

Networking Creates a WIN - WIN Relationship

Even if you are a seasoned networker, it is worth taking time to remind yourself of what networking is all about. It must be planned, and it is most effective when the element of personal interest is expressed by building friendly, supportive relationships as a result of the contacts.

We all feel that we must network to help further our own careers and success. Keep in mind that when we do, whomever else we involve in our process is

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reaping his or her own reciprocal benefits. We exchange information both ways. Networking creates the classic win-win scenario.

While letters will always be an accepted method of networking communication it is no surprise that the most important networking instrument is the telephone.

When Using the Telephone to Network, Abide by the Following Rules:

Before you make the call, list the questions you want to ask the recipient.

Introduce yourself and give your reason for calling as soon as your contact picks up the telephone. Say where you found his or her name or who referred you. Give an idea of how much time you would like to talk and ask if this is a convenient time to do so. If not, offer to call back at a set time.

Speak clearly and slowly if you leave a message on an answering system. (It doesn't hurt to repeat your telephone number.)

Be patient. Allow the individual on the other end to call you back at a convenient time.

Building a network of contacts around the country can enhance the life of any professional. When you are on the road attending conventions, seminars or workshops, the opportunities to network are everywhere. Opportunities include not only the associate professionals you will meet at planned activities but also the strangers you meet along the way. Many chance encounters can turn into valuable networking connections.

Tips for Connecting on the Road

Be prepared before you hit the road. Pack stationary, business cards and stamps. Put everything in a folder or file so it will be easy to access.

Let your existing network know of your travel plans. Your current contacts will invariably give you names of people they know in the city you are visiting.

Call an organizational contact ahead of time to introduce yourself and set up a lunch date.

Catch up on your calls and correspondence.

Use travel situations to meet people.

Follow up with a note once you return from your trip.

Networking can be one of the most rewarding professional activities. So dial the phone, pass out a business card, ask a question. You're on your way to developing those win-win relationships that make life and work a joy.

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