talk.

Wrong Way: I'd like to meet your children and the children of your friends who are in High School or College and are struggling with Physics. (Many parents with students in college don't know if they are struggling with Physics until the grades come out, if then, therefore most people would not know if their friends kids are struggling or whether or not they are taking Physics. If they are already struggling it may be too late to make much difference in grades).

Right Way: I'd like to meet your friend and relatives who have children in High School and College so that I can share some information about my services. Please write their name on your business card and pass it to me. (This opens the door to an introduction to people with children and some of them are bound to take Physics sooner or later, or know other parents with children. By providing this information to parents in advance you stand a better chance of being contacted sooner rather than later and stress the point that they want to simply plan on using your services to improve grades.)

Step Five - Share who you are, your company or business and how people should contact you.

Wrong Way: My name is Barney Fountain and I live at 8117 Kensington Drive in Carrollton, Texas, 75006 and you can call me at: 972-435-6345 or email me at: Barney.Fountain77@yahoo.com. I don't have a website yet but I'm going to get one real soon and I'm waiting on business cards. (Unprofessional and too detailed).

Right Way: I'm Barney Fountain, my company is Physics R EZ and we are on the web at PhysicsREZ.com. I put out some business cards up at the front, please feel free to pick some up to give to your friends or stop by and see me after the meeting. (If you have something to offer then market your services like any other business, don't shortchange yourself.)

Step Six - This step is always optional depending on how much time you have and what you have said previously but you can include a step to mention incentives for referrals or Specials you are offering or Business Announcements such as inviting people to a ribbon-cutting or open-house. Good sense suggests you choose just one of these items to include in order to stay within the 30 or 60 time guidelines. As always, keep it short and simple.

Right Way: As an incentive for referrals I will give you a \$25 gift card for each of your referrals who purchases three or more tutoring sessions from me.

PRACTICE FORM FOR YOUR OWN THIRTY SECOND COMMERCIAL

Problem:

My Solution:

My Unique Business Proposition:

My Ideal Referral today:

How to Contact me & My Company:

Incentive - Announcement - Specials:

Elevator Speeches and Cocktail Introductions

You will often find yourself in a situation where just for a few brief seconds someone will ask you what you do or after you ask them they will ask you. This is an opportunity to provide them the first two steps of your commercial message and give them a business card if they would like more information.

For Example:

What do you do?

"Most companies only have two opportunities to get great people working for them. Either they hire them the first time or they coach the people they already have. My company GreatPeopleWorks.com helps them do both. Here is my card. Can I get one of yours?"

This short version of a 30 second commercial describes the problem companies have and how you help them solve that problem. It also introduces your company website and offers up a business card with a request for one of theirs. Something this short but focused can result in an introduction to that individual or perhaps a follow-up call and further discussion and perhaps, a referral. Sometimes it might even lead to business.

Never underestimate the power of synchronicity, (for more see: Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synchronicity>). Someone you meet in an elevator, on a plane or a train may turn out to be a great contact. Stranger things have happened.

The pattern for a short introduction of this type is simply the first two steps of you thirty or sixty second commercial and the fifth step.

What problem do you solve:

What is your solution to this problem:

How can I contact you or your company:

TIPS:

Once you have written out various versions of your commercial messages you should memorize them and rehearse them in front of a mirror so you become comfortable saying them, smiling and generating enthusiasm and integrity. You want your messages to sound professional but natural and honest. By practicing them, when you stand up in front of a group of two, ten or a thousand people you will still be comfortable saying them because you have trained yourself to know what to say.

Avoid telling someone all of your talents and everything you can do. Talk about the one thing or primary focus of your current business, product or service. You may have 40 years experience and done a wide variety of jobs with a long list of accomplishments. Unfortunately, nobody but your Mother and the IRS can remember them all so don't expect someone else to either.

Make a stronger impression by having a singularity of purpose.

What do you do? I help people hire and retain great employees.

If you can't describe yourself and your business in under 30 seconds how can you possibly expect other people to refer or recommend you to someone else?

How to Have a Conversation and a Successful One on One Meeting

A conversation is a dialogue, not a monologue. That's why there are so few good conversations: due to scarcity, two intelligent talkers seldom meet.

...Truman Capote

In Networking having a one-on-one meeting is often considered critical to forming a relationship but too often the time is wasted. Many people new to networking mistakenly think this is an opportunity to make a sales presentation, or flip through a notebook of brochures and visual aids that describe all the details of their business. Nothing could be further from the truth. You are not trying to sell the other person, train the other person to go forth as your emissary into the world or to operate as your sales agent. In a good one-on-one meeting you are trying to build a relationship with the other person. You want to understand three things:

- who the other person is with whom you are meeting, their background, whom they are as a person.
- what their business delivers and what makes it unique and who are good referrals for them.
- how you can help them meet their goals.
-

Again, keeping it simple and short is the best rule. If you need a form or list of questions to accomplish this you can use the one in the **Appendix** called **One on One Networking Form**.

The key challenge in having an effective conversation is listening. Most of us are so busy thinking about what was already said or what we are going to say next we fail to listen. It is important to listen actively to the other person but not allow them to get into monologue. Force them to have a conversation by asking direct questions and carefully listening to their answers. More importantly, care about their answers. If someone tells you they "have been trying to launch a business but it has been a rocky start and next week it won't

matter anyway," stop to ask them exactly what they meant by that. You don't want to recall them having said that in this conversation next week when you read in the papers about finding their body. Networking is, after all, about forming relationships which are limited friendships initially, but they are still friendships. If you are not willing to be friends with people don't network.

