



Empowering Networking Techniques

By: Bert Oliva

Many of us are discouraged by the networking events that we go to. We feel swamped by people just looking to get money from us, and we rarely feel as though the event was worth our time. Yet networking should be one of the best ways to bring in new business. The key is learning to network correctly.

The true purpose of business networking event is to connect with people. Effective business networking is building up a stable of friends who can help you and your business. Keep in mind that networking is about being genuine and authentic, building trust and relationships.

You're not alone. Most people are uncomfortable walking into a roomful of strangers trying to build relationships.

Here are some techniques to get you started:

1. First, **arrive early**. Get there early when the group is small and manageable. Enter the room with a smile. Even if you feel nervous, "act as if." If you have a smile on your face, you will be perceived as approachable, enthusiastic, and friendly.
2. Make sure you always have **enough business cards** before entering the event. But most importantly ask for the business card of those that you do meet.
3. Figure out an **opening line** that works for you no matter where you are. This will help you break the ice.
4. Say **your name twice**, slowly. This way you give people two chances to remember your name. And giving the other person a trick or tip to remember your name further cements it in his or her mind.
5. Learn and develop a **30 second introduction** of your business to share and let others know exactly what you do.

One of the most important rules of networking is to **be a good listener**. In fact, you should only be speaking about 30% of the time. We all love to talk about ourselves, and if you give your contacts the chance to do that they will think quite highly of you without even realizing why. Learning these techniques and more will only help you overcome any fears, obstacles or limitations you may have set for yourself or may not even be aware of.

You must take a small risk and step out of your comfort zone. The good news is, the more risks you take, and then the more you put yourself out there in the world, available for more successful opportunities to come your way. Just remember that almost everyone there happens to be looking for more relationships as well. It's a positive cycle that builds with action steps, no matter how small.

About the author:

Bert Oliva has spoken for hundreds of business groups and associations, has written numerous articles for trade publications and magazines and has a new book called the "*Empowering Networking Techniques-The Art of Interacting with Others*". To learn more about Networking Techniques or Business Networking Coaching, please contact Bert Oliva at (305) 256-8773 or visit www.BertOliva.com.