

Networking 2.0

Building Relationships
and Getting Results
one person at a time

by Terry Bass



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Introduction

Our economy is showing the largest job growth (and all forecasts expect it continue here) in the small business and individual entrepreneur arena. Studies show that 70% of sales that occur are due to some type of networking.

And where you see them looking for business, building relationships & just meeting people is your local networking events. There are tons of people out there networking their fannies off as you read this.

The problem arises that very few people know how to network effectively. They either fumble through and don't create a very good first impression or they come and socialize. So what is it that you can do to make your time more worthwhile?

Welcome to Networking 2.0.

While there are a gazillion books on networking, they basically fall into two schools.

The first school is the "hunter" school and it's based primarily on selling or "what can you do for me". The networker will have very specific goals, focusing very quickly on whether the person they are talking to can be an asset, quickly setting up the next meet to expand the relationship and then moving on to the next person. If the person is not seen as an asset, the hunter quickly moves on.

My experience is that there are very, very few people that can do this successfully. It is mostly off-putting and has a pretty close rate of return of zero. And so what you see is the second school of networking.

The second is the "building relationship" school or being a "farmer" instead of a hunter. This is where you build that trust and interest and see what happens. The expected results are building a long term, mutually profitable relationship.

The challenge for farmers is that where does the socializing end and the "business" begin? Are you going to networking events, chatting away with mostly people you know and then calling it a night? Have you really accomplished anything?



This book attempts to take a middle ground, a hybrid of the two schools if you will, taking the best aspects of each. Let's for the sake of the discussion introduce the "explorer" school.

The explorer is curious, dives into the unknown, enjoying the exploring, yet wants to get some kind of results. The explorer will see where the results take them.

And so it should be with you when you network.

As a non-stop networker, I am a strong believer in meeting everyone and creating relationships with as many people as I can. Are the people I'm going to meet going to buy my services. Maybe. Maybe not. But they also could be people who's services I could use. Or somebody I know could use. They could be people who are connected with someone else, or an association/organization that I have an interest in. They could just be somebody that is in an industry that could be of interest to me, personally or professionally. Won't know until I meet them! They could also turn into a friend, mentor or help me get a job someplace. The simple fact in life is that the more people you know, the better placed you will be no matter where your future takes you. I haven't heard of anyone who has ever suffered from knowing too many people!

However, when I network, I don't want to just meet people, after all I could be home with reading a good book, in my sweats drinking a cold beer. So lets try and create some useful results for our effort.

So welcome to the hybrid school of networking, where we will focus on creating and building relationships, but do a little goal setting and focusing, so that the time you spend networking can be more productive for you, your career and your business.

The bottom line when networking is that you want people to come away with a positive impression of you and perhaps do business with you. This book is loaded with tips on how to do just that.

Lastly, I'm suppose to tell you that I'm the only one responsible for what you're going to be reading. So there you have it.

Let's get started.

Know Thyself

There are a couple things you should know about yourself in regards to networking.

The first is are you an extrovert or are you an introvert? This is important to know because extroverts and introverts deal with networking differently. Common thoughts are that it's better to be an extrovert to network and introverts will have a hard time being successful. That's absolutely untrue. Both extro's and intro's have their own strengths for networking and their own weaknesses. The intelligent networker first understands where they are on the scale of extrovert and introvert and uses the strengths (and works on the weaknesses) to their advantage.

Next myth. Introverts are uncomfortable meeting strangers. The fact is **EVERYONE** is uncomfortable meeting strangers. And that's ok. Understanding that a major part of networking will be meeting new people, we just need to be aware that being an extrovert or introvert has nothing to do with it. For years (much to the amusement of virtually everyone that knew me) I considered myself an introvert since I was not comfortable going up to perfect strangers. I have gone through several "personality profiles" and the one consistent thing is that I am pegged as a strong extrovert. So I just learned what I needed to work on to be more successful meeting people just like everybody else.

So what are the 2 big differences when networking?

- The way we are comfortable interacting with other people
- Our Personal Energy (not the new-agey stuff, read on)

OK it is true, extroverts love to interact in groups. If you're networking and see a group of 4 or 5 people (or more) with one person "holding court", chances are you're seeing an extrovert in action. Extroverts are bigger, more expansive, the hand gestures will be more pronounced!

The challenge for extroverts is that we love to talk. Extroverts can be fun, hold a group together, provide the energy, but they also will do most of the talking. You will learn about the extrovert all sorts of things, but they may not learn much about you.

Section I - Before, Chapter 1

So they extrovert needs to learn to scale back, give others the chance to talk and get involved in the discussion, learn about other people.

The introvert is not someone who has difficulty networking. They just have to do it a little differently. Introverts for example excel one on one. Two people talking to each other is the perfect networking environment for anyone and that happens to be the comfort zone for intro's . Introverts are more likely cede talking time than others, but he might still need to learn how to listen properly just like everyone else.

QUICK TIP - FOR AN INTROVERT, GROUPS ARE PROBABLY NOT GOING TO BE A COMFORTABLE ENVIRONMENT, SO IF THERE IS SOMEONE IN A GROUP THAT YOU WANT TO TALK TO, SEPARATE THEM FROM THE HERD! TAKE THEM ASIDE AND CREATE THAT ONE ON ONE SPACE THAT YOU ARE COMFORTABLE IN.

As mentioned, the other differentiator between extro's and intro's is energy levels.

Think of a long day at work. You're tired, but you have to go to some networking event. Geesh!

The extrovert on one hand, while maybe starting out bushed, starts getting energized as the networking event progresses. Extroverts basically get energy from groups and gatherings. Extroverts can typically last the night away! Heck, as the event draws to a close, the extrovert might even try to get a group together and head out for a beer!

Understand that the extrovert will probably crash on the way home. They no longer have the group feeding them that energy and on the car ride home, tiredness will set back in. That's ok. The extrovert just needs to watch themselves because they can crash.

