

A Better Way to Network – Eliminate Cold Calls Forever! (Pass this on to people who are still doing it the hard way!)

Extracted from the Book “Take Your Team to the Top”, by Christine Sutherland

Over 70% of sales come not from advertising or cold calling, but from personal introduction. This article does not suggest dumping cold calling immediately. For many businesses that would be plain dumb! What this article strongly recommends is that you build your referral networks exponentially so that you are fully engaged with dealing with warm, referred, qualified clients and potential clients. At that point you no longer need cold calling! Other people are doing it. You can too!

Networking So It Works

Informal networking is easy for most people – we do it all the time when we spend time with family or friends. We’re “networking” even when we’re sitting on the couch watching television with our beloved, because “networking”, after all, is just a fancy word for spending time with and relating to people.

Formal networking has become another kettle of fish altogether because most people get it so very, very wrong. In fact most people think networking is standing around with a drink being bored to death by a series of 15-second elevator pitches and pretending to be interested in people just so you can give out as many cards as possible in the course of a couple of hours.

That’s not networking – that’s torture!

The New Rules of Networking

Profitable and enduring business relationships cannot be achieved on the basis of a “deal”. As in our personal lives, success depends on liaisons built on trust and on common principles and values.

In building business relationships, we should not be looking for obvious or direct benefit, because real benefits are a product of the quality of the relationship! Without an authentic business friendship, there is no real deal! Without an authentic business friendship, any deal made is likely to be one you’ll regret!

What’s Out!

- Stuffing your card in someone’s hand the moment you’ve met.
- “Working the room”, 15-second “elevator pitches”, or “selling at people”

Speed Business Networking is Available to Everyone

Currently we have live meetings in Western Australia. Check the web site for dates and times. And we are growing!

Our many on-line services are accessible by members all over the world!

www.speedbusinessnetworking.com

Could You Bring Speed Business Networking to Your Country or Region?

We can support you to brilliant success, and the financial rewards are exciting.

If you are a business person, senior manager or consultant with great depth and breadth of experience which your members could benefit from, we’d like to hear from you.

Telephone Christine Sutherland direct on 61 8 9246 1977 (Perth, Western Australia) or email info@speedbusinessnetworking.com

- Only being bothered with people who look like potential business for you
- Thinking you have to make an impression
- Having an attitude of “what’s in it for me?”
- Thinking that if I didn’t meet whom I wanted to it was a waste of time
- Thinking if I didn’t get a referral, make a sale, or arrange an appointment, it was a waste of time

Why?

Every one of these behaviours, attitudes, or beliefs has in common the fact that they are plain self-interested and rude. In fact, if we attend networking with any of this operating we may as well turn up wearing a neon sign above our heads that says “I am rude and self-interested” - that’s how obvious it is.

And you know who will want to deal with us? Other rude and self-interested people! Do we want to deal with them? The other type of person who may deal with us is a vulnerable person who hasn’t seen our type coming before. Inevitably, that will lead to problems anyway. So there must be a better way.

A New and Better Way to Network

When people remember that business is part of life, and life is about relationships, they automatically behave in life-enhancing ways, humanizing and enriching the process of networking.

This results in gestalts of people working together for each others’ success, creatively looking for ways to refer or to assist. The outcomes are little short of amazing. And it’s easier and a lot more fun. When you go networking:

- Go with an attitude of giving
- Look at the person in front of you, not the potential deal
- Don’t give your card until asked
- Never make a presentation unless asked
- Know that every single person in that room could help you in some way
- Take off your business mask and just be you
- Realise that it’s about the quality of the relationships you are forming, not the direct deals you do
- Ask for other people’s cards and be genuinely interested in them, not just in what they “do”
- Follow up promptly after the meeting with a short personal note (and a small amount of marketing material only if requested!)
- Know what your own principles and values are
- Do deals only with people who share them!

Good networking is not about doing deals. It’s about sharing goodwill and expertise with people you like and respect. If you do that, you’ll be

shocked and amazed at the referrals and creative assistance you can give each other, because these flow naturally out of the quality of the relationship.

The old way of networking is anathema to relationship quality and offends and devalues us as human beings.

If you want to quickly form authentic, enduring business relationships that flow quantum referrals to you whether you're awake or asleep, at work or on holidays, then Speed Business Networking is the answer to your dreams, because at those events, everyone is playing by the same rules.

Just ask the people at Speed Business Networking who've done exactly this, and have doubled and quadrupled their revenue as a direct result.

The Problem of the Introduction

When we meet someone new at one of these gatherings, we're usually curious about what the other "does". Some networkers practically take out their garlic and crosses when people say "And what do you do, John?" I just think, "Oh for god's sake leave people alone to ask their little ice-breaker questions!" There's nothing innately offensive about asking what someone "does", especially at a business meeting, and the silly proposition that we should instead say "And what is it that you do, John" is just playing semantics.

However I do think we can answer the question a lot better than we have. In the past, people have been taught to answer the question with their "15-second elevator pitch".

It goes something like this:

Q "And what do you do, John?"

A "Well Fred (looking carefully at the other stranger's name badge) I offer a range of accounting solutions that will save your company squillions in operating costs every year, as well as maximising profits through better cash flow management."

Oh my god! It's like someone pushed his little robot button and off he went. I asked a simple, appropriate question for the sole purpose of striking up a conversation and I get a sales pitch coming at me! A half dozen of these and I'll feel like I'm walking down a market street in Bali, assailed from every side! Am I going to be glad to get out of that room! Or maybe I'll just find a nice person with a cheeky smile and hole up in a corner with them until the whole awful thing is over!