When listening demonstrate you are listening by adjusting your body language to match theirs. You are trying to establish rapport which is defined as being in sync with or on the same wavelength as the other person. If you are all hyper and squirmy and they are relaxed and meditative you are both out of sync, but it is your responsibility as half of the communication process to "get in sync". Once you get in sync with the other person then you are in a position to lead them but first you must get in sync. It is important to do this quickly when you first meet someone in order to create a good first impression, because first impressions do last and are hard to change.

Here are a few tips on how to build rapport and have a successful one on one:

- Always look professional and dress to the image you aspire to be.
- Observe and follow their body language and gestures.
- Adjust your temperament to match theirs.
- Listen carefully and give them reasonable eye contact.
- Avoid the temptation to interrupt, criticize or argue.
- Use open-ended questions to gather information about them and their business.
- Use closed-ended questions to direct the conversation in directions you choose.
- Clarify meaning and statements if they are unclear to you.
- Check for their understanding when sharing concepts and strategies they may not be familiar with.
- Restate things using their key words and phrases. This shows you are listening and helps build rapport.
- Be mindful of your own body language, when what we say and what our body language is saying do not match, most people will follow our body language.

- Do not dominate the conversation, draw them out and ask questions to ensure they are remaining active in the conversation.
- At the end of the one-on-one you should both know more about each other's business and be comfortable in providing each other helpful referrals.
- Promote your own credibility by offering examples of successful clients, business successes and anecdotes that help people understand what you do and how it helps others. Stories are easy remembered.

How to Uncover Individual Needs

Because we are always dealing with people in networking situations it is important to understand their individual needs. When we understand their needs we can understand their motivations and we can better help them meet their needs. So, what kinds of needs are we talking about?

Obviously, most people work in order to have their needs satisfied by earning money to pay for the things that provide basic needs like a home, food, security, safety and so on. Once our basic needs are satisfied, however, people have higher needs that drive their behavior and some of these needs will tend to become dominant. Here are important needs:

Power - The need to be in charge, to have power over self, systems and others, to be a leader and above others ability to impact you negatively.

Achievement - The need to create or accomplish something, to see results and changes to build a list of accomplishments and achievements.

Recognition - To be recognized as knowledgeable, adept, as the go-to guy, to be selected as leader, to get a pat on the back, applause, a trophy.

Affiliation - The need to belong, to be a part of something greater than oneself, to be a member in good standing, a team member, part of an organization that is accomplishing things you alone could not.

Order - To have structure and order and logic in systems and processes. To have things organized so that they line up, balance and fit together in a logical sequence. To ensure things happen in a logical fashion.

Safety - The need to stay healthy, balanced, out of harm's way, avoiding hidden pitfalls and traps, foreseeing disaster and avoiding it successfully.

In your conversations with others and one-on-one meetings you will be able to hear the adjectives and words they use to describe themselves and their business. When they talk about their goals they will use words that also tell you what their underlying individual needs are. This is why you must develop a carefully trained ear to listen closely to what others are saying. The more you practice this level of attentive listening the better you will find yourself becoming at picking up on these cues and indications of the individual needs that drive their behavior.

Likewise, you must learn to listen and ask intelligent questions. Ask open-ended questions to encourage people to tell you more about themselves and closed-ended questions to confirm your understanding, clarify something that was said or when you want a yes or no answer.

In addition to managing the rain off your roof can you tell me more about what you expect from a new rain gutter? Yes, I want gutters that look good, the colors should match the house colors and adds value to the house. I plan to sell this house next year and am building another.

Why would we want to understand individual needs?

Because that enables you to better understand people and to help them get what they need. It also begins to help you understand their buying motives and anticipate what kinds of concerns they will have about the things they purchase. For example, a person with a strong safety need may want to know that a home worker is bonded, insured and passed a criminal background check before hiring them; while a person with a strong need for power might want to work out the details in advance as to exactly how much it

will cost, what level of quality will be provided, what will happen if they are dissatisfied and so on. Of course, in any situation a prudent person might want to know all of these things but some points will be more important to them based on their individual needs.

Here are some open-ended questions you can practice using. Listen closely to peoples answers to these questions and you will learn much about the people you meet. How would you answer these questions?

1. Tell me about your background and experience in this line of work.
2. What qualifies you to offer this service?
3. Who might I know that would be a good contact for you?
4. If you had your choice of being a great athlete or a brilliant scientist which would you prefer and why?
5. If you were to pick a wild animal, a tree and a pet that most exemplify you, what would you pick and why?
6. If someone was to leave you two million dollars (after taxes) on the condition that you give half of it away today what would you do with that half? What would you do with the other half?
7. How many animals of each species did Moses load onto the Ark?
(Ah-ha, Moses didn't load any animals, it was Noah, just wanted to see how close you were listening [or reading].)

One of the best ways to find out how people make buying decisions is to ask them "What was the process you used last time you purchased something like this?" This answer will reveal exactly how they process these kinds of decisions and what mental process they use to evaluate products and services.

Use other carefully crafted questions to help you better understand your referral contacts and your customers. Validate some of your observations by asking them to choose between different outcomes, such as: "Would you rather be in charge of a company or a one of its' best executives. "

Also, ask people questions about their childhood, background, upbringing and so on. This is where they become unique individuals to you and often where you can hear important underlying messages about them and their needs.

Avoid imagining you know what they are thinking. Mind reading doesn't work. Believe only what you hear and see. Add notes about your observations to your relationship management system for later reference.

Fostering and Leading a Networking Group



While it is one thing to participate in a networking group it is much more time-consuming to lead one. First, let's look at some of the common forms of networking groups.

Networking for Hire: These are groups where you pay to belong to them, they may have rigid criteria to join and to remain a member in good

standing. Depending on the group you might even have to pass a background check although this is not common.