The introvert on the other hand essentially loses energy at group events. And if there was a long, tough day at work, the last thing you want to do is go networking.

Section I - Before, Chapter 1

So it's important for an intro' to recharge first.

Perhaps between work and networking, stop someplace, do a caffeine and sugar thing, maybe if alone time with a book helps you recharge, stop at Starbucks or Mickey D's and take a half hour by yourself.

How about stopping at your favorite store like Best Buy or clothing or outdoor store? Roam the aisles, fantasize about your next vacation, that humongous screen TV. Figure out whatever works for get you re-energized and focused on the networking event ahead and take a breather.

If you show up a little late that's fine, especially if you are now more ready to dive in!

QUICK TIP – THIS APPLIES TO THE EXTRO'S ALSO. IF YOU HAD A CRAPPY DAY AT WORK, HEAD OUT FOR A LITTLE DIVERSION AND GET THE MIND CLEAR. NOTHING IS WORSE THAN BEING SOMEPLACE THAT YOU DON'T WANT TO BE. AND TRUST ME, IT SHOWS!

Lastly, the introvert needs to understand that you may not last the whole time. Figure out what you can handle. Don't make this an excuse to leave early (or not attend at all!) but try different things that will help you be on top of your game when you do network. It could be a more productive time for you by being "all there" for 2 hours of a 3 hour event, then physically there, but mentally in la-la land for the entire event.

It's to your advantage to understand where you sit on the extrovert/introvert scale and what are your strength's and weaknesses when networking. This way, you can adjust your schedule or behavior to maximize your networking, making it more successful and enjoyable for you.

The bottom line is that if networking is an arduous chore for you, it doesn't matter what you are trying to accomplish.

Know Who's Coming

Many networking events now register on-line and list who is attending along with their company.

Even if you registered early, a lot of people wait until the last minute, so the best time to check out who's coming is a couple hours prior.

OK, so now you know who's showing up, now what?

Is there anybody that you would like to meet on that list? It doesn't even have to be someone that you would like to sell to.

This is where you start thinking outside the box. (I know, I know, old cliché, but it really fits here!)

For example, your business has printers (don't they all) and a guy from a discount cartridge place is going to be there. Would he be a good person to talk to in maybe helping you reduce costs? Even if you are an employee. What would happen if you turned your boss on to a way to save money for your organization? Wouldn't you look good?

How about that lawyer, real estate agent, chiropractor? Is there some information that they might have to help you personally or professionally? Maybe you want to find out where the lawyer's congregate, or what associations in the area they belong to. How about some dirt on the condos going up next to your office.

The point I am attempting to make is that there is a wealth of information, ideas and experience that will be at any networking event. To focus strictly on people being prospective buyers limits what you can get out of them.

Chances are the things that are stumping you right now (how to market, where to market, next steps, etc.) someone may have the answer or at least a direction to find the answer.

How about personally, even not for yourself? Is there someone going to the event, that can help you get an answer for a friend or family member?

Section I - Before, Chapter 2

Is there some industry that you might be interested in, whether just interested in or possibly as a career change? Will somebody be there that you find out more about that industry, the pitfalls? Who knows, your next employer could be there!

QUICK TIP – YOU CAN CHOSE TO LOOK AT PEOPLE AS POTENTIAL CLIENTS OR YOU CAN CHOOSE TO LOOK AT PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE RESOURCES FOR YOUR WHOLE LIFE SPECTRUM. THOSE THAT NETWORK WITH THIS EXPANDED OUTLOOK REAP GREATER GAINS.

Also by checking out who is coming and marking down a few people that you might want to talk to gets you circulating after you arrive.

If you have some specific people that you want to meet, you will move around, check out name tags and introducing yourself. A great way to get you in action.

By looking beyond the “possible client” and pursuing other reasons to get to know your networking contacts (and what they know), you open the door to creating better relationships, getting better results in your business/career and making your networking time much more effective and enjoyable.

QUICK TIP – WHAT IF YOUR NETWORK COORDINATOR DOESN'T POST WHO'S ATTENDING? ASK! CALL AND SEE IF THEY HAVE A LIST MADE UP (THEY SHOULD HAVE IT ON SOME EXCEL SPREADSHEET). CHANCES ARE THEY'LL BE MORE THAN HAPPY TO EMAIL IT TO YOU FOR YOUR PERUSAL. AND YOU'LL BE AHEAD OF EVERY ELSE AT THE EVENT!

Know Your Goals

Certainly adhering to chapter 2 would be a great start to making a goal for networking. But there are certainly other things that you can focus on as well depending on what you want to accomplish. Some goals could be...

- Planning on getting an appointment to meet with X amount of people.
- Plan on getting to know someone better (building that relationship), maybe someone you met previously.
- Getting a certain amount of business cards.
- Finding someone more experienced in the business than you, and see if you can have them mentor you a bit.
- Finding someone from a less mainstream industry or just one you're not familiar with and see if it could be a market of interest to you.
- Meet someone that could "partner" with you, someone that may have a different business, but similar clients. Could you do something (advertise, host an event) that would bring in both sets of clients and maybe help each other.
- Introducing yourself to the powers that be (if a chamber event, the officers and the people who work at the chamber).
- Plan on meeting X amount of new people (a great networking goal!).
- _____ (create your own goal that makes sense for you and your business!)

Making goals doesn't have turn into this high pressure "business" thing. But BY making goals, you are more likely avoid what the vast majority of networkers do, which is to show up, talk to some people (usually people they already know) and then head home. You also get a better sense of satisfaction at the end of the day, when you reach those goals!

QUICK TIP – WRITE YOUR GOALS DOWN, PUT IT ON A SPREADSHEET WITH THE EVENTS YOU GO TO. KEEP TRACK OF WHAT GOALS YOU ACHIEVE AND WHERE. IF YOU'RE NOT ACHIEVING THOSE GOALS, FIGURE OUT WHY. IS IT BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT DOING THE RIGHT THINGS, OR IS IT BECAUSE MAYBE YOU'RE NOT GOING TO THE RIGHT NETWORKING EVENT?

