

Small Talk Your Way to Success Through Networking
by Lynne Breil of The Professional Edge
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The futurist John Nesbit says, "networks are friends talking to each other – sharing ideas, information, and resources. The important part is neither the network nor the finished product, but the getting there. It is the communication that creates the linkages between people and clusters of people."

At this recent SBSS program, participants were guided through the art and the science of networking. Yes – it is both. It is a science wherein you need a strategic plan. We operate our businesses with one, why not our network? There are 2 key strategies here:

1. Identify people you consider to be your most important career-related contacts.
2. Identify what you want from others, and what you have to offer.

When we mention 'what you have to offer', consider not just your prowess in your industry, but also your access to other professional groups, your knowledge about a special interest, or professional perks you may have access to that others would desire.

Networking is an art wherein you need some finesse to help you navigate a networking or business-related event. You should practice and have at the ready:

- A 15-second commercial (how you would introduce yourself and what you do in a positive, upbeat way to others)
- A firm (not bone-crushing) handshake; others judge your level of confidence by how you shake hands!
- Easy access to your business cards (which, by the way you don't shove in someone's face seconds after you meet them, but rather offer an exchange when there is a reason to follow up with this person)
- Conversation starters (opening lines like "Tell me about...", "What's reaction to...", "Fill me in on...")

Networking – like every other managerial challenge – involves planning and people skills. Humans spend more time communicating than any other species, and the average person knows about 250 people reasonably well. You will either build your network or one will happen to you.

About the Author...

Lynne Breil is not a networking guru. In fact, she claims that she many times feels a lack of confidence and assertiveness when faced with a networking opportunity. She suspects that many of you share the same reaction to the networking process.

Yet, she started her business in 1995 with no financial support, no investors, no Board of Directors, and no tangible product. Since then, she has presented close to 5,000 programs to organizations across the country - several of them Fortune 100 Companies. Today, she is recognized by the Philadelphia Inquirer and The Chicago Tribune as an expert in the field of Communications and Etiquette in Business. How did she build her business? ...Through a constant never ending, day-in and day-out unremitting process of Networking.

Lynne's company is The Professional Edge, Inc. She specializes in creating professionals and teaching others how to behave in business.

For more information:

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