Open and Closed Groups: Some groups are open or closed by professional category meaning they may allow only one or more of particular type of business, such as one CPA or one Real Estate Agent for the group. Competitors are not allowed to join and may not be allowed to attend as a guest in some cases or if allowed to attend they may not be allowed to speak; if their category has already been filled. In order to fill a category someone might need to meet other criteria. For example, I 'm a CO-FOUNDER of a group called **Networking at Vista Ridge Lewisville** (<http://www.meetup.com/Networking-at-Vista-Ridge/>). In order to become a member someone must attend five meetings, bring five guests, and perform five one-on-one meetings - one each with each of the five founders. This group also has an annual maintenance fee of \$50/year and an attendance policy requirement for weekly meetings of 75%. Once the criteria has been met a member has "locked in" their profession in this group providing they remain in compliance with requirements. The advantages to a member are simply that in this networking group they have no competitors but it does not guarantee referrals. In this group referrals are encouraged and fostered but not required.

In some groups referrals are required and entry requirement may be more difficult such as seven meetings, seven guests, seven one-on-ones with members and a monthly referral quota. Likewise, some groups track referrals and how much business resulted from them by member and organization.

Still other groups offer software systems to help members manage networking, referrals and to track business, usually available at an additional cost or as a requirement of membership.

Another networking group I have regularly facilitated is a monthly networking group which is a ministry of the [Cathedral of Hope](#) in Dallas. The [Cathedral Business Network](#) <https://www2.cathedralofhope.com/cathedral-business-network> is generally a small group of 15-25 active members. Some are affiliated with the church but many are not. The monthly meetings are open to anyone and no professions are excluded. Membership is a small annual fee and meetings usually include luncheons and a spotlight speaker from the membership in addition to ample networking opportunities and an exchange of business tips all within a Christian atmosphere but not limited to those of the Christian faith.

All groups have a group leader and/or Facilitator and may have other Executive or Administrative positions including a Treasurer or Sergeant of Arms. To facilitate a networking group it helps to have some experience leading diverse groups and managing disruptive activities or individuals. A key point for any leader is to ensure a safe, respectful environment is maintained and that rude, aggressive or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated.

Considerations for forming a networking group within a company or across organizations or a public networking group may differ widely depending upon the purpose of the group. So, here we will focus only on public networking groups but before that there is one other kind of Networking that is well worth mentioning and that is "Master Mind Groups".

A growing number of networking groups are "MASTERMIND" groups a concept popularized by Adam Smith in his book "Think and Grow Rich", an international Best Seller that is still relevant today. It is based on subjective research, interviews and observations of a number of wealthy and successful individuals referred to him by Andrew Carnegie who wanted the study made to identify the common traits and characteristics that made people successful and rich. In a Mastermind group the participants generally take turns focusing on one individual, business or topic of interest and sharing what they are doing that has been successful for them so that others may learn and replicate their efforts in their own business, or conversely, the members will focus on one

individuals problems and challenges or barriers and propose various remedies or considerations for solutions or removal of barriers. In all cases the power of networking and the synergy of teamwork is used to make quantum improvements in performance and results. One of the key ingredients of successful Master Mind groups is accountability. Members are accountable to each other to provide feedback on their efforts and to follow-up on the ideas or actions provided or explain why they were not to the group. In this way the group both encourages and holds others accountable to become successful. It is a constantly changing learning laboratory with a shared vision of success that more groups should emulate.

Before forming a new group

Ask yourself these questions about the creation of the group.

Who/What/When/Where/Why and How

- ✓ Who is likely to want to join such as group?
- ✓ Who is the target audience or participants?
- ✓ What do they share in common?
- ✓ Why are you creating this group?
- ✓ What do you hope to accomplish?
- ✓ What will members do in a typical meeting?
- ✓ What will be the criteria to joining this group?
- ✓ Who will keep track of members and membership?
- ✓ When and how often will this group meet?
- ✓ Where will the group meet?
- ✓ Will there be dues, fees or other costs in joining the group?
- ✓ Who will handle the money or pay the bills?
- ✓ Will it be a closed or open group or restricted in some way?
- ✓ How will the group be paid for if there are costs for food, space, audio-visual services, parking, etc.?
- ✓ How will it be advertised? How will I find out about it?
- ✓ How will people become members
- ✓ What if the Organizer is ill or out-of-town?
- ✓ Will the group be on meetup.com or Craig's List?

TIPS:

Many restaurants have meeting space and encourage meetings but vary widely in how they handle regular meetings, charges for space, minimum purchase requirements and so on. Some require contracts. It pays to shop around and choose a facility that is a reasonable accommodation for the group and equivalent with the caliber of the individuals you expect to attract to the group. A luncheon meeting for a group in a private room at Morton's will appeal to a distinctly different socio-economic group than the same meeting to be held at Denny's and will generate different costs and membership.

Sometimes finding restaurants that do most of their business in the evenings will allow you to take advantage of unused meeting space with a luncheon meeting or vice versa.

The more details and rules, procedures you establish for the group the more difficult it will become to manage and the less appealing to some people. The least restrictions and processes you impose which will still create an effective group that fulfills its purpose the better and the greater the vitality of your group.

Expect turnover in your group. Many people change businesses and move into and out of employment. Sometimes interpersonal conflicts cause members to leave or simply logistics or they find other groups that fit their schedule or purposes better. There are always more people looking for successful groups and a certain percentage of every group will have people who have a high need for affiliation.

For examples of successfully proven networking exercises you can use in your group or modify for your group see the APPENDIX, as well as the sample Networking Group Agenda.

One of the features of the Networking at Vista Ridge Lewisville group has been to have four meeting formats each month. These include meetings for open networking, spotlight presentations, guest speakers, mastermind sessions and theme meetings. Another Dallas group called NetWeavers tends to have a repetitive format that doesn't change from week-to-week.

Create your own format and find what works for your group. Your ideas might catch on with other groups.

