

SPECIAL REPORT!!

☑ 15 Point Checklist

...and BONUS Tips too for

Business Networking SUCCESS

By Gina Bell,
The Networking Maven



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NetworkingMaster\$.com
"Connecting Entrepreneurs and Experts... Together We're Better!"

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“Help! My Networking is NOT Working!”

Yes, I've heard this cry many times!

My response is... “Tell me... **HOW** are you working your networking?”

Usually, my clients aren't prepared to respond to that because they've never really thought about it before. Their efforts are hit and miss and they've been hoodwinked into believing that networking is about meeting new people. But meeting new people is just the tip of the iceberg.

My best advice to clients in this situation is for them to become more **proactive** vs. reactive with their networking efforts. To think about the results they'd like to get from their networking endeavors and to explore the potential of what meaningful connections, with the right contacts can bring to their business.

Networking really is about so much more than just meeting new people. Here, let me help you... how about referral partners; joint ventures; strategic alliances; information; introductions; recommendations; masterminding; friendship...?

More often than not, my clients just haven't thought about the real benefits of networking. And once that light bulb turns on, they're anxious to get networking working for them in new, more powerful ways.

You can give yourself a competitive advantage by simply **preparing** for the networking meetings and events you will be attending. A little prep work is the key to increased confidence and getting the results you want from your networking efforts.

The same thing goes for online networking too folks. Think about the results you want and then decide what actions you will take to make it happen.

To get you started, and in a proactive frame of mind, I've prepared a **networking checklist** for you. Happy Networking!

My Best,

Gina Bell,
The Networking Maven

☑ **BEFORE an event:**

1. Prepare Your “Networking Tool Kit”:

Two nice pens... Your pens should look nice because people do judge by what they see... a nice professional looking pen is an easy way to convey a professional approach to business networking. You need the second pen in case one runs out.

Business cards... Make sure you take enough business cards to go around. Your business card is one of the most cost effective marketing tools around... make good use of them by NOT being miserly with them.

Breath mints... Need I say more?

Hand sanitizer... You’re going to be shaking a lot of hands and collecting a lot of germs that you don’t want to pass along or worse – take home with you! Use it subtly so you don’t appear compulsive.

Professional name tag... Wear this on your right side so that it is highly visible when people shake your hand. Tip: Tuck a yellow highlighter in your purse to use on sticky “Hello my name is:” name badges... Your name will pop and people will ask how you did that... it’s a great conversation starter (I stumbled on this great idea in “Million Dollar Networking” by Andrea Nierenberg.)

Small notepad... A small notepad allows you to document important notes, reminders, dates, etc...and believe it or not, some of the people you meet will have forgotten to bring *their* business cards. Make note of any important information you learn about your new contacts as well as planned follow up ideas... Tip: Don’t carry around your large and cumbersome Day-Timer because it will be inconvenient to open and make quick notes.

Note cards & stamps... If you're a procrastinator like me you'll appreciate this idea. Keep several note cards and stamped envelopes in your purse or even the glove box of your car. Jot a short personal hand written note to your new contacts and drop the cards in a mailbox BEFORE you get home... this way it's sure to get done AND think about the impact you'll make because almost nobody does this.

Hi Susan!

It was great meeting you tonight at the BNI Gala. I really enjoyed our conversation about the _____. (Fill in the blank or create a sentence that acknowledges your conversation) I'm anxious to learn more about that so I'll be in touch with you soon.

Feel free to contact me anytime at (your contact info).

My Best,

*Gina Bell,
The Networking Maven*

Now if you're a real pro with your database and used to adding new contacts promptly, you should consider using a **professional greeting card service** such as [Send out Cards](#)TM. I started using it for my businesses and we absolutely love it. It's very professional, super easy to use and saves both time and money. *(Simply click on the link above and you can get started today – it's really easy!)*

Business card holder(s)... Have one card holder just for your own business cards and a separate multi-page card file filled with the business cards that belong to your existing network contacts you usually refer to others. This accomplishes two important things: 1) You won't mix up the cards and accidentally give your new contact someone else's business card and 2) You look very professional when you have an established network of professionals that you refer to (your new contacts will be wondering... how do I get my cards in that folder?)

