

Five Ways to Get the Biggest Bang From Your Networking Buck

Ok – you have signed the cheque and have been accepted as a member. Now what? There is more to just showing up with business cards in your pocket. Some people leave a networking group because they didn't get results. As with every aspect of business, results come from effort. Here are 5 easy ways to getting the most from your networking dollars.

1 – Search the Directory

Don't limit yourself to the people you meet at meetings and events. Look through the print and online directory of the WBN to seek out the people you want to connect with. Since it is organized by category, you can easily find someone in the sector you want to network with. Simply email or phone to introduce yourself as a new member, and suggest a coffee meeting so that you can learn more about their business.

2 – Follow-Up

When you leave an event or meeting having made a connection with someone, don't let it get lost in the shuffle of your busy schedule. Add your new contact to your database, so they can receive your newsletters, promotions, or announcements. Immediately follow up with note or phone call. A simple handwritten card with your card tucked in will really stand out among all the emails, and get you noticed.

3 – Get Involved

Like most organizations, the WBN needs volunteer effort to be a success. Join a committee to raise your profile in the network and meet people. By participating you will gain more from your membership. This is a fast-track way to build the relationships which can help your business. Great friendships can also develop!

4 - Ask The Questions

When you are interacting with other members, don't be vague about what you are looking for. If you want a lead into a specific company, simply tell your contact that you want to connect with that company, and ask if they have any suggestions. Most people are happy to use their network of sources to help you out. Which takes us to #5....

5 – Give The Answers

If you are asked by a fellow member for help, be sure you take the time to do it. Respond promptly, even if the answer is "Sorry, but I am new in town and can't help." By assisting fellow members, you help build a strong network which everyone benefits from. Establishing yourself as a trustworthy source of information reflects well on you and your business.

Following these easy five guidelines will help you make the connections and develop the relationships which create great networking, and give you a solid return on the time and money you invested in your membership.



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