Understanding Your Own and Others Business

Many people focus on what they do instead of what they provide to their customers. One of my friends was struggling with his landscaping business and failing to close sales. He had worked hard on preparing competitive price lists for lawn maintenance, tree removal, cleaning flower beds, planting gardens and building new gardens among other things but people were hesitant to hire his company. I asked him to come over to my house and look at my yard and tell me what he could do for me. What he did was tell me what I needed done right now, trimming trees and hedges, removing dead stuff and weeds, adding a few flowers and fertilizing. During the process he kept telling me how much cleaner and better everything would look, but in the end I would still have the same landscape although it would be neater and with a few more flowers. I gave him a few suggestions:



First, ask your customers what their ideal landscape would look like? How would they like to use the space in their backyard? Did they cook-out much or entertain? Were they planning on staying in that house or selling in the near future? Did they enjoy backyard activities today? Would they like to in the future? Then, I suggested he take and bring some pictures of the work he had done, maybe a couple of before and after shots, but mostly finished photos of beautiful landscapes he had created or improved. As he talked to people instead of talking about what needed to be done, I suggested he talk about his vision of what could be done to create strikingly beautiful landscapes, add utility or otherwise satisfy the vision of his customers. His closing rate improved dramatically and he is doing much more creative work than just landscape maintenance although he gets that business too.

What he was initially selling was landscape maintenance, not a very exciting thing to do and which hundreds of competitors could do. What he began selling were beautification projects; a vision of how they could be enjoying their yard, entertaining their friends and finding peace and tranquility or building memories of fun times with their kids in their very own yard. At the same time, he began justifying the work as adding value and curb appeal to the value of their home so that not only could they enjoy being the envy of the neighborhood, but if they

ever sold their home they would be able to get higher prices which in turn would help pay for the beautification projects.

How well do you understand your own business and what you are truly selling? If you don't understand it, how will you get others to do so? How can you effectively network if you cannot clearly get others to understand what you provide and who you need to meet?

You must be able to put yourself in the place of a customer and decide what it is they are hoping to gain from your product or service. Using the landscape example, it might be a neat, orderly lawn that looks healthy and pest free to one person, but to someone else it is a playground, while to another it is a grotto or their own private picnic shelter.

Another friend of mine has a battery store. I found this kind of amazing initially because it seemed like you would have to sell an awful lot of batteries to make a living and you can buy batteries in so many places. On the other hand, I now appreciate that what he sells is security and reliability. He never sells old batteries that have outlived their shelf life. He markets batteries for all kinds of needs so when your laptop battery expires you can quickly get another without needing to special order it, or your camcorder battery needs a back-up or your watch or whatever it is, he has a battery ready and stands behind the product. Plus, he can special order any battery needed that he might not have. He's a one-stop shop for batteries, so what he is really selling is peace of mind and security. If your ALARM System Battery wears out he can sell you another one that day. Rest easy.

Restaurants are great examples. Many of the fast food restaurants are selling fun, they have playgrounds on the premises and include toys in their meals. Fancier restaurants are selling exotic foods and ambience, a place to take that special someone and impress them, a place to create a memory. They are selling much more than just food. My favorite Greek Restaurant [Stratos](#) offers Belly Dancing lessons but truly, I just go for the food.

So, who is your market and what are you selling?

Problems-Solutions, Features-Advantages-Benefits

Every business solves a problem by providing a solution. Some even solve problems and provide solutions they did not know existed. When I bought my dress shoes, the shoe company and I were on the same wavelength. I wanted inexpensive dress shoes that were comfortable, looked good and did not need to be polished every week, plus would wear well. The French Shiner's had anticipated my wants and needs and already built a shoe to my specifications, even in my size, in black. Neither one of us knew that it would also be used as a bug swatter when I happened to see a brown recluse spider scampering out of a corner of my garage, but it proved to be an admirable weapon as well. (Apparently, this is something people in the Middle East have known for centuries and occasionally use shoes as weapons. Most shoe companies are missing this opportunity to sell more shoes by stressing the weapon potential.)

You should be able to identify what problems your business solves and to communicate this to other people simply.

Likewise, you should understand what the Features, Advantages and Benefits are of your business. People buy benefits and they buy them when they can visually see themselves benefitting from using your product. Therefore, you must understand your customers needs in order to know which benefits they may be interested in.



Let's talk about the difference between Features, Advantages and Benefits and we will use this shoe as an example. A feature is some quality or characteristic of the product or service. An advantage is something that feature provides to the customer and a benefit is something the customer enjoys as a result of that feature and advantage. So, one feature of this shoe is that it is a loafer (meaning it has no shoestrings). The advantage of being a loafer is that it is easy to put on and easy to take off, even without using your hands.

The benefits to the customer are that he never looks poorly groomed by having untied shoe laces or the nuisance of having to retie them (Need for recognition, power). He will never trip on a shoelace when wearing loafers (Need for safety, order). He will save time putting his shoes on and taking them off. (Need for achievement) He will have a slightly casual, comfortable appearance but also a sophisticated stylish look demonstrating his good grooming (Need for affiliation).

We could talk about other features, advantages and benefits of this shoe such as how the loafer is a fine aerodynamic design allowing you to quickly remove it and throw it across the room at someone, (not recommended in most networking groups) but the point is that you should fully identify and understand the Features, Advantages and Benefits of your business products and services. First and foremost, you want to know this so that you can effectively and efficiently tell others about it and secondly, so that you can help others understand their business and identify who among your friends (networking contacts) who might be able to benefit from using their product or service. In this way, you can make more successful recommendations and referrals which in turn will generate more effective referrals for your business.

What I would suggest is that you create a Product Profile for your Products and Services and identify all of the features, advantages and benefits you can for each of your products and services. In this way you will be building up your own knowledge about your business and training yourself to be able to communicate the benefits you provide much more effectively in networking groups and sales situations.