Section I - Before, Chapter 3

Successful people in any business today know the value of preparation. For some meetings, the preparation can take a great deal longer than the meeting itself. But good prep is likely to create good meetings. It is no different with networking. The good news is preparation time for networking is pretty short, checking out where our head is at (Know ThySelf), the prospective attendees (Know Who's Coming), and what you want to accomplish (Know Your Goals). In fact, after doing it a time or two, it will be pretty natural and take just a few minutes. But like any preparation, payoff is significant.

You can expect to have more meaningful networking events. You will open yourself up to learning more, getting to know more people, having more people know you, building better, stronger relationships, opening yourself up to opportunities that you may not have considered before.

Making networking a more profitable experience for you.

How do you look?

In chapter 1, I talked about your mood. It should be upbeat and positive. If you had a lousy day at work, leave it outside. In that chapter, I wrote about how to get out of it, build up a little energy for when you get to the networking event. We have all gone to a networking event and met somebody that was “in a mood”. They were negative, sarcastic, they may even have been bitching about their company, a real joy to spend time with. Here’s a question – If that’s the one and only time you’ve met them, what are you thinking? Are you thinking that, “Gee, this is someone I want to get to know better” or are you looking for a way to escape? Let’s face it, we beat feet as quickly as possible. So think about that when YOU’RE in a mood. You aren’t creating a good impression.

Different studies show that people make their first impression within 5 – 30 seconds of seeing you. What you are wearing, how you are standing, your whole body language. All sorts of things. It makes sense that if you are trying to build relationships, you want to remove any obstacles to that positive first impression.

One of the biggest first impression snafu’s I see are cross generational. People typically don’t dress badly, but they may be dressing more for “their” age group. I’m not telling 20-somethings that you need to dress in your parents clothes, but I recommend you put a little more thought into it to create the right first impression.

What is the image you wish to project? Do you want to say that you are a young professional, for you and your company to be taken seriously? Then if what you’re in is more appropriate for clubbing than business networking, maybe you need to rethink your outfit. Sometimes throwing on a jacket can do the trick and look more professional. Good rule of thumb – Tats and navels aren’t needed to be seen at a business event. If you’re not sure, get advice.

This doesn’t let the elder’s off the hook. The fact is our clothes say a lot about us. Looking too outdated adds years to your look and makes people think you aren’t up in the latest business trends. Try to look young however and you could just look silly.

Update your wardrobe so that you look the professional that you want everyone to know that you are.

Some Do's and Don'ts

- **Have a name tag that is legible and can be seen.**

People are more comfortable approaching someone where they can clearly see their name and company. It can start the conversation and makes it easier to remember the important stuff like who you are and who you represent!

Textbook says to put the tag on your right side, so that as you shake hands, its visible to the other person.

QUICK TIP – MAKE YOUR OWN NAME TAG. GET ONE OF THOSE “SHOW BADGES” THAT HANG AROUND YOUR NECK, PRINT OUT A CARD THAT HAS YOUR NAME IN BIG, EASY TO READ TYPE, YOUR COMPANY NAME AND A POINT YOU WANT TO MAKE (WEBSITE, SLOGAN, LOGO) MAKE A KNOT IN THE BACK SO THAT IT SITS ON YOUR CHEST (AND NOT AT NAVEL HEIGHT) SO PEOPLE CAN EASILY READ IT. YOUR OWN BADGE THEN SHOWS YOU’RE A PRO, IS EASIER TO READ AND YOU CAN STICK A FEW BUSINESS CARDS IN THE BACK FOR EASY EXCHANGE WHEN THE TIME COMES!

- **Always have business cards.**

Business cards don't sell you or your business, but they do help people to remember you are and what you do and they of course give people that essential contact information. A good rule of thumb – **ANYTIME** you leave your house, you should have up to date business cards in your hand.

QUICK TIP – TO ENSURE THAT YOU DON'T FORGET THEM, TAKE A CHUNK OF THEM FROM THE BOX, PUT THEM IN A BAGGIE AND PLACE THEM IN THE CENTER CONSOLE OR GLOVE BOX OF YOUR CAR. THIS WAY, IF YOU FORGET THEM OR RUN LOW, THEY ARE HANDY TO RESTOCK.

- **Don't hand out flyers.**

You're trying to build relationships. Flyers give you the excuse to not talk and people generally don't like them at networking events, 'cause then **THEY** have to then carry them around, etc. The two exceptions – If they ask for more info and you “just happen to have a flyer” in your purse or briefcase, that's one thing.

The other time is (maybe) you are offering a discount or “deal”.

Even then it might make sense to leave it on a table near the door.

Section II - **During**, Chapter 5

- **Go over to the person standing alone and introduce yourself. Always strive to meet new people.**

First because they are available to talk, and also because chances are they'd be grateful in having someone "break the ice" (and isn't that making a great first impression?) If you chat with them and know someone they should know, connect the two. This IS what networking is all about, and you now have two people thinking good thoughts about you!

- **Don't just talk to people you know.**

That's the whole idea of networking. Meeting new people. If you've been to the same group, as one of your goals make a personal commitment (that's goal) to meet a certain amount of new people each time or maybe get to know others better. Let's face it, if you're just talking to people you already know, you're socializing, not networking. And is that really what you want to accomplish then and there?

QUICK TIP — IF YOU DO WANT TO TALK TO YOUR FRIENDS, COMMIT TO "NETWORKING" THE FIRST HALF AND THEN RELAX WITH YOUR PALS THE SECOND HALF. OR GRAB A FRIEND AND NETWORK TOGETHER! THEN YOU CAN COMPARE NOTES LATER.

