

# Seven Parts of Successful Networking

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Now that you have the rules and a contact strategy, here are specific tactics that will allow you to put into action what you know and become a top-notch networker:

## 1. Observe and respond to success around you

This means reading the newspaper with a networking eye and listening to the news with a networking ear. When someone in the news gets your attention, send that person a note with a compliment about what he or she said and mention how you were inspired. Then mention that you would enjoy meeting the person and sharing an idea that would interest the person.

## 2. Set small goals that lead to big goals

Make networking fit into your work plan and set some goals. Let's say you're off to a meeting or business function. Set a goal to make two new contacts. Make sure you leave the room only after that goal is accomplished. Then follow up with these people. One of the best ways to follow up is with a short hand-written note.

## 3. Offer a thousand thanks

Thank-you notes stand out because they show people that you took the time to craft a personal message. These notes should be short and might include appreciation for something specific that the person said or did, a brief review of anything that will trigger the place you both met, an attention-getting comment or a specific offer given within a specific time. If you take away only one idea from this article, this note concept should be at the top of your list. Most people won't take the time to write follow-up personal notes. When you do, you'll be unique and remembered.

## 4. Do your homework and be prepared

If you're going to a business luncheon, do advance research related to the industry represented. People appreciate your efforts in getting to know them and their profession. If you know, for example, that mostly meeting planners will be there, find out what the hot topics are for this group.

## 5. Always support and empower others

Networking skills come naturally to me now; however, it wasn't always that way. We all need to reach out to people, give advice and help anyone who asks. Helping others is a great way to connect, and I often learn the most from those I've extended a hand to. Even in networking, it's much better to give than to receive.

## 6. Build solid foundations

Once you've determined the best way to network with a new contact, stick with it. For example, if there are monthly meetings for a particular association you belong to, make sure you attend each one.

## 7. Perception is reality

Always make a good first impression and keep your subsequent impressions good. Whatever you did to make a good first impression (e.g., sending a note, following up quickly, having a cheerful attitude), make sure these positive attributes are always present.

To sum it up, develop and nurture your network with your own system. Think back to current clients you got through networking. Now remember the tactics that led you to those customers and contacts. The goal here is to discover what you already do that works and repeat it. If all this sounds like a lot, start with one or two tips and work with them long enough to measure their effectiveness.

I'm no stranger to the business community in New York. It certainly isn't because I'm the most famous training professional in the United States; it's because I made a decision to create a network of business relationships that are uniquely mine. We all can do this by being thoughtful when we meet new contacts. A thoughtful person is a remembered person, and that should be our ultimate networking and self-marketing goal.

*Based on an article written by Andrea Nierenberg who is a training consultant in New York*