	Feature	Advantage	Benefits
<u>Product</u>			

Selling
is
an
Art!



"Art is making something out of nothing and selling it."

Frank Zappa

"Every morning you are handed 24 golden hours. They are one of the few things in this world that you get free of charge. If you had all the money in the world, you couldn't buy an extra hour. What will you do with this priceless treasure? Remember, you must use it, as it is given only once. Once wasted you cannot get it back."

Source unknown.

"To handle yourself, use your head;

to handle others, use your heart."

Donald Laird

"Imagine, if you personally reach out and touch just five people a day how many will you stay in touch with over a year?"

Pamela Edwards

Marketing and Branding Yourself

You and your sales people and everyone that works in your company are representing your company even when they are not at work. If one of them is stopped for a speeding ticket what is one question that law enforcement frequently asks them, "Where do you work"? If they are applying for credit or opening a new account or buying something expensive what are they asked, "Where do you work?". In this mundane way your staff is constantly creating an image of your company. They are being associated with your company. If the image they present is negative, it presents a negative image of your company. Think about that in your hiring decisions. You want great, qualified workers but you also want people who will present a positive image of your company out in the community. We may not like it, but first impressions tend to stick unless we make a concerted effort to change people's minds.

Who is in your mirror?

When you prepare to go to work or a networking meeting what image are you presenting?



One of the most successful financial planners I know always looks like a Financial Planner. He always wears a suit, usually a white shirt and a tie. It is a conservative, respectable, prudent look; exactly the look for someone you would trust to help you grow financially. If he dressed or acted like a Texas Ranger or even the Lone Ranger you might trust him to hold your money but you probably wouldn't trust his investment advice or suggestions for diversification of your portfolio.

Another friend is a CPA and he too always looks like a CPA, someone you can trust to get your taxes right, while helping you take advantage of all the deductions to which you are entitled. Much of the time he doesn't wear his suit coat which to me makes him look even more like a guy who is actually working to save me money on my taxes.

Do you look like what you do? Do you look like a full-time business person when you go to networking meetings or are working? What image do you convey? If your image does not fit the work you are doing, guess what, people will remember the image. If you dress and look like a retiree who is too bored to sit at home and wants a little extra income, that's the impression you will

leave with people. If you look like a Mother who is selling something part-time to make a little extra income, that is who you will be seen to be. So, are you saying you should look like someone you are not? No, but you should look like the person you want to be. If you hope to one day be a highly-respected and successful business authority, well-known in the community then start by looking like one now. Cultivate your image. How do we recognize a Priest or a Pastor? The clerical collar. How about a Doctor or Nurse, White Jackets, Uniforms, Scrubs. How about a Policeman? All of these professions have adopted a standard of dress that is easily recognizable and created an image of who they are. Who are you?

The Pygmalion Effect (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pygmalion_effect)

also called the Rosenthal effect is simply that people live up to the expectations others have for them. But the secret to this is that we live up to our own expectations. It works really well in studies with children in experiments where their Teachers provided certain expectations for them.



Children would improve their grades or do worse based on the teachers expectations. We all live up or down to our own self-image which is shaped by others. When we trust others expectations (value their opinions) we in turn adopt or believe the expectations that others have for us. They become our expectations for ourselves also. But guess what? You can change your own expectations for yourself and you can shape the expectations that others have for you. Let them know what they should expect and

make yourself live up to the expectations you have set for yourself.

Likewise, many people will tell you that Affirmations, ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Affirmations_\(New_Age\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Affirmations_(New_Age))) have been especially powerful in helping them achieve ambitious goals which previously seemed unachievable. It is the power of belief and expectations that something will happen, combined with the power of knowing where you are going, what you will accomplish and why you will accomplish it, that has been demonstrated frequently to more fully energize a person, improve their focus and actually help them "attract" the end result through their associations and actions.

Part of this success is the image you project. When people see in you a high level of confidence, integrity, knowledge and a powerful successful attitude, with an image that matches who you aspire to be they have no reason not to refer you and in fact enjoy referring someone like you to their friends. Likewise, when you see the person you aspire to be in the mirror you are telling yourself, "YES, THIS IS WHO I WAS MEANT TO BE. I AM THIS PERSON IN THE MIRROR." You must first know who you aspire to be, you must be able to visualize your success at achieving your goal, have a clearly defined goal and the steps you will take to ensure you achieve it. Start with yourself. Walk the talk, look the part, be the person you aspire to be. The rest will follow. Start with the end result in mind.

You are what you do and say.

"Actions speak louder than words." ...Unknown Author

"Saying is one thing and doing is another." ...Michel de Montaigne

"Preach the gospel at all times. Use words if necessary."
...St. Francis of Assisi

If you say one thing while doing another people will believe your actions by watching your body language . . . what you said will be a disconnect.

BE THE PERSON YOU ARE MEANT TO BE NOW AND AT ALL TIMES.

The hardest thing for people to accept is when someone who had previously portrayed and spoken one image is suddenly revealed through their actions to be someone quite different. Depending on how extreme the behavior or how discordant it is compared to the previous self they had created, the level of shock can be mild or huge. Recall Richard Nixon and Watergate, the tapes of the President of the United States, full of "expletives deleted", made public ruined his career and caused the first resignation of a President of the United States. Perhaps the shock was greater because Nixon was also the only man to be elected twice to both Vice President and President, meaning that a lot of people had a very high image of Richard Nixon, only to find out that he had participated in the cover up of a felony crime and lied about it. They were in shock, and the rest of Nixon's life was only a shadow of its former glory. The newspaper is regularly full of similar examples where people who presented one image are caught being someone else such as Brittany Spears, Mel Gibson, Tiger Woods and others. Each of us is at risk for changing the image of ourselves that others hold when we engage in behavior that is inconsistent with who we want to be. Therefore, first know thyself. Know who you want to be and ensure your actions match your words and image...always.