- **Shake hands firmly.**

One of the common mistakes people make is to shake hands limply especially when shaking hands with a woman. Don't be a bone crusher, but a hand shake should be firm no matter your gender or the shak-ee's.

- **Thank people on your way out.**

Courtesy never steers you wrong. If the event is held at a business, thank the host. Don't forget to thank the organizer's or if there is a sponsor. Just a quick "thanks, great event" will suffice. It may lead to conversation or not, but you are showing people you appreciate their efforts and that only makes them think positively about you.

Section II - During, Chapter 6

Your 30/60 second commercial

The 30/60 second commercial is not when you introduce yourself to an individual, but to a group. At many networking events you may be given the opportunity to introduce yourself to the group at large - to give that 30 or 60 second commercial.

It is important to have a good idea of what you would like to say whatever time you are given.

Also the good networker respects the time given. We often see people who when given the opportunity to introduce themselves clearly take the time that they are on "center stage" to really sell who they are and what they do, taking far longer than the time allotted.

So what should you say?

First think 30 seconds.

Certainly, you're name & company. And then the hook.

An effective hook is something that will interest people and want them to talk to you after the introductions.

Can you mention what you do in such a way that intrigues people? But you need to do it honestly. If the hook is "I have a program that can save every business lots of money", is it true and something they won't feel conned (for showing interest) when they hear the solution? The hook doesn't have to be mysterious, just interesting.

It doesn't even have to be business related! For a long time I threw out that I recently had lasik surgery. People would then walk up and ask me how it went, etc. and we would have a conversation creating rapport and eventually getting around to business. I often gave them lasik tips, offered to email them info on where I went. All steps to creating that relationship. It gave me the opportunity to contact them again to see if they did the eye surgery. No sales push, just continuing to build that common ground.

The next step is to have the flexibility to expand your commercial to 60 seconds!

Section II - During, Chapter 6

At 60 seconds, you will use much of what you say in the 30 and add something new.

The best thing to offer is testimonials - "People who have used my services see a savings, increase in business of XXX.

Or being a problem solver - "Businesses today have a tough time in this market being different from the rest and our business is to make your business really different and unique by...." Or "many companies are fighting the high cost of XXX and a simple no cost revue by our people has saved significant money for 2 out of 3 businesses that we meet."

These are just a couple of examples of being a *solution provider* or *problem solver*.

Unfortunately, most people when doing their commercials are *menu readers*. My company offers blah blah blah services and we also can do blah blah blah. Like reading from a menu.

Not interesting, not unique (although the range of services may be a unique point that YOU are excited about, the ordinary layman doesn't understand and probably doesn't care!) and not likely to generate enough interest to walk up to you afterward.

And practice, practice, practice. So that it's smooth, no ah's and um's, and generally around the time frame (30-60 seconds) given. If you network frequently or with a networking group, try out different approaches and see how they react. Use humor or current events, anything that can tie in what you do and how you can help them. Be real and be interesting & don't read the menu!

Remember the idea you want in their head when you have completed your commercial is not "I understand what that person does", but "hmm, maybe they are someone that can help me, I should meet them and find out more".

Meeting New People

First myth. Only some people (namely you) are uncomfortable meeting strangers. The fact is EVERYONE is uncomfortable meeting strangers. We can probably blame our parents for this one too. (Always a convenient trick). We have been taught from the cradle to “not talk to strangers” for a very good safety reason. But it HAS carried into our adult lives and it really doesn’t matter what the occasion, the vast majority of us really have a difficult time walking up and meeting someone we don’t know.

This happens certainly in social occasions. Have you ever been to a party where there are several groups of people? You know, work friends, neighborhood friends and maybe sports club friends. And pretty much during the course of the party they remain in 3 distinct groups, each eyeing the other seeing if there is someone interesting, gathering the courage to “cross the line”. Really kind of silly, isn’t it?

Similar things happen at business networking events. You see the newbie’s (that don’t know anyone) standing up against the wall, drink in hand, looking like a deer in the headlights. You see the “old hands” together, but seemingly in their own little clique’s chatting away with people they obviously know. And there are a few brave souls circulating around the room.

So how do you meet new people?

The solution. Just do it. Honestly, it really is the trick.

Try an experiment. Go up to someone that you don’t know (you can do this anywhere) and greet them. Do they bite your head off, snarl, run to the bathroom and wash their hands, give you a disgusted look? NO! Of course they don’t. In fact, especially if they were standing around and not interacting with someone, they’re probably grateful that someone approached them.

Next step is to do that whole networking thing. Get to know them, ask them questions about themselves and so on. Good chances you’ll meet an interesting person.

Section II - **During**, Chapter 7

Think about it. You wouldn't have met them if you didn't just bite the bullet and go up to them. So now you did, hopefully you had a good conversation, met an interesting person, maybe have something in common. Now what? Repeat.

Meeting new people should be enjoyable, not some scary hurdle to overcome.

Part of the nervousness is that you are putting yourself out there, that you are representing yourself, your company and your product. Possible rejection. That you need to see if they are a prospect for your services. Well, stop that! Really, cut it out.

**The fact of the matter is networking isn't about selling; it's about creating and building relationships. So take a deep breath and understand that the first time you meet someone, you shouldn't be "selling" or "prospecting", you should just be getting to know them, build a rapport and find out what they do and so on. And the biggest, coolest trick in the book is...
Ask.**

**Ask them what they do. Ask them where they live.
Ask them how they like their job. Ask them what interests them.
Ask them to clarify something when you don't understand.
Ask.**

People love to talk about themselves especially if you show an interest. So, ask away! You're not on the hook. You're not on the spot to "produce answers", you get the chance to know someone and the conversation will flow pretty naturally.

And there will be a conversation. At some point they will ask about you, so yes, you still have to have an elevator speech about yourself and what you do. And who knows, as mentioned before, you may find a common interest, even a reason to do business together. But the primary focus is to introduce yourself and get to know them.

