



Networking? What a waste of time!

Last week I went to a networking event and had a great time meeting new people. I'm always on the lookout for services that I need at events like this.

I met a young accountant. And since I'm not very happy with mine at the moment, we talked and I asked him many questions. What he said sounded good to me.

So I handed him my card and asked him to call to tell me more. And then he gave me his card and said something like: "OK, I'll call you or you can call me, whatever."

Guess what? A week later I still haven't heard from him!

I think that it's important to point out that this is more often the rule than the exception. Even when making a connection with a real potential client who has a real need and who has real money to spend, so many professionals fail to follow-up.

It's not the economy that's hurting your business. It's you!

The magic of successfully attracting more clients has very little to do with the economy or brilliant marketing messages or exposure on every single social media site. It has a lot more to do with setting up opportunities to connect with more qualified prospects and actually following up with them.

So why doesn't everybody do this? Three main reasons:

1. People don't have a system and they are not prepared. They literally have no plan, no intention, no purpose or goals to build their business. They don't have a written strategy or plan. They haven't thought much about the tools and resources they need.

And if you don't have that, nothing much will happen. Not even if the economy picks up.. Without a plan and preparation and some serious thinking about what you're doing and what you're trying to accomplish, your business will not grow. If you go to event s and don't follow up what's the point in going in the first place?

2. People are disorganised and unfocused. Even if they have a basic plan, they are scattered. They get home or back to the office after a networking event, put the cards they collected on their desks, and then they get busy and the cards collect dust. Two weeks later, they look at the pile of cards and go, "Oh, s###! I forgot to follow up with anyone at that event!"

If this is your modus operandi for growing your business, you're in deep trouble. Like my young accountant without some systems and organisation, you'll be left with a pile of cards but no appointments with potential clients.

3. People are afraid of rejection. If all of the above wasn't bad enough, we fail to follow up or take any kind of proactive action because we think things like this: "I don't want to be pushy. If they're interested in me, they'll call me. I'm just not the sales type. I don't have time for follow-up."

All of this is a disguise for deeper fears such as: "I'll be ostracised if I market myself too aggressively. I'll be rejected and then won't be able to show my face at that group again. I really have nothing of real value to offer. Why am I doing this anyway?"

THREE KEY POINTERS TO CONSIDER

- 1 if they say 'no' don't take it personally
- 2 They are not rejecting you, just the offer of your services
- 3 What is the worst they could say after calling? 'No thank we have decided not to move forward'. And generally most people add either '...at the moment' or '...not yet'. This leaves the door open for you to follow up at some future date



How to Stand Out and Attract Lots of Clients

Those who are attracting as many clients as they can handle are doing the exact opposite of the above:

1. They have a plan and they know what they are doing. They are focused, prepared and ready to play the game of marketing. Attend more events, meet more people, build more relationships, ask good question spot more opportunities and then FOLLOW UP
2. They are organised with real systems in place which they follow without fail. Follow-up is not a burden but an opportunity. For example as soon as you return from an event diary and alarm any actions you have committed to. Put all details into your CRM or similar system. Then ensure on the day you have agreed to call or send information do it.
3. They are fearless. They understand the value of their service and don't worry about being rejected. They make it happen. When you think , "How can I help and add value to this person who has a problem I can resolve?" rather than "Who can I sell my services to because I have targets to meet?" then and only then will you find business development far easier.

Now if this is you, you are attracting a lot of business and you probably wonder what all the fuss is about! You realise that marketing yourself is part of your business and you simply work at getting good at it until it's never a big issue again.

AND FINALLY

Most people find proactive selling marketing and promotion nerve-racking and uncomfortable. Gaining new work through recommendations, introductions and clients calling for more is so much more comfortable. This means however you're leaving the growth of your business or portfolio in the hands of third parties. If you're happy with that, do nothing. If not ,now is the time for change.

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