



Connection Pros

Anyone in business today knows that networking is one of the easiest ways to help grow your business. The challenge is knowing how to network effectively. It's not a mindless exchange of business cards. The goal is to make a real connection with another person. How do you do this? It's not easy because most people have years of bad networking habits to overcome.

Over the next few months, I am going to provide you with tips that will make you a more powerful networking professional. If you follow these suggestions, not only will you pick up much more business but you will also have the chance to truly connect with so many more people.

Let's start with an easy suggestion. Every time you go to a networking function, you are asked to wear a name badge so people will know who you are. After filling out the badge, most people then put it on the left chest. I would like to suggest that you start wearing your name badge on your right chest. The reason behind this is simple. When people shake your hand, their eyes instinctively follow your right arm all the way up and directly to your name badge. By wearing your name badge on the right side, it makes it easier for people to see it and, more importantly, **REMEMBER** your name. Also, if you are one of those people that attend a lot of networking functions, you should have a professionally engraved name badge made for you. A custom engraved badge allows people to read your name easier and it also allows for more information to be printed on your badge such as your company name or even better, a clever title that will make you more memorable. These name badges can be purchased at most copy shops, office supply stores and mail box stores and normally cost about \$8-10. If you want to stand out from the crowd at a networking event, get a name badge that can help with that.

Another tip would be to always remember that every person you meet is the head of the long line of potential relationships. Every time you meet people, not only do you meet them, but you have the opportunity to connect to every single person in their network. Most people are too short sighted when they network. Are you? Do you only look at how you can sell your product or service to the people you are talking too? If these people aren't interested, do you blow them off and go to the next person? If you do, you are missing out on a chance to connect with so many more people. The people you meet are the



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gatekeepers to their individual networks. You get past the gatekeeper, you will find more connections and more business than ever before. However, until you satisfy the gatekeepers, you can't get anywhere. Think about your network. Are you going to let someone you don't know or trust have access to your friends and family? I think not. So, the next few people you meet, visualize hundreds of people behind them that are willing to meet you if you take the time to help the person at the head of the line.

Finally, one of the questions that I am most often asked is Where is the best place to network. Is it Chambers of Commerce, Leads groups, your health club? The answer is all of the above and none of the above. Confused? I know how you feel. The real answer to where is the best place to network is there is no such place. There are so many different places that what might work perfectly for one person but won't work at all for another. You need to make a decision to try one and GO. You will never know what works best for you if you don't try it out. Give it a couple of visits. If it feels good, stick around for a while. If not, get out and find another place. How do you find places to network? Check out your local business publication. They will normally list a fair amount of them. I would also check with your local Chamber of Commerce. Chambers always offer many networking opportunities and they are a wonderful resource for other functions as well. One of the best places to find good networking events is to ask your network. Are you starting to see a pattern here? Find people in your network that are in similar industries or are trying to network with the same people as you then ask them where they go. Find the best place to network for you is a very simple process. You just need to dive right in, find the ones that work for you and continue to go to these events on a regular basis.