Section II - **During**, Chapter 7

Whew! Sound a bit easier now?

As said earlier, I happen to be a strong extrovert; I'm a really outgoing guy. But even I had a tough time learning this and still sometimes have trouble today going to an event and just getting started. But I happen to be a business coach, and I help people.

When I see the person standing alone, it's something that I CAN help in a small way. So I go over, introduce myself and ask what they do. And off the conversation goes.

I have met a lot of great people that way!

Many times, I've been able to take the newbie and introduce them to someone else, someone with a common interest. That's networking and that's life. In retrospect, one of the great things about my work is meeting a range of people with a wide range of careers and experiences that I would never have known about. It encourages me to know more. And what a great place to be.

So go ahead, say hi.

Introduce yourself and ASK.

It can be fun and a great use of your time.

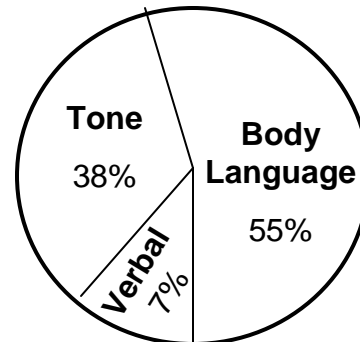
And who knows, the next person you meet could end up being a colleague, a gateway to your next job, a client, a drinking buddy, a friend.

And it starts with you walking up to them.

Body Language & Tone

When we talk, we are actually transmitting 3 ways.

The first is verbal, the words we say.
The second is the tone of our voice.
The third is our body language.



Our words are only 7% of how people register what we are telling them. People are actually picking up (albeit mostly sub-consciously) much more from our Tone and Body Language, that other 93%!

A good example of this is listening to someone that you think is not being honest with you. They are saying the right words, but you still think they are attempting to pull one over on you. You are probably picking up something in their tone of voice or in their body language that is telling you they are being less than straight with you.

So are you saying the right words, but are sounding bored?
Is your body language letting the person know that you really aren't listening to them?

Guess what? They sense that. They may not know why, but they are picking up the signal. So be aware of that.

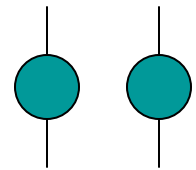
Also use it yourself. Are they sounding like they are interested, but their tone of voice is indicating they're not. How about the body language?

Understand that you or they may just be tired. But by being aware of the total way that you are communicating with someone gives you a better chance of getting the right message across!

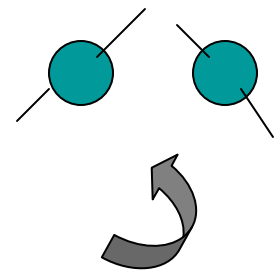
Section III – The Conversation, Chapter 8

QUICK TIP –

YOU HAVE TWO PEOPLE DIRECTLY FACING EACH OTHER, THEY ARE CLOSED. IT IS TYPICALLY DIFFICULT TO “BREAK IN” THIS TYPE OF CONVERSATION. IF THERE IS SOMEONE IN THIS POSITION THAT YOU REALLY WANT TO TALK TO, EITHER COME BACK LATER WHEN THEY’VE “OPENED UP” OR STAND TO THE SIDE PATIENTLY UNTIL SOMEONE ACKNOWLEDGES YOU. (ALWAYS APOLOGIZE FOR INTERRUPTING THEM)



THEN THERE IS THE “OPEN TRIANGLE”. THAT MEANS WHILE THEY ARE TALKING, THEY ARE OPEN TO OTHER PEOPLE JOINING THEM. YOU CAN THEN COME IN AND “CLOSE” THE TRIANGLE, INTRODUCING YOURSELF WHEN THEY LOOK YOUR WAY.



Don't forget to make eye contact with who you are having the conversation with. People who don't make eye contact are thought to be unsure of themselves or dishonest. Not the impression you want people to have of you.

These are a couple of quick tips about body language and being conscious of the signals you are getting from people as you network. The more you are aware of what people are telling you by not only what they say, but through their tone of voice and body language, the better you can respond and communicate more effectively.

The Conversation

In *Do's and Don'ts*, I wrote about meeting people that are standing alone. Two reasons..one, that's what you're there for, but also as mentioned by making the connection the already are going to think positively of you. You broke the ice & say hello. Never a bad thing. Or you join a conversation already in play, what now?

The important difference between networking and socializing is when you are networking you are meeting new people or people that you would like to know better, that creating and building relationships stuff. When you're socializing, you're just chatting with the same old crowd. And (again) is that an effective use of your time?

So now you're standing in front of someone, shook hands (firmly) and are making eye contact, where do you start?

Although a lot of networking books tell people not to say "So what do you do?" almost everybody does, or something similar. I personally don't have a problem with it, after all, the whole idea of networking is to meet people and find out what they do! If you want change it around a bit, "So what brings you here?"

Make sure you have a good "elevator speech" about what you do and good follow up. It should be succinct, interesting and you know you succeeded when the person says, "tell me more"? People often focus on the initial statement and ignore having a good follow up. What often happens is that you lose focus and could start babbling! Keeping people interested in you is what you want to do.

QUICK TIP –

**YOU FIND YOURSELF BABBLING, PEOPLE'S EYES GLAZING OVER OR LOOKING AROUND, HOW DO YOU GET OUT OF THAT?
..JUST SAY, "SO ENOUGH ABOUT ME, TELL ME (MORE OF) WHAT YOU DO".**

Section III – The Conversation, Chapter 9

Now that we have some basics down, let's break the Conversation into two parts, Listening and then Talking.

Listening is often misunderstood. Most people think of listening as “not talking”. We think we are doing pretty good if we don't interrupt. That's a start, but only the start.