In Networking you can often demonstrate through your actions who you really are. Do you give referrals? Do you reach out to help others? Are you looking for ways to help others meet their goals or are you only focused on your own goals?

If you would be a person of influence learn how to become influential. There are a wide variety of resources in your public library, at book stores, on audio and video, online and in print. Maybe you would like to take a short course on becoming influential. I can get you signed up for this one at INDABA entitled the 21 Laws of Influence. http://indaba1.com/21_laws_program.aspx.

You don't have to be a carbon copy of who you aspire to be, there is plenty of room for originality and creativity but realize that people compare you to who or what they expect to see. My Financial Planner friend looks like a Financial Planner when he is in that role. He could choose to look like a Biker who moonlights in a Rock Band (which he might do), but he does not try to market himself as a financial planner when he is playing in a rock band or riding his Harley. Likewise, I know a Surgeon who loves to race cars. He doesn't talk about being a Doctor when he is racing. He talks about racing.

When you go to networking events and talk be sure your image matches your image of who you want to be and say things that support your image. Be consistent in ensuring your actions match your words and the image you are creating for yourself. Have fun and enjoy yourself but as they say on Broadway, "stay in character."

Be true to thyself, but realize you can determine exactly who thyself is.

How to rehearse and speak well.



First, start with the goals of what you want to accomplish by speaking. Are you looking for referrals? Exactly who would you like to meet? The better you describe who that is, or more importantly, the easier you make it for someone to give you a name the more likely you will be to have a referral name.

If you are speaking to a group with a presentation, again you must know what you want to accomplish. Are you trying to train, educate, persuade or motivate your audience? Pick one.

Here is a quick way to make your talk more effective. Before you start ask people in the audience what they expect and jot these down on a flipchart if available. "Why are you here?" This is a great question to start. If you don't have sufficient time for this activity, try to determine what they would like to know before you come to speak so you can prepare comments relative to their expectations. Short of this, tell them at the beginning why you are speaking and set their expectations as to what will be covered and possibly what will not be covered. Setting expectations is important so that you can meet or exceed those expectations with your talk. If you tell them up front that you are a professional and not a performer or a public speaker, this will sometimes lessen the tension and set expectations at a reasonable level. On the other hand, if you are introduced as an accomplished public speaker, then you will need to live up to those expectations to be successful.

While you can rehearse in front of a mirror or a partner, I prefer a video camera.

Before you use the video camera, practice what you are going to say until you can say it fairly comfortably out loud. Then, set-up your camera to focus on your face and body language and do a dress rehearsal. Go back and review the video after three trial runs if the material is fairly short (less than 10 minutes), or after every trial if it is longer. Look at your body language, gestures and listen carefully to your voice, is it loud enough, too fast or too slow? Eliminate distracting monosyllables like uh and um and definitely abolish repetitive phrases such as "you know", "right", "you know what I'm saying?"

When you first write and read your introductory 30 or 60 second commercial message it will seem challenging. You might find yourself tongue-tied, tripping over words, including a few "uh's and um's" which is okay when you are first

rehearsing. The more times you repeat or rehearse what you are going to say, the easier it will become and you will find yourself speaking comfortably and casually. Remember you are not "performing", you are conveying valuable information. You are introducing your business and you want it to sound positive, successful and reliable. Always know what you are going to say in advance. Never apologize in your introduction or make excuses for how you present it. Look as many people in the eye as you can for about four seconds each but don't worry about their facial expressions. They might be daydreaming or thinking of something else entirely. You keep smiling.

Follow the format in [sharing information and services among individuals](#) and change it up once in awhile. Including new topical information is always helpful to your listeners, adds value to what you say and reminds them of what you do. For example;

According to the Society for Human Resources Management, "The legislation extending many Bush era tax cuts includes many provisions that affect employers and employees, including replacement of the "make work pay" tax credit with a payroll tax cut."

Companies that are not aware of these changes could be missing out on significant savings and paying higher taxes.

My company helps companies stay on top of human resource issues that affect them and make better human resource decisions.

My name is Gregg Sterett, my company is Sterett Enterprises LLC, on the web at GreatPeopleWorks.com, and we bring almost forty years business experience to help our customers make better human resource decisions.

I'd like to meet your friend in an IT department or computer services company.

Please write their name on one of your business cards and pass it to me.

Above all be confident. Confidence and a calm demeanor will go much further in reassuring your listeners that you know what you are talking about. If you need Presentations Skills training then get some, (I offer one-on-one coaching and a half or one-day training program) but meanwhile, learn your product and service so you can talk about it easily. By knowing your material, product and service thoroughly you will be confident in the knowledge that you have in order to talk intelligently about it. If you prefer to do this in a Q&A format, then structure your talks so that you have more discussions and Q&A time.

Be your brand

Brand is the personality *that identifies* a product, service or company (name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or combination of them) and how it relates to key constituencies: Customers, Staff, Partners, Investors etc.

Source/Learn More: WIKI(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brand>)

One of the most rewarding things to happen to a networker is when they become known as the brand they have created and their message has been so well delivered and remembered it becomes a part of the listeners memory. For example:

"Oh, you need to talk to Nina the Mary Kay consultant. She has a product that works great for that."

"Sounds like you need to call Dan the Computer Man. Here, I'll give you his number. He can probably get your laptop up and running over the phone or fix it remotely."

"You should talk to Debbie, she's an attorney that specializes in partnership and estate issues."

"Let's call Bob at HandymanMatters. He can fix it."

Their name becomes associated with their brand or their product or service. This is done in a number of ways, through networking in their introductions, actions and information they share. Sometimes people wear clothing with their company logo or name. Their business cards are consistent with the product/service and brand image they are creating.

