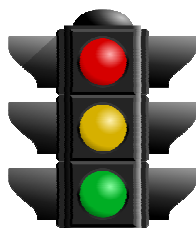


The Traffic Light Approach when you go networking

Or

Know when a conversation is going somewhere ...or not



One attends business events to create more business opportunities . Sometimes it is just gaining new knowledge, other times to reinforce connections and occasionally to start a business relationship. It all revolves around conversations. When we attend events we are looking for our 'ahaa moment'. It's when the person you're talking to says something to raise your heartbeat and you think 'Ahaa this could be useful'. This is where my traffic light analogy kicks in

The Green Light

This is where you have a conversation and at the end of it there is nothing further to say. No business opportunity, nothing in common outside business; it was just a conversation going nowhere. We all have them and often think 'Well that was a bit of a waste of time'. Wouldn't it be great if everyone was labelled with key words to ensure this doesn't happen?

When this happens find the appropriate way to move on...and move on.

The Amber Light

These are conversations where you have found some spark of common interest or you have built rapport quickly. Maybe, somewhere in the back of your mind, you're thinking it may be worth keeping in touch sometimes just because you have got on really well.

When this happens ask for their business card and suggest you keep in touch. Send them an email saying how nice it as to have met them and if you think it appropriate such you meet up.

The Red Light

This is the biggy. This is where you have had a great conversation and you've spotted a potential business opportunity to benefit you both. Remember as a buyer or a seller you both have to create value from any business you may do in the future. So why the red light? It's because I want you to STOP and think 'This is worth following up now.'

When this happens what do you do? You take intelligent and positive action. You have spotted an opportunity to move the relationship forward so this means either a call or best of all a one-to one meeting. You will never do a business transaction at business events all you can do is lay the foundations for the next step. So ask for their card, comment on the card to show interest and then ask the most important question of the conversation. "You remember a few moments ago you said you had an issue with xxx?" They will say yes because they did.

"Now isn't the time to discuss the detail. Do you mind (or how would you feel if) I called you later in the week to chat it over and if you think it relevant we can set up a meeting?"

For really brave people who carry their diary in their pocket...seize the moment and try to get your name in their calendar there and then.

Stop...pause...go.

Every conversation has to lead somewhere even if it is to eliminate some people where you don't want to move forward with a relationship.

The author of this article is Will Kintish, leading UK authority on effective and confident networking both offline and online. If you'd like Will to speak at your conference or training workshops, call him on 0161 773 3727. Visit www.kintish.co.uk and <http://www.kintish.tv/> and www.linkedintraining.co.uk for further free and valuable information on all aspects of networking