So can you listen, really listen and not just “not talk”? People often let other people talk, but then spend their time thinking about what they are going to say next, thinking about their favorite sports team or a show they are missing right now. *Listening is really focusing on what the person is saying.* In the book “What Got You Here Won't Get You There” by Marshall Goldsmith, he talks about it as listening with respect. We all know people that we love talking to because they do that to us. You get the sense that right there, right then, you are the most important person to them. When that happens, how does that make you feel? Wouldn't that be a good way to make the person you are conversing with feel? Would they then have a positive sense of you?

Think about a first date, professionally or personally, someone you are trying to impress. You hang on their every word, you are attentive to what they say and even focus enough to pick up what they aren't saying. You feel connected with that person as they talk, you are “clicking”. You can do it, you just need to learn to do it regularly.

Why? As mentioned before, the other person is picking up that you are really interested in them and responds positively to that.

QUICK TIP – A GOOD MEASURE OF HOW MUCH YOU SHOULD NOT BE TALKING (THEREFORE LISTENING!) IS EQUAL TO THE QUANTITY OF PEOPLE. IF THERE ARE TWO OF YOU, THEN YOU SHOULD BE LISTENING AT LEAST 1/2 THE TIME, THREE OF YOU, 1/3 OF THE TIME AND SO ON. THIS WAY YOU ARE NOT DOMINATING THE CONVERSATION AND GIVING THE OTHERS THE CHANCE TO TALK ABOUT THEMSELVES.



Ok, so you've shown you're a good listener and now is the chance to talk. This is an excellent opportunity to really screw it up when you open your mouth to speak!

The best words out of a persons mouth are questions or openings for people to talk about themselves.

"Tell me about yourself..your company..your industry".

"What kind of customers do you like?"

"How do you do that?"

And so on.

People love to talk about themselves and what they do. When you ask questions, you are gathering information about them and their organization and you are showing yourself to be someone interested in their life, creating a great impression.

But you ARE going to get the opportunity to talk and you should....

- be enthusiastic about what you do and what you are doing now. Keep your energy and enthusiasm up. If you mumble or by your tone of voice don't sound too thrilled about what your doing, why would someone want to do business with you? But being enthusiastic doesn't mean you go on...and on...and on.
 - be aware of using fillers – ummm/s or "like" or "and stuff". It's filler. It means that you don't know what you are saying. It's distracting from the message you wish to give.
 - never whine about work or you're busy day. Why would people want to do business with someone that doesn't like their job?
 - not inundate people with everything that you do. Some people have a lot of offerings....who cares? The purpose of networking is to build relationships. Even if you are looking to meet with them, the purpose is to get a meeting. If you are pushing your product, you're selling, and nobody is interested. So stay focused and keep your eye on what you want to accomplish.
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Section III – The Conversation, Chapter 9

QUICK TIP - WANT TO REMEMBER NAMES?

AFTER THEY INTRODUCE THEMSELVES, TRY AND REPEAT IT AT APPROPRIATE TIMES –

SHAKING HANDS – “WELL, NICE MEETING JACK.”, “SO TELL ME SUSAN, WHAT IS IT THAT YOU DO?”, “IT WAS GREAT TALKING TO YOU PAUL.....”

A good conversation will range over business, personal, sports and local happenings. It benefits you to be prepared and read local news so that you can converse or at least understand what people are talking about. You don't need to be a sports fan to pass over the sports pages and know the major players, who is being traded and so on. Having said that, don't pass yourself off as an expert if you're not. Let the others do the talking.

QUICK TIP – YOU NOW WANT TO LEAVE THE CONVERSATION GRACEFULLY, BUT NOT SURE HOW? REMEMBER THE BODY LANGUAGE SECTION WITH THE DIAGRAMS OF THE TWO PEOPLE TALKING. MOVE YOUR BODY FROM ANY CLOSED POSITION INTO THE “OPEN TRIANGLE” POSITION RELATIVE TO YOUR PARTNER LEAVING AN OPENING FOR SOMEONE TO COME IN. AT THEIR ARRIVAL, GET THEM TO START CONVERSING AND THEN EXCUSE YOURSELF.

Section IV – After, Chapter 10

Keeping the Conversation Going

You're done. The networking event is over. You did everything Terry told you to do (well most) and whew, you can now relax.

Not quite yet.

You now have met some people and maybe got an appointment or agreement to meet. So now what?

Obviously, the people that you are going to meet get attention. As soon as possible, contact them for a concrete date and time if you haven't already done so.

Networking is to gain favorable attention. Post-Networking should be focused on keeping your name, company and services in front of the potential client.

So write a handwritten note about how nice it was to meet them. Very few people do that any more and just because of that it will make you more memorable.

QUICK TIP – HAVE STATIONARY THAT HAS YOUR BUSINESS NAME, CONTACT INFORMATION, WEBSITE ON IT. THAT WAY, “THE NICE MEETING YOU” NOTE IS SINCERE, BUT YOU STILL HAVE THE INFORMATION ON HOW TO CONTACT YOU AND FIND OUT MORE ABOUT YOU AND YOUR COMPANY.

The next chapter is about uber-networking. Being a super networker and a lot of that has to do with the “after” phase.

Just remember that following up can be the make or break of any relationship. If you promised to follow up, like promising to give them a call or even just emailing someone with a book title that you were talking about and you don't, you endanger all the work that you have done. You become someone that they can't count on. And no one, absolutely no one does business with people they can't count on.

Master the follow-up

There is a popular book on network titled “Never Eat Alone” by Keith Ferrazzi. It can be described as the bible of tips and ways to become an uber-networker. Uber-networkers are the upper tier of super or extreme networking. If you know the book, it’s pretty clear that the author Keith Ferrazzi, who tells you how he networks is in a stratosphere all by himself. Part of it is the obvious financial opportunities he has to throw parties together with significant names and so on, but it’s pretty clear that the man not only networking when he’s “eating”, but also when he’s walking, talking and goodness knows what else.