A Positive Attitude... You're probably thinking this is simple common sense right? Wrong! You'd be surprised at the number of Negative Ned's and Nellie's who attend networking functions hoping to grow their business. Note: Successful Networkers are memorable – in a positive way!

Your Smile... Even if you are the biggest sour puss in the world anyone can put a smile on their face. A nice smile is the best greeting of all; it puts others at ease. A smile makes you appear more approachable; you look more attractive, happy, confident and self-assured.

Remember, you only get one chance at a first impression so consider smiling more often and people will want to meet you.

A Firm Handshake... Saying hello with a confident handshake speaks volumes. Make sure your handshake is firm (not bone crushing or the dreaded “dead fish”). Find a friend or colleague who will practice shaking hands with you.

Your Attention... Be respectful by remembering to turn off your cell phone or blackberry when you arrive at the event. Disrupting a meeting with your phone going off sends a very negative message to the other attendees. Not a good first impression strategy either.

2. Take a Good Look in the Mirror:

I'm sure you've heard the phrase... **“You only get one chance to make a good first impression.”** Make sure you're presentable. You don't want people to know what you ate for supper ;)

Be sure to **“Dress for Success”** or at least dress for the occasion. If you are attending a business breakfast make sure you aren't planning to attend in your blue jeans.

Did you know, “accessorizing” has been proven to increase perceived status so when they say “dress for success” they really mean it.

Shoes are a big one... make sure they are polished (especially the heels ladies); in good shape and match what you are wearing.

3. Know What You Will Say (A) –Your 30 Second Commercial:

This really could be considered part of your “Networking Tool Kit” because a well thought out and rehearsed response to the inevitable question: “So, what is it that YOU do?” is an absolute MUST.

Your “verbal logo” should be memorable and meaningful; it should grab the listener’s attention and leave them wanting to know more.

I recently listened to an incredibly informative Tele Seminar Interview where Ann Convery, creator of “Speak Your Business in 30 Seconds or Less™” shared specific tips on how to craft a powerful verbal business card:

Use numbers in your verbal logo; they make the abstract real and increase the believability of your message. Think about Magazine covers... they are found in the most high traffic and compulsive buy areas of a store – right by the check out counters. Their headlines need to grab your attention fast – and they do (i.e. 44 things teens don’t want their parents to know and why!). Notice, this headline format makes you anxious and curious – immediately you wonder... just what are the 44 things teens don’t want parents to know and why?

Use specific phrases in your verbal logo that **demonstrate the exact results** you can generate: So, if you’re a fitness trainer: “I help my clients break through the barriers to weight loss using a proven 7 step action plan for maximum weight loss”. If you’re a Skin

Care Consultant: “I have 2 skin care products that are not on the market; they will take 10 years off your face in just 2 weeks!”

Tie what you do to time, money, love or health and you will trigger an emotional response. Describe what need you can satisfy. (i.e. hunger, anxiety, urgency, weight loss,...) Your message is not about you... it’s about what you do for them.

Provide a description of the types of people or businesses you work with. This provides immediate visual and relatable information for the person you are speaking to. The odds are much higher that they can become a referral source or connect you with complimentary professionals if you paint a clear and memorable picture with words.

Please **DO NOT LABEL YOURSELF** using your job description. You risk being labeled based on the person’s past experience with others in your industry. These experiences could be good or bad – you just never know.

Never start selling when you’ve just made first contact – **EVER!** It’s an instant turn off.

Make sure your new memorable response to the inevitable question rolls off your tongue - so practice, practice, practice!

4. Know What You Will Say (B) – Confident Conversations:

Think of ways to start conversation **BEFORE** you go to a business meeting or event. You will need an inventory of “opening” questions, “get to know you” questions and “small talk topics”. Practice them in front of the mirror so that you feel comfortable saying them. The key is to use “open-ended” questions which require more than a one word answer.

