

## October 2006 Newsletter

# Thoughts about networking

Whether you have moved to a new city, just started a business or are at the point of growing your business, building a community with lots of connections is essential for your personal business evolution.



**Remember** networking isn't about instant gratification – it's about long term success! Relationships, business and personal, need time to develop.

Home business people have an added reason to network. If you don't get out of the house, isolation and the longer term effects of isolation, (depression), may set in. If you don't get out there and let people know that you exist, how are they going to do business with you?

I am a member of the East of Scotland Business Women's Club and I am constantly amazed when I meet new members who really don't know what networking is all about, or indeed how to network.

**Fear not**, networking is a skill to be taught and to be learned. Here are some tips to help:

## The first phase in networking is establishing your integrity

The number one skill for good networking is the ability to **listen**. As Stephen Covey puts it, "**seek first to understand - then to be understood.**" Ask good questions enabling a person to give you lots of information about who they are and what they do. People love to talk about themselves and they will leave you thinking what a wonderful person you are and all because you gave them time and space to talk. The next day follow up with an e-mail expressing how nice it was to meet them and they will remember you even although you told them nothing about yourself. Your turn will come the next time you meet.

A really good question to ask is, "**what are the particular challenges that come up for you in your business**" The focus is on the other person and how you can support them to achieve their outcomes rather

than what's in it for you. You never know, you might be the very person they are looking for or you may know the very person they need. Always remember, if you say you will e-mail information or phone with details - **do so!** You are then walking your talk and being an excellent role model and networker. This is what is known as building trust and personal credibility. People then have faith in your integrity and competence. A good networker is always looking for opportunities to give rather than to get.

## The second phase of networking is building rapport

In NLP we say that people like people like themselves, so now is the time to align your self with the other person. Get a feeling about who they are and allow them to get a feeling about you. Mirroring and matching is the skill to use here. Your empathic skill is important here too, as you are giving the message, **I am like you, you can like me.** People do business with people they like.

Sometimes it takes a while to get to this point and it may not be possible to achieve this at the first meeting. Only once you have gone through those two stages have you reached the point where you can go for what you want. The most effective way of selling your services is to show how best you can meet another person's needs. Even if your services are not what the other person is immediately wanting, s/he will confidently recommend you to others because you have prepared the way by building a relationship first and giving value.

### So where do I go to do this networking?

- Join a business club
- Contact your local Chamber of Commerce
- Look for groups to network with that are within your own industry
- Consider groups that might not be in your own town - expand your horizons
- Take a class, at night school perhaps, get to know some new people as they will probably ask what type of business you are in
- Start a group - either social or business
- Teach what you love - design a continuing education type class
- Get out there and speak - find a group you enjoy attending, or that your ideal client attends and volunteer to speak

Most of all have fun building some great relationships and enjoy the journey.

## Happy networking

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If you want back copies of the news letter e-mail Sheena at [Sheena@changingperceptiond.org.uk](mailto:Sheena@changingperceptiond.org.uk)

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Thank for your interest, we hope you have found this newsletter interesting.

Sincerely,

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