So what can make you an uber-networker?

Two simple (related) things.

The first is to really get to know and remember interesting points of another persons life. Certainly, birthdays, spouses and kids names are pretty minimum. But what does the person do on their spare time? What about quirks? Do they collect ducks or plastic flamingos? How do they vacation? Museums or Beaches? Do they like to read a good trashy novel when they are on the beach or are they worried about skin cancer? There is a thousand bits of information about a person’s makeup and interests. The more you know about them, the better you’ll understand them.

Now let’s not stalk. Going to networking events with a pen and pad of paper, lurking around groups that are talking and jotting down notes would be not only weird, but pretty scary! Think about natural conversations that you have or come into with people. There are constantly little tidbits being dropped about the persons interests during the course of any conversation as they discuss sports, vacations, business, family life and so on.

Figuring out how you are going to **RETAIN** that information is something you need to figure out.

Again, whipping out a pad and paper and scribbling away or taking out your personal recorder and sticking it in their faces would be a conversation damper to say the least.

Section V, Uber-Networking, Chapter 11

Here are some ways that might work for you –

- **Create a valid opportunity to write something down.** It may be to promise them information or to contact them. If you have their business card, even better. Jot on the back the information “Call Joe tomorrow”, but you know can quickly write down that he just celebrated his birthday, rabid Bears fan, is into Hummel figurines, she loves Coach bags and so on.
- **You’ve finished chatting, can you step away and discreetly record some of the information you picked up.** An appropriate way is if your cell phone has a recording element to it. So while you’re recording those tidbits, it looks like you’re just making a call.
- **Go to the bathroom or go outside for a smoke.** Jot down the relevant info and head back.

The bottom line to getting the information and retaining it with tact and discretion. Do what comes naturally.

So now that you have all this personal information, what do you do with it? This is the second thing you do to obtain uber-networkhood. *Using what you got.*

This is where you send the birthday card with a personal note, “Hey Suzy, hope your birthday is a great one”. Or “ I remember your birthday was around now, can I buy you lunch to celebrate?”

Email Frank about that incredible game last weekend (Frank’s favorite team)

Write a note to Bob mentioning that you remember he was into Hummel figurines and you happened to see that they were having a show displaying them coming soon. Throw in the clipped article or web link.

Hey Nancy, I remember our great conversation at the last event where you were talking about the problems you had motivating your people and I stumbled across this article/website/vendor, thought of you and I’m passing it on.

Morning Beth, I remember you saying you liked (author name) books when you go on vacation and I was just at the Barnes & Noble and there is a new one out. Was wondering if you knew.

And so on.

Section V, Uber-Networking, Chapter 11

What you are doing is raising the level of the relationship to maybe not friend, but certainly friendly acquaintance that is aware of what they do in their lives (and isn't it nice to know that people show a genuine interest?) and are making an effort to recognize and support that.

But again, it needs to be natural. For example, you don't need to pretend to be a Hummel figurine collector to just mention that you saw the upcoming event and thought about Bob and his interest. In that case, you paid attention to their interest and passing on some info that supports their hobby. But if you are not a sports fan, and you are trying to come off as one, it will ring false and be pretty obvious. You can still go up and say "Hey Frank, didn't you say that you are a Notre Dame fan and aren't they doing pretty decent this year?" Shows you listened, but aren't quite following their team. And trust me, the fan will be more than happy to fill you in.

A quick note about automation. We have a lot of processes available today where you get someone's name and send out newsletters periodically about local happenings, general interest items, etc. This isn't bad. It does keep your name and your organization in their minds, however don't mistake it for the strength of the personal touch, the "I was thinking of you" action. It's something that can't be automated or faked.

So these are the two things you need to do

Understand and collect information about people and their lives.

Act on it. Build a relationship that shows you heard, you remember and that you are interested in them and their lives.

You are creating a deeper and more significant relationship. You are exhibiting a memorable thoughtfulness. And it naturally flows that they will want to support you in your business and your success.

Think on it. Act on it.

Be honest and helpful in your dealings.

And a new uber-networker will be born!

Gaining instant credibility

Networking is all about building relationships. Building rapport and building credibility, so people can get to know you and see that you are a person that they want to do business with (or just get to know better!).

But there are several ways to gain instant credibility with people, giving you the opportunity to separate yourself from the herd.

When first meeting people, we put them through a mental obstacle course. We wonder if this person is valid, someone that you could trust. Have you ever been to an event and you are talking with someone when a third party comes up and says, “I’ve used John’s services and he’s just great! Yadda-yadda-yadda (the details that is!). Your viewpoint takes an automatic leap. That person, by getting that “attaboy” gains greater credibility in everyone’s eyes and gets to advance a few squares (so to speak) of trusting that this could be a person you could do business with.

Now, I’m not suggesting that you hire a professional plugger for yourself, where they wait until you engage in conversation with someone and then on signal come running up and start proclaiming the wonder of your services. But are you attending networking events with people that have used your services? It certainly wouldn’t be out of line, to ask them to mention it or be available if you told someone that “Sue over there has used my services and maybe she’d share with you her thoughts”. Instant Credibility. (Just make sure you know what Sue is going to say!)

Another way is to be a speaker. Many organizations, especially chambers are looking for people to speak to their groups on relevant topics. Being a speaker gives you instant credibility as a knowledge expert. People that don’t even attend your engagement will still give you that “expert” status when they find out you did a presentation. There are pitfalls however and public speaking has a whole bunch of them. The two top pitfalls are you need to do a decent job speaking and secondly, not do an infomercial. Infomercials, where you basically do a 30 minute sales presentation where they get 25% off if they sign up today (and there are still people doing this) are a huge turn-off for the vast majority of participants.

Section V, Uber-Networking, Chapter 12

But presenting a good, informative speaking on topics pertinent to your listeners immediately puts you in front of numerous people allowing you to present yourself as an “expert” that wants to help them improve their life/career/business. Someone they maybe could do business with. Instant credibility.