Example “Opening” Questions:

- Do you find these meetings helpful to your business?
- I’m new here. What can you tell me about this group?
- Hi! I don’t think we’ve met yet...I’m Gina Bell, and you are?
- What brought you to this meeting?
- That’s a great pin (suit, scarf, purse...etc), where did you get it?

Example “Get to Know You” Questions:

- Where are you from?
- How do you keep yourself busy when you aren’t working?
- Where do you work?
- What is it that you do?
- How will I know if I meet someone that could use your product/service?

Notice that these “get to know you” questions focus on the person you are speaking with rather than the organization, or event itself.

The art of Small Talk:

According to Susan RoAnn; Author of “What Do I Say Next?” Small talk is a way to connect even in situations where "big talk" -- murder, war, famine, religion, and politics -- may not always be appropriate. Not everyone wants to hear our views on the deadly Ebola virus or the latest border skirmish at a museum fund raiser for students of the arts. The big issues are important, but we must know the right time or place for them. Small talk is what we do to build to big talk. It is what cements relationships and success.

Example “Small Talk” Topic Ideas:

- Current Affairs
- Best Selling Books
- Movies
- Business News
- Stock Market
- Industry Trends

Consider your personal interests and areas of expertise to come up with additional topic ideas. Start and develop a journal of interesting topic ideas for future reference.

Good Resources for “Small Talk” Topic Ideas are:

- Local, National & International News (Paper, TV, Website, Radio)
- Magazines (Traditional and Online)
- Books
- Movies

Why worry about small talk? Small talk in conversation allows you to find common ground, something in common to spark a connection...this is the fuel that opens the door to establishing rapport and building trust.

5. Start With The End in Mind – Goal Setting:

Start with the end in mind – Define your purpose for attending each event. Ask yourself: “Does this event/meeting fit with my business goals? Can I make quality connections by attending?”

Once you’ve determined the time/cost investment is worthwhile, determine a specific number of ‘quality’ connections you would like to make at each event. (Key word = quality). Two or three is a realistic goal for most.

Tip: When setting goals, they should always be:

- a) written down
- b) specific
- c) measurable
- d) realistic
- e) based on YOUR unique plans and what makes sense for you.

6. Be Sure to Leave/Arrive Early:

The early bird gets the worm! Leave early so that you arrive 15 to 20 minutes before the event officially starts to allow for proper networking time.

☑ DURING an event:

7. Make Strategic Introductions

The first thing you need to do once you've arrived at a meeting or event (especially if this is your first experience with this particular group/event) is to introduce yourself to the host (or an obvious member/coordinator) and tell them you are new and would appreciate it greatly if they could introduce you to a few people.

Depending on the number of introductions you get, doing this one thing can completely remove the need to introduce yourself to any other strangers.

Make sure you deliver a confident and polished commercial, use your conversation and small talk ideas and don't forget to smile ;)

8. Resist the urge to visit with people you already know!

It is human nature (*and all about comfort level*) to be drawn to something or someone that is familiar however, when it comes to networking this is the absolute quickest way to squash the potential to generate results from your networking time. The goal of networking is to increase your network by meeting NEW people. Put that smile on your face, remember the list of conversation starter ideas and go for it!

9. You have TWO ears and ONE mouth... Use them proportionately!

Learning to **ask** questions and **listening** closely to the answers is one of the most valuable skills you will want to develop when it comes to business networking and effective business communications in general. **Start with the five “W” questions:** Who, What, When, Where and Why. The answer to each of these questions will provide a lot of information about what your new contact does and will make it much easier for you to refer business to them and provide added value in the future (i.e. invite to a networking event, send interesting information or articles, make an important introduction...etc...)

10. Act like a HOST not a guest

This is one of the best strategies for those who are hesitant to introduce themselves to total strangers. There is an obvious difference between the behaviour of a guest and that of a Host. If you were the event or party “Host” wouldn’t you introduce yourself to people you didn’t know and introduce them to others? Wouldn’t you make sure your guests knew where to hang their coat or where to get a food/beverage? Of course you would!