Can you tell that I absolutely hate elevator pitches? Not only are they rude, because you're making a sales pitch without being invited to do so, but they're ineffective because almost invariably the listener tightens up, shifts their weight backwards, and comes over all glazed-like around the eyes!

If you want to engage people with your answer to that question, you can do far, far better than that. You can come up with an answer that is not only non-threatening, but is maybe even humorous, and best of all, it gets the interest of the listener so strongly that they feel compelled to engage with you and ask a question to find out more!

Here are some examples:

Q “And what do you do, John?”

A “I specialise in underground accommodation.” (John is an undertaker.)

Q “And what do you do, John?”

A “I have the connections to get you just about any drug you want.” (John is a pharmacist.)

Q “And what do you do, John?”

A “I’m a jewellery freak.” (John makes exclusive jewellery as corporate giftware.)

Q “And what do you do, John?”

A “I’m a virgin who keeps his promises.” (John works for Virgin Blue and organises corporate bookings.)

Q “And what do you do, John?”

A “I try not to eat myself out of business.” (John is a restaurateur.)

You get the idea? It’s pretty hard to come back merely with a “How interesting” when someone’s given you an answer like that. Most people are going to smile and/or look curious and ask us more questions. And we’re going to very happily answer them. Instead of putting someone on the back foot with an elevator pitch, we’ve helped them feel at ease and have related to each other on a very human level instead of like a couple of selling machines.

What to Say after the Introduction

Once you’ve figured out what each other does and asked any questions that you might have you’ll want to move on to more useful topics, rather than discuss the weather, or the paté, won’t you?

I tell people to use this opportunity to pick the brains of their networking buddies and be generous about having one’s own brain picked. In an average networking room, you’re going to find there’s an absolute minimum of some 250 years of shared experience, knowledge, and expertise. As well, some of these people, being outside your business, can give you the sort of bird’s eye view into your business that you would never otherwise benefit from.

So some good topics of conversation or

- What's been your biggest business challenge and how did you solve it?
- What single marketing mistake would you never make again?
- What's the best marketing strategy you ever used?
- Would you mind telling me, out of this list (produce list of ad headlines or slogans) which you think is the most eye-catching?
- Who do you know who could put me in front of Mr A from the XYZ company?
- Would you have the name of a good plumber, masseuse, hairdresser (fill in the blank)?
- What do you think is the secret of a harmonious, productive team?
- What's your favourite type of customer?
- How would I recognise that someone would be a good customer for you?
- Where's your favourite coffee shop for meeting clients?
- What do you think is the biggest mistake businesses make?
- How would you solve this business challenge that I have?
- Do you know many people here?

Obviously, not all these questions are appropriate all of the time, particularly the "Who do you know who could put me in front of Mr A". That's the sort of question you ask a Swan or a Kookaburra, not a Duck and certainly not a total stranger. (*Author note: see definitions of Swan, Kookaburra and Duck in the section on database management in "Sell Your Way to Your Dreams".*) Why? Because if you track down Mr A **through your relationships** you can be assured of being introduced to Mr A in a quality way. If you take "pot luck" you have no idea of the type of person your referrer is. **Who** introduces you matters, because it tells Mr A a lot about the type of person **you** are. Additionally, it is rude to ask such a favour of a stranger because there's no relationship. Why would they refer you when they don't even know you? You could turn out to be a complete idiot and cause them untold embarrassment. So there has to be a relationship based on trust and respect before you can ask such a question.

Take Time to Get to Know People

When you've met people you've taken a shine to at these types of events, do follow up appropriately. It might be appropriate to simply pop a personal note in the mail or email (don't send marketing material unless you've been asked). Or if you really seemed to get on, or have mutually identified a business need, call and make an appointment to meet or even to have coffee or a drink.

It is often in these informal gatherings that the real friendships form and the creative support or problem solving occurs.

The very best networking results from being involved in several networking groups, and meeting lots of the same faces as you get around. You start to look familiar to each other, and of course it's such a nice feeling to walk into a room of strangers and yet see several familiar faces amongst them. You put each other at ease straight away, and you're more likely to launch into more relaxed conversations, getting to know each other so much better, and possibly forming those high-quality relationships that we're aiming for.

Keep in mind that human relationships don't generally form in an instant. Sometimes they do, like "love at first sight", but mostly they need to be cooked slowly to be any good, not microwaved!

Building business friendships is just like building any other types of friendships. You must consistently, persistently and personally keep in touch over time. You must do this with an attitude of giving, always mindful of how you can help. If you will only do this, and keep doing this, you will have more business than you know what to do with, and you sure won't have time for cold calling!

What to Do Next

Take what you've learned in these notes to become a wonderful relationship builder. Forget the potential deals, focus on making authentic friendships with people who share your principles, values and methodology and wait to watch the magic happen!

Speed Business Networking is custom made to build just these types of relationships because:

- ☑ It provides on-going personal and professional development to help you master this new approach to business building.
- ☑ It deliberately creates an environment that is *structured* to enhance relationship building.
- ☑ It respects people's privacy by making it crystal clear that no-one is obliged to refer or to accept referral.
- ☑ It provides structured Speed Business Networking and also has more relaxed purely social get togethers, further enhancing relationship development.

- ☑ For those who can't attend live meetings, it allows networking via My Speed Business Network, as well as through the business support discussion group "BrainBiz". My Speed Business Network allows members to search for warm referrals to clients, business partners, mentors, or employees.
- ☑ It removes all the pressure so that the environment is fun, light-hearted, and totally non-threatening.

Check out membership today by visiting www.speedbusinessnetworking.com, or call Christine on 61 8 9246 1977 (Perth, Western Australia 08 9246 1977.) or email info@speedbusinessnetworking.com.

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