Another way is to write articles. There are a lot of publications out there, again chamber/neighborhood newsletters come to mind that would like submissions. There are also online venues, such as ezinearticles.com that accept articles. The articles themselves are a long term marketing solution to gain business or traffic from.

However, being able to say in a conversation, “oh, yes, I’ve published an article on that very subject”, immediately alters your status. People who write articles are considered knowledge experts, once again giving you instant credibility. Bringing the subject up needs to be natural however. If you’re running around telling people you write articles may not have much effect (or at least the effect you want). But if a topic is being discussed and you casually mention your article you can expect positive interest in knowing you better.

The last and easiest way to gain credibility when networking is to take a position within the organization. Get on the board, or a committee. If the group has them, become an ambassador greeting new people. If you’re networking to meet new people isn’t that a great position to be?

Board members, etc. get a certain introductory pass. Let’s face it, we’re impressed and maybe a little flattered that they would pay attention to us. By being a board member, people believe that you are going to be connected whether in the community or the organization and that you are a good person to get to know. Someone they should know. Instant credibility.

Section V, Uber-Networking, Chapter 12

As an officer, you can offer to have a meeting with a new member with the stated intent of letting them know how the organization works. And they'd love that!

Should you then do a hard sell for your business? Absolutely not. But if the purpose of your networking is to meet new people and build relationships, this gives you a genuine, non-threatening (read non-selling) opportunity for you to approach people, get to know them and begin a dialog that could form into a relationship profitable to all parties.

If this is an approach that would appeal to you, I'd recommend that you genuinely commit to the position. Don't just go in with the attitude that you're in it for the name tag and this will help you score more business when you network. The main reason is because it's just the ethical thing to do, but if you need a business reason, think of who else is on the board. Chances are they ARE connected; they ARE good people to get to know. And if you go in, commit, work to support the organization that only makes both the new member and the more senior ones more than happy to know you and support you in your business.

People go through a buying process. They first have to "buy" you; then "buy" your company and then lastly, they may buy your product. If you are someone who is recommended (first example), knowledge expert (speaking or writing) or is an organizational leader, you gain that instant credibility of being someone they should get to know better. And isn't that how you want people to view you when you network?

Closing Up

So here's the deal. I've loaded you with a ton of information.

Learn to do a little prep work prior to going to any networking event. Get your head in the right place, target some people that can be resources and set some goals of what you want to accomplish.

Always be yourself, but be professional. Get rid of behaviors or appearances that put road blocks in your way. Treat people with interest and respect, even if you don't see where they fit in to your present situation. It doesn't cost you anything and you don't know what's around the corner. They may not be a resource or client today, but there is always tomorrow, or the day after!

Learn to listen well and instead of trying to show how smart you are when you speak, figure out a way to show them how smart they are. If you can do that, you'll be a person that they will want a relationship with.

Don't forget basic courtesy or following up. The fact is that these things are not widely done and will mark you as someone different in a refreshingly positive way. When you follow up, you show that you are someone that they can count on. Always a (big) point in your favor.

Strive to be better, to improve. Good networkers are rare. If you give a damn when you network, show professionalism, interest and responsibility, it will resonate with everyone you meet.

Networking where ever you do it, socially, personally, professionally should be worth your time, enjoyable and rewarding. Networking is all about relationships, you helping people, people helping you, connecting in ways that you may not foresee. Focusing on HOW to network better is what this book has been about. I sincerely hope you have found points that will help you to be a better networker in time. Take a tip today and use it, then another, take time to be more effective in your networking.

You now have the tools, so the time to begin exploring is now.

Credits

Thanks to –

Never Eat Alone ..Keith Ferrazzi

THE book on being the consummate networker!

What Got You Here, Won't Get You There ..Marshall Goldsmith

More a behavior change book, but great sections dealing with communication.

Networking for Dummies

Good solid basics for the beginning networker

If you go to Amazon.com and search for business networking books, they will come up with slightly under 60,000 hits. Knowing that they are talking about the hardback version, the paperback version, the revised version, it's still a LOT of networking books. IF you practice the skills from my book and still feel that you are coming up short, certainly have at it. And drop me a line if you run into something profound!

Some business Networking Organizations

BNI or Le Tip www.bni.com or www.letip.com

These are networking lead referral organizations that allow you to visit them a couple of times to see if they are useful for you.

Chicagoland networking website can be found at www.networkingmonkey.com

Linked In www.linkedin.com

An online networking site where you “link up” with people you know or may be interested in knowing.

Your local chamber is usually a great place to network and “get your feet wet”.

About the Author

Terry Bass is a business coach who speaks, presents dynamic (and often fun) webinars, seminars and workshops, along with some of the most empowering development programs being offered today.

While he works primarily in the ChicagoLand (IL) area, Terry's seminars and workshops have been seen nationwide.

Terry's last position in the corporate world was National Training Manager of Tech Services Intl. (a subsidiary of Eastman Kodak) where his career involved supporting people, providing solutions and creating exceptional customer service.

The author uses his extensive coaching, training and business background to work with individuals and businesses to help them excel in today's business environment.

As a business coach, Terry gets most of his work through meeting people face to face, meaning networking of course. Besides reading some outstanding books and articles, Terry observed and developed what was effective and not so effective when he networked. One of his most popular seminars is on Networking where he covers some of what is presented in this book.

Chadons provides Networking learning through in person seminars and great webinars. His webinars and topics can be found at www.webinars4business.com.

Lastly, check out his website at www.chadons.com and see his flamingo dude logo. The dude is an embodiment of the fact that everyone has visions, dreams and goals of who they want to be and where they want to go. By connecting with your vision or dreams, whether organizationally or individually, you can then create the purpose, motivation and drive to move forward to a better tomorrow.

So what's your dream?