A Host is much more active and is focused on doing things for others. A guest typically sits back and relaxes. There is nothing stopping you from choosing one behaviour or another.

A great opportunity for you to learn by example is to get involved with your **local Chamber of Commerce** as an Ambassador or Visitor Host. Their job is to greet visitors and introduce them to others.

11. Be a connector:

Create reasons to re-connect with the people you meet.

- Invite them to parties and networking events,
- mail magazine articles you know they'll enjoy or relate to their industry and past conversations,
- call or email just to see how they're doing,
- arrange a 3-way lunch to introduce two new friends,
- email an interesting web address,
- forward a photo,
- recommend a book,
- pass on a newsletter

You get the idea. Find ways to re-connect and be the connection for others. You'll improve your top of mind status and be more memorable.

12. Relax and Enjoy Yourself!

Make the decision to enjoy your networking experiences. A positive attitude and willingness to learn and improve will take the weight of the world off your shoulders.

Give yourself permission to make mistakes—just make sure you learn from them !

AFTER an event:

13. Update your data base.

The most valuable networking asset is a database. Whether you keep yours in a Rolodex, on the computer, or on 5x7 colour coordinated index cards, update it after each event. Include the date and function where you met; info about children, pets, vacations, and how you followed through.

14. Send out a personal note & add new contact to your “keep in touch plans.

A quick note or email message following an event will help keep you top of mind. Make sure your follow through message is about them, their business, not a sales pitch for yours. Virtually no one else is doing this.

It's natural during conversation to have ideas and make suggestions. If you said "I know someone who. . ." put a call in to the person who wasn't there, suggesting a 3-way lunch. If you mentioned that you read an article, make a copy, jot a note and pop it in the mail. If you talked about a service that someone else needed, fax through a flyer with a note of endorsement.

One of the primary purposes of networking is to build credibility so that people will refer their clients to you. **Follow through action makes you credible.**

Did you know... You can put your follow up plans on autopilot... We use www.sendoutcards.com/19221

A good keep in touch strategy can win clients long after your first meeting. Recent statistics indicate more than 50% of business professionals give up on their prospects too soon!

15. Think about adding value to each new contact:

Become known as a powerful resource for others. When you are a strong resource, people remember to turn to you for suggestions, ideas, names of other people, etc. This keeps you visible, endears you to others and what goes around comes around!

✓ **About the Author:**



Gina Bell is co-Founder of Networking Masters International, creator of D!VA Women's Network, and GetYourYearInGear.com; resident Networking Expert for the International Association of Web Entrepreneurs (AWE); co-author to "The Power of Mentorship for the Home Based Business" and "The Networking Masters to the Rescue" series of books as well as forthcoming author to "I am Diva: The Essence of Extraordinary Women".

There is always something to look forward to with this serial entrepreneur so it's no surprise that Gina's expertise will be featured in three additional books this year including "Career at Home Moms", "The Power of Mentorship for Creating Wealth" and "The Official AWE Web Navigation Guide: Twenty Emerging Trends Every Online Entrepreneur Must Know in 2009"

For years, Gina has been teaching entrepreneurs how to effectively leverage their networks and accelerate their success thru purposeful networking and relationship building strategies such as in-person and online networking; referral partners; strategic alliances and joint ventures.

Gina is highly passionate about helping her clients breakthrough barriers such as negative mindsets and self-limiting beliefs. Gina's "Believability Makeover Program" is a must for entrepreneurs who feel stuck and don't know why.

Get Your FREE Networking Success Kit:
at: www.TheNetworkingMasters.com

Learn more about Gina and her highly acclaimed business acceleration programs at:
www.DaringDivapreneur.com
www.GetMoreAndBetterClientsNow.com (Sept. 08)
www.GetYourYearInGear.com (Oct. 08)
www.DIVAwomensnetwork.com (Nov. 08)

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