

Strategic Networking

ASK OUR EXPERTS...

Lately I have been spending hours and a lot of money at networking events and it feels like I am just collecting business cards. How can I strategically network and save time, money and still grow my business?

The simple answer is to be patient, strategic and persistent. Networking is essentially building relationships. It takes the right attitude, a caring heart and time. Here are a few key steps and processes to help you network strategically.

Before you go to an event, prepare and memorize a short statement that describes your product or service. Keep it simple! When you offer too many choices, the other person stops listening due to information overload.

What type of connections are you looking for? You must be prepared to ask for help and know what you need help with. Generally, people want to be helpful but often only if you are willing to share exactly what you need with clarity.

Pick and choose your events wisely. Go to a couple of groups consistently rather than jumping from group to group. Getting connected takes time and several meetings. Do your research and find the group that is going in the same direction as your business mission.

When you are at the event, relax. Don't be in a hurry to collect cards. If you are impatient, anxious or appear nervous, you cannot be fully present for the other person and you will miss the opportunity to truly connect with whom may be an important contact. You can also build a stronger connection when you honour the other person by being fully present. Be a great listener and ask great questions. This demonstrates your capacity to care while promoting your expertise.

Be likeable. This may sound a little fuzzy, however the hard core truth is that you will push people away if you are too assertive, too focussed on your needs, too cranky or too critical. A likeable person is magnetic and everyone will want to connect with you. Nice people finish first.

Lastly, remember to be a giver of time, contacts, ideas and compassion. We all face challenges so when you are supportive and giving the journey is so much richer. This is great karma.

Building a network is like going to a potluck. You bring your own food to share but everyone enjoys the feast.

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