Slogans and rhyming phrases are helpful to remind others what you do and can be easily learned and remembered.

What is the drink "For those who think young?"

What drink says "You like it, it likes you?"

What drink provides "The pause that refreshes?"

What car says "Oh, what a feeling?"

Who has a better idea?

Answers: Pepsi, 7Up, Coca-Cola, Toyota, Ford

Creating a Brand and a Branding Strategy can be enhanced with a Marketing consultant. Be sure whoever you consult has a Marketing & Branding background and not just graphic arts. Having a logo is helpful to creating a brand and making you memorable and conveying your message but a logo is just one piece of the identity. Can you draw the Pepsi, 7Up, Coke, Toyota or Ford logo from memory? Probably not all of them, but you can remember most of the slogans and associate them with the brand. Logos and slogans are just a small part of the strategy.

Big corporations work on branding products and services and less on who the people are behind the product or service except for customer service. The Progressive lady on TV commercials, the Gecko for GEICO, Jared Fogle for Subway, the guy on the Verizon commercials "Can you hear me know" (Paul Marcarelli); each of these persons has put a face and character behind the company. It makes them friendlier and real to each of us even though they are big corporations and franchises. We remember the people (or the lizard). When you are networking you are that spokesperson for your company. What kind of image are you creating? What impression are leaving behind? Think about the branding strategy for your company as yourself.

When do you want people to think of you? How do you want them to remember you?

If you provide a service for businesses to stay in touch with their customers and for people who don't like to send cards you might start "SendOutCards.com" and then market it to those people as a way to inexpensively and methodically send out cards to their prospects and customers and anyone else.

If you market home insulation inspections, products and services you want them to think of you every time they feel a cold draft in their home or when they get a high electric or gas bill. A company named "KLD Energy Raters" is an appropriate start to creating this brand image of a company who can address these problems and lower energy costs.

My website: **GreatPeopleWorks.com** is an attempt to brand this concept of a virtual factory for getting great people using a combination of behavioral assessments to aid in hiring and coaching, matching people to the job and for training people to be great managers and leaders.

My logo attempts to artistically show a guy making stars as in creating star employees. The slogan: **Maximizing the ROI of Your Human Assets** focuses on the financial benefits of lower employee turnover, great talent retention and consistently raising the bar on performance.



In conclusion

Networking is one of many ways to help you grow your business, but like all things it is not necessarily the easiest or best way for every business or person. You need to decide what will work best for your business and your products or services in line with your business goals for revenues and profits. On the other hand, we all network every day in a variety of ways, so be aware of opportunities you have to build stronger relationships with the other people with whom you come in contact. You may never know where that next opportunity will come from. How many of us couldn't hear opportunity knocking because we were talking instead of listening?

If you are a network marketer such as a Mary Kay Representative or Ignite-Stream Energy Associate or other network marketing company you may find that networking is the ideal way for you to meet people and get new referrals. For some businesses it is the only logical way to grow their business and for others it does not work at all due to the business, markets or people involved. Perhaps a more selective networking approach such as through a professional organization involving your specialty, trade group or association might be the most effective way for you to network, but you will network, everywhere.

It is all up to you to become an effective networker. Thanks for stopping in.
Good Luck!

See the attached list of [Other Networking Resources](#) just before the [APPENDIX](#) for other ideas and information about networking.

OTHER NETWORKING RESOURCES

Klein Creative - Jeff Klein

<http://www.kleincreative.tv/workshops.html>

Career & Professional Development - Bill Fenson

<http://www.linkedin.com/in/fenson>

Jeremiah Johnson

<http://www.linkedin.com/in/jeremiah72000>

GreatPeopleWorks.com Amazon Store (Books)

<http://astore.amazon.com/steretenterp-20>

Join:

MeetUp

<http://www.meetup.com>

LinkedIn

<http://www.linkedin.com>

Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com>

APPENDIX

One on One Networking Form

Name of Business:

Products or Services Offered:

Unique Business Proposition:

Website Name:

Contact Information:

Experience/Authority/License for Business:

Ideal Customer Referrals Requested:

Strategic Referral Partners:

Synergy Referral Partners:

Major Competitor:

Other / Notes:

Sample Networking Agenda 90 Minute Meeting

- 11:30 AM - 11:50 AM - Open Networking, Seating and Mark Luncheon Orders, Registration & Payments.
- 11:50 AM - 12:00 PM - Welcome, Group Overview & Rules, Housekeeping
- 12:00 PM - 12:20 PM - 30 Second Commercials, Members / Guests
- 12:20 PM - 12:35 PM - Member Spotlights (Two - 5 minutes each)
- 12:35 PM - 12:45 PM - Thanks You's and Announcements
- 12:45 PM - 1:00 PM - Networking Exercise at Tables or Open Networking or Sharing of Business Tips

TIPS: Share the Agenda and let others follow the progress of the meeting. This helps people feel that is proceeding to plan and know what to expect next and when to participate.

Expect most meetings to run slightly overtime unless time limitations are imposed.

Successful meetings are those that start and end on time and achieve the purpose the group.

PILGRIM EXERCISE - SHARPENING MY MARKETING STRATEGY

Background: The early Pilgrims in North American History are recognized as the English settlers who left England due to political and religious intolerance and, with the help of English and Dutch investors, established Plymouth Colony in present day Massachusetts. Plymouth Colony, established in 1620, became the oldest, continuously inhabited British settlement and the second successful English settlement after the founding of Jamestown, Virginia in 1607. The Pilgrims' story of seeking religious freedom has become a central theme of the history and culture of the United States, which is one of the reasons it makes the U.S.A. so attractive to people of diverse cultures from all over the world. (Source: Wikipedia)

A Pilgrim, however, is simply one who in search of something. They are on a quest either through travel or through internal introspection to find something or experience something that is highly desired. Today's exercise will use the synergy of teamwork to help you hone your marketing strategy.

