

The Business Connector

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Network Anywhere; Network Everywhere

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There are lots of words in the English language that serve as both a noun and a verb. Examples include:

PLAY: As a noun, it is what the drama club produces, and as a verb, it is what we, as working adults, don't get enough of.

TRAIN: As a noun, it is that large, powerful vehicle people ride on, and as a verb, it is what we do to improve our minds and body.

BLOCK: As a noun, it can be something children build with, and as a verb, it is something that a football player does.

Another example is the word, "network." As a noun, it is the group of people in your life, and as a verb, it is the act of interacting with those people.

In essence however, the term "network" is much more important as a verb than it is as a noun. Think about it. We cannot have a network unless we first network.

And while the verb "network" is immensely more important than the noun, the most important part of the verb network is the second syllable: WORK.

Successful networking is not about sitting around, waiting and hoping for things to happen. Successful networking is about getting up and about, engaging in communication, and partaking in action.

It is somewhat clear that action is necessary to successfully network. What is not always clear is what are appropriate networking actions.

Far too often when we think of networking, our minds immediately conjure up images of the latest Chamber event, a corporate golf outing or some business after-hours. The action of networking is not limited to those things that some person or entity has officially dubbed as a "networking event."

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The reality is we do not have to wait for someone to anoint a gathering as "networking" for networking to occur. After all, there is no pre-ordained time or place to network.

When we volunteer our time at a charitable event, we are networking. The same is true if we lend our expertise to a civic organization or contribute our talents to some school initiative.

We do not need a special invitation to embark on networking. We create it by our very action. By that very definition, opportunities to network are all around us.

Take the time to give someone a referral and *voilà!* We are networking, just as when we share specific

information with another, or introduce them to another.

While big, meaningful acts are networking, actions do not need to be overly complicated to rise to the level of networking.

We are networking if we do something as simple as being complimentary towards another. The same is true if we are encouraging or empathetic. This activity is networking as well.

We, however, do not need to direct our activities towards a particular individual or group for them to be networking.

If we publish an article or post a blog on any topic of interest, by the very nature of sharing it with the rest of the world, we are networking. The same is true when we deliver a speech or make a presentation.

To be networking, however, we do not need to limit ourselves to traditional means of communication. State-of-the-art ones work well too.

Networking happens when we do anything on social media related to immersing ourselves in a group, generating discussion, or answering (or asking) a question.

The reality is that we can network virtually anywhere and opportunities to network are everywhere. To build our network, however, we need to take every opportunity to network. All we need is the desire to interact with others and the initiative to do so.▼