

**BE STRATEGIC,
BE INTENTIONAL,
BE SUCCESSFUL**

A Business & Marketing Guide for Small Businesses,
Nonprofits and Entrepreneurs or
Anyone Who LOVES Marketing

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CHAPTER 15

NETWORKING

One of the best ways to promote your business is through networking. When you are out networking, you get an opportunity to meet people and see how they align with your business. Likewise, people get to know you and get a feel for what you do and who you are.

When most people approach networking, they do so from a mindset of “*who can I get*” and “*what can people do for me?*” The most successful networkers, though, go into a networking situation asking themselves the question “*who can I help*” and “*how can I make a difference?*” When you come into new relationships with the idea of serving rather than taking, people are attracted to you.

Like all other parts of your business, this extra shouldn't be embarked upon until you've built your foundation. It's key to know who you serve and what benefit you provide BEFORE going into a networking event. This information is used to determine the most effective events to be at. For instance, if you are a realtor and you're going to events where there are tons of other realtors, you aren't likely to find new clients there. Yes, there is value in going to meetings with other realtors so you can form alliances and build a resource of other experts to call on when you are trying to noodle things around. However, your networking should be at places where you can find, or be connected to, your ideal client. For example, if you are someone who sells insurance to new homeowners, the networking event with all the realtors could be the right one for you.

There are different types of networking events each with varying costs and commitment levels. I recommend trying a group a few times before making a decision about if it's the right one for you. I also recommend finding a few good groups and going to them consistently. The best results come when people can see you regularly and have a chance to get to really know you. Take time out a few times a year to look at your recent clients/customers and determine where they are coming from. This is a good sign of a place to spend more time and money. I often hear people say “*I'm not going to that group because I don't want to pay to go to a group.*” What I tell people when they say this is that people who are willing to pay for a group are often willing to pay for higher end services and know people who are willing to pay as well. I often find that my investment is made back and I make more money beyond that. So, it was definitely worth

joining. If I don't, it's not because the group cost money but rather because it wasn't the right group for me or my business.

While you are at the networking event, it's nice to go in with a set idea of questions you are going to ask people. If you can gear them toward your business, it's even better. For instance, since I help people with challenges in their business, a good question I often ask is "*what challenges you most in your business?*" People love talking about themselves and their problems and what they share allows me to provide some tips and demonstrate that I am an expert. It also gives me an idea of what people are looking for help with so that I can use it as I develop future programs.

In addition to having a set of questions you like to ask, it's also good to have a set of talking points to share about yourself and your business. This ties directly into the messaging we talked about in the foundation section. Look back at that and determine what makes the most sense for you to share. Depending on where you are at, you will probably want to tweak it to adapt to the particular group and people in attendance.

Be sure to collect business cards while you are at the event and to follow up with people you meet that are relevant for you and your business. This helps with the trust you are building and shows that you care. Successful business owners create a system to make following up after networking events a breeze. This often includes having pre-made emails that they can simply copy and paste as well as notecards and a database to put contact information in. During my *Maximize Your Momentum* program, I help clients create a system that works for them and their style.

