Hidden Secrets to Networking Success© by Syndi Seid

Some time ago we published an article on the basics to networking etiquette. Lately I’ve realized the true secret to networking etiquette and success is much more than what was first reported. Check out…

http://www.advancedetiquette.com/blog/communications/networking-etiquette/

to review the basics, then continue with the below addition to this important topic.

Susan Roane, author of the best-selling book How To Work A Room™ advises how a person should never not follow-up with a person they meet, because if you don’t that person becomes a one night stand. Although this may be a corny analogy, the truth is no one likes to be a one night stand, personally or professionally.

Networking etiquette and success is in the connections made long after the event is forgotten.

1. **Ask yourself:** How well do I follow up and stay in touch with the new people I meet? Most people agree this is where they drop the ball. It’s fun to meet and greet new people, but then what? The cards get placed in a box or tossed? What steps should be taken to ensure networking success?

2. **BEFORE THE EVENT**

   Develop a contact management system (CMS). It doesn’t matter whether you are a student, stay-at-home Mom or Dad, or a business professional of any kind, or level. Everyone should have a system by which to keep all contacts of people they meet. This can be as simple as an alphabetized card filing case, Excel spreadsheet, or a dedicated software program. What matters is you have a system that works for you in being able to find someone when you want.

3. **DURING THE EVENT**

   Spend time with the person you are meeting to a point you’ll be able to remember the person at a future time. Learn to pronounce their name correctly, ask for and equally provide information about yourself to begin the journey of building a friendship. Learn about things you have in common which is the basis of all friendships. I network primarily to build new friendships and to renew former ones. You’ll be amazed at what great and unexpected bonuses come from just being friends.

4. **SOON AFTER THE EVENT**

   When you get home, be sure to write the date and location, event, or occasion at which you met on the back of each card and include all information learned from the person for future reference. Enter the person in your CMS and send the person an email and/or a handwritten note by regular mail. What can I say? The most memorable messages I receive are those from people who take the time to send me a handwritten note. I definitely make a note of this in my system. A note need not be fancy or lengthy, just a few simple sentences will do: Dear Syndi Seid: I thoroughly enjoyed meeting you at the Chamber event Tuesday evening. I look forward to more opportunities for us to continue getting better acquainted. Please don’t hesitate to call me if I can be of any help to you. I’d enjoy hearing from you. All the best, Jane Doe. P.S. Attached is our brochure for you to learn more about our business. When being in contact after the event, it should be done as soon as possible—ideally within a week, before too much time passes.

Other follow-up ideas include sending the person an article of interest, a lead or
referral, or an email with a helpful resource. Invite the person to meet for coffee, for a telephone meeting, to meet up at another networking event. There are infinite ways to continue building the relationship.

5. **STAYING IN TOUCH**

Develop a plan by which you will stay in contact with the people you meet over time. A monthly newsletter like ours* is an excellent way to stay in touch with folks. A nicely formatted social media page is yet another good way to stay in touch, inviting folks to join your LinkedIn or Facebook group. Organize your contacts into various groups, such as by geography, industry, potential clients/employers, personal friends who like wine, traveling, vendors and suppliers, etc. When something arises in a particular category you’ll be able to share the information with that special group of contacts. Beyond this the universe and the laws of attraction will come into play… I guarantee it!

Here are two true stories to help illustrate these principles:

6. **Story 1:** I met a woman named Jane at a networking event where she happened to mention she was born under the astrological sign of Aries… which I then made a note in my database. A few years later a friend was organizing an Aries party and wanted names of people born under this sign. I looked in my database and pulled up several names. Among them was Jane, whom I hadn’t seen in years. We invited her and received a most joyous reply about being remembered and invited. We reconnected at the party, where I learned she was now employed in the HR department of a major company and was thinking about calling me for a possible workshop. The end result was two months later I was able to be of service to Jane and her new company. Initially, I had no thought of inviting her to this party for any business gain; yet this is a great example of what networking is truly about and what they call the Law of Business Attraction*. Similar situations have happened where I hear about people receiving major leads and referrals as a result of seeing folks at parties.

7. **Story 2:** I know a college student named Will who at his school’s career day event met a CEO of a major corporation, Mr. Smith. This company was Will’s #1 choice at which he wanted to work when he graduated and told Mr. Smith exactly that. Mr. Smith reply was, Great! let me hear from you when you graduate and we’ll see what we can do to find you a position. Graduation was over a year away. Will knew he had to stay in touch to be remembered, so he immediately followed up with Mr. Smith by sending him a handwritten note, sent by regular mail, thanking him for the great chat and mentioned that if there was ever an internship available (paid or unpaid) he was most interested and enclosed his resume. Next, at the end of that year, Will sent Mr. Smith a personalized holiday card with a brief update on his studies. Finally, when Will graduated in May of the following year, he wrote Mr. Smith to say he was ready for full-time employment. Because Mr. Smith was kept informed of Will’s progress in school and was already impressed with Will for staying in touch, Mr. Smith’s personally referred Will to the HR department. The HR department thinking Will was someone special for the CEO to have recommended him, HR knew they had to find Will a position right away. Will achieved his goal of being employed by his dream company, due to his systematic approach to staying in touch.

8. **CONCLUSION**

The days of attending events and winning the contest for the most cards collected in an evening are long past. Today’s trend is to attend networking events to meet only a hand-full of new people with whom you will follow-up and follow-through to stay in touch.

Remember, networking is not about how much you can get from the other person. It’s about what you can do for the other person in the spirit of friendship that will naturally be returned in kind. By helping others, they will truly want to help you in return.

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