

The Business Connector

A Quarterly Newsletter from AmSpirit™ Business Connections

It Works!

Winter 2009 Vol. 11 No. 4

Networking is the target of much speculation and skepticism. And if you are honest with yourself, you will admit that you have been a party to such thought and cynicism, even if only to yourself.

- Do my many small acts of generosity only serve to give me a warm and fuzzy feeling inside or circle their way back to benefit me somehow?
- Is the polite chitchat I engage in just an enjoyable pastime or does it ultimately result in real business somewhere down the line?
- Are my countless hours of volunteering on community boards and with local charities merely an expense of my time or a valuable investment?

You can sum up all this conjecture and uncertainty in one simple question: Does networking really work? Or alternatively, is there really something to the notion that your interaction with those around you eventually serves to lift you up in the form of business referrals, additional information and vital new contacts?

The answer is as simple as the question: It works. Networking works. It got you friends growing up. It served to get you through school. It was likely integral to getting you where you are now. Networking works. It has always worked and will continue to work

Remember, networking is not an innovation of the 1980's, 1990's or the new millennium. Networking works. In fact, evidence of it working is as old as recorded time. In the earliest years of human existence, people developed ways of interacting and ensuring one another's survival.

Humans who hunted in an organized group were more successful than those hunting alone. Humans who shared labor produced more than those who did not. Humans who cared for and watched over one another tended to live much longer than those who operated independently.

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In short, they discovered they improved their chances of survival by networking – simply sharing labor, tools and information. That concept has carried forward with the development of our species. By continuing to share labor, tools and information, we have built a civilization that inhabits all corners of the planet and continually toys with moving beyond that.

While today, networking is more a matter of success and prosperity than survival, it is just as much a part of our existence as it ever was. And despite the advances in transportation, telecommunication, and computerization, the basic principles of networking still works as it always has.

It may not work exactly how you want it to work. You spent a morning at a Chamber function looking to meet a handful of prospects for your latest and greatest service offering. While you find none, you happen to meet the person who can help you plan that well-deserved, perfect vacation. Networking works.

It may not work precisely when you want it to work. You devote weeks to connecting with new contacts and reconnecting with old in an effort to pump up sales to hit your year end targets. Though you might disappointedly fall short of your near-term sales goal, you are pleasantly surprised five years later when a contact finally decides they need what you have got. Networking works.

It may not work quite where you want it to work. You spent hours at a tradeshow hoping to make just one or two new key contacts. You mingle with those you know and you thrust yourself in front of prospective new contacts. Despite the effort, you leave the venue without what you had hoped to find. Then while at the store picking up a few things for home, you happen across that key contact waiting in line with you. It works.

Networking works. You may not always work the process and you may not always work the process appropriately. Nevertheless, networking works. It has demonstrated that time after time, with example after example, for millennium after millennium. It works!. ▼