

The Business Connector

A Quarterly Newsletter from AmSpirit™ Business Connections

Networking Refined

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What is networking? It certainly depends upon whom you ask, as there are various definitions.

- Two or more people working toward their mutual benefit
- Short-term activism; long-term self-interest
- The mutual desire to share – the joy of giving and the joy of receiving

Whatever definition suits us best, one thing is for sure ... networking is when we surrender to the notion that “what we know” is of far less importance than “who we know.”

Simply stated, “It is not what you know, but who you know.”

Here is a better question; What is successful networking? Still the “who we know” is more important than the “what we know.” There is more to this, however. There has to be.

If we really think about it, there are people we have known, but nothing has come from it. Perhaps it was a successful relative, an influential neighbor or a highly connected associate. Whatever the situation or whomever the person, we did not realize our networking potential with this individual.

Thus, it is more than who we know. It is what we do with that relationship. After all, a successful relationship involves “know,” as well as “like and trust.”

If we surrender to this – just as we surrendered to the notion that “what we know” is not as important as “who” – we need to alter our networking strategy.

The strategy of building solid relationships, however, involves the habits and attitudes that serve to get those we know to like and trust us.

Much of the strategy of “who we know” involves networking skills and techniques. These are actions like working a room, getting our business card around, or having a spiffy 30-second commercial.

The strategy of building solid relationships, however, involves habits and attitudes rather than mere actions. It is these habits and attitudes that serve to get those we know to like and trust us.

These relationship-building habits and attitudes will fall into one of three categories: presence, altruism and integrity.

Presence involves those habits and attitudes that serve to cast a

positive impression of us on others, whether that impression comes through:

- Personal contact or observation
- Telephone conversation
- Written correspondence

We cast a strong presence when we exhibit a sense of humor, remain authentic and are unpretentious.

Altruism involves the habits and attitudes associated with our selfless contribution to the world around us.

These behaviors and mind-sets include being encouraging, having compassion and demonstrating thoughtfulness. In addition, altruism involves offering compliments to others and showing our appreciation as well as volunteering our time.

Integrity involves our habits and attitudes associated with how we interact with others. This is more than just our perception, but the actual dealings or relationship.

Attributes of integrity include being honest and reliable as well as being trusting of others. It also involves having contrition as well as being forgiving and open-minded.

Networking is about focusing more on the “who we know” and less on the “what.” To be successful at it, however, we need to surrender to the notion that we must focus on building the relationship. This serves to refine our networking efforts.✓

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