

The Business Connector

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Networking Discovered

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We all stumble upon professional networking in a similar way – someone remarks to us, “*It is not what you know, but who you know.*” At first, we do not give this curious little statement much thought. We remark under our breath, “Hmm, whatever.”

Even if we immediately dismiss the statement, this advice has a way of looping through our minds like a catchy song on the radio. “*It is not what you know, but who you know.*” Again, we quickly disregard it as being sound advice, but not really applying to us.

We rationalize to ourselves, “Yes, that is the general rule, but it doesn’t apply to me ... I am special ... look at my grades and accomplishments ... everyone is going to want me on their team.”

As time wears on, we stick to our plan: *relying on what we know*. This it is not a complete failure. We manage to land a couple interviews that hold some (albeit little) promise. And we are offered some positions, but they are hardly worth considering based on “what we know.”

At the same time, however, we see other less qualified individuals struggling not nearly as much as we do. Not only are they getting more

interviews, but they are getting great job offers. That is offers – plural.

When we commiserate about the situation, someone chimes in to remind us again: “*It is not what you know, but who you know.*” Nevertheless, we again dismiss it as not being applicable.

We rationalize, he or she got the position because they are lucky ... he or she lied on their resume ... he or she is a butt kisser.

Time continues on and that statement continues to play in our head from time to time. “*It is not what you know, but who you know.*” In fact, we might even have shared this little kernel of wisdom with someone else, long before we heeded the advice ourselves.

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In the meantime, our lives advanced some. We were able to get a job. Although not a great one, it is decent. This allows us to earn some money and gives us a degree

of prestige. However, most importantly, we feel as if we did this through “*what we know.*”

At this time, we probably sat across from the person who first rendered us advice on advancement and in a round about way smugly indicated, “*See, I did it based on what I know.*”

At that time, knowing that we still do not get it, they confidently indicated back in a round about way, “*It is not what you know, but who you know.*”

We probably gave them a curious glance much like a dog does when you show it a card trick. Moreover, we likely thought to ourselves, “Why do they keep saying that?”

But life moves on, as it always does. Then at some point (which is sooner for some of us and later for others) this looping statement plays again ... *It’s not what you know, but who you know* ... and it really hits home.

As we struggle to muddle along with our lives, we see others whose lives and careers seem to have just scooted along. They are no smarter. They are no more qualified. They do not work harder.

We can rationalize no more. The only difference we can see is who they know.

There truly is something to this curious statement: “*It is not what you know, but who you know.*” By then, we know that this statement has a name: NETWORKING ✓

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