YOUR CHALLENGE: As a team at your table, each pilgrim will have one minute to describe the key components of their marketing strategy for their business, then the team will have five minutes to brainstorm additional strategies or ideas that may help increase this persons reach and success. The person hearing others ideas should write down each idea exactly as presented on the back of this page to capture the list of ideas to take away with you.

BRAINSTORMING is an exercise to generate ideas. Do not try to qualify your ideas or limit them or judge them now. You can do that later. Think outside the box. Be creative. Sudden flashes of insight or what might seem like a crazy idea initially may become a brilliant breakthrough or at least the first step towards it. You can always evaluate ideas later and if you capture who suggested a particular idea you can call that person up and ask to talk about it further. **The point is to generate as many ideas as possible in the time allowed.**

TIP: Try to build on others ideas. This encourages team synergy and enhances your results.

TIMER: We will tell you when each six minute period is ended and the exercise will end after twenty minutes.

Cowboys Networking Exercise

The Dallas Cowboys Football Team is constantly on the look-out for new talent and they rely on the advice and referrals from a network of strategic and synergy referral partners including College Coaches, Talent Scouts, Sports Reporters, Sports Agents and Recruiters from all over the world.

Likewise, each of our businesses relies on strategic & synergy referral partners. People who can refer the best potential customers to us. For example, someone marketing a specialty food supplement that promotes the health of people with high cholesterol might build relationships with Fitness Center Managers, Doctors, Weight Loss Clinics, Hospital Nurses who teach classes to likely patients and Dieticians or Nutrition Consultants, etc. Each of these persons could be a good strategic referral or synergy partner referring their customers to our products or directly to us as the Food Supplement provider and likewise we may have customers or referral partners to refer to them or know someone else who can partner with them.

YOUR CHALLENGE:

- 1} Help each member on your team to identify at least three strategic referral partners for their specific business and
- 2} Provide at least three names total from your team with individual names and their business who you will refer to this person.

END RESULT:

Each person in the room should have at least three contact names of strategic referral partners who will be referred to them by the end of the session.

REFERRAL TYPES:

1. **Warm Referral (Preferred)** One person provides a direct introduction either in person, over the phone or via Email to another person, exchanging contact information for both parties
2. **Cold Referral.** Someone gives you a person's contact information and authorizes you to use their name in introducing yourself and as the source for the referral.
3. **Frigid Referral** - Someone gives you a person's contact information and asks that you not mention their name as the referral source.

Pirate Game for Networking

Fact: Piracy is also called "Cutthroat Capitalism". Think carefully before you become a pirate in reality.

This Pirate Game is called "**Finding the Gold**". In this case, the gold is learning what are the really "unique" things about other businesses at your table. Unique meaning "one of a kind, unequalled, distinctive or unusual".

For example, Unique Sales Proposition might be the 'first all women-owned construction company', or "being one of the few companies that can not only clean and care for your carpet but replace your entire floor with a variety of flooring alternatives" or "being the only Edward Jones Representative with a home arsenal to help protect your investments. LOL

Each table of 4-5 people is a band of pirates searching for the gold, which are the unique benefits of each business in their group. Their first challenge as a team is to choose a SCRIBE to record their name and each Unique Business Proposition or "Why should you do business with me and why should you refer me to your associates"?

1) Record the person's name and their business name and their USP.

Each band will have 20-25 minutes to complete this assignment.

Benefits and What is Learned: Each band will learn more specific things about the people in their band as well as others in the room. In some cases, people may not be sure of what their unique benefit is so their band will have to help them develop it because **any band who does not complete the process will have to "walk the plank and join Davey Jones"**.

This will encourage teamwork and actually be helpful to anyone in the group who is struggling with their 30-second promotional message or communicating their business benefits to others. It will also be a fun activity that "promotes" networking.

Total Time: About 30 minutes including presentations and instructions.

VALUES

1. Read through this list once quickly, then go back and circle the values that are most appealing to you or describe you or to which you aspire. Feel free to add any you do not see listed.
2. Then check off the ten (10) most important values to your future, those that you feel are worth working towards achieving.
3. Write your top ten values on the bottom of the page. This is an important step in affirming your values.

Love of friends	Challenge	Trust	Peace of mind
Equality	Adventure	Democracy	Love of family
Power	Education	Love of life-partner	Creativity
Honesty	Beauty	Financial success	Physical appearance
Success	Travel	Attraction	Mutual communication
Religious faith	Overall security	Respect of peers	Spiritual unity
Respect of friends	Respect of family	Freedom of choice	Financial freedom
Fun	Integrity	Financial security	Personal growth
Vacation time	Family time together	Support of friends	Support of family
Helping peers	Pleasant surroundings	Sharing knowledge	Project completion
Passion	Punctuality	Physical fitness	Teaching others
Helping others	Competition	Setting goals	Reaching set goals
Time management	Good health	Time for hobbies	Spiritual Growth
Being outdoors	Influencing others	Being well-known	Becoming mega-rich

MY TOP TEN VALUES

Plato's Allegory of the Cave (Excerpt)

Speaking are Socrates and Glaucon. Socrates begins.

Behold! human beings living in an underground den . . .

Whereas our argument shows that the power and capacity of learning exists in the soul already; and that just as the eye was unable to turn from darkness to light without the whole body, so too the instrument of knowledge can only by the movement of the whole soul be turned from the world of becoming into that of being, and learn by degrees to endure the sight of being and of the brightest and best of being, or in other words, of the good.

Translated by Benjamin Jowett

Read the entire allegory at:

http://www.oswego.edu/~delancey/101_DIR/jowett_cave.html