INNOVEST SME
Accelerating Small Business

PR: Managing your Relationship *with the* Media

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CONTENTS

The public is the only critic whose opinion is worth anything at all.

Mark Twain

PREFACE

In this book, you will get knowledge you need to manage effectively your image and value by forming solid networks through strategic communication planning. Effective networking is essential for day-to-day business or for those times when you are actively pursuing job opportunities.

Networking and public relations is the most successful method of communicating your value to those around you. Furthermore, good networking skills enable you to tap into those relationships you already have and increase the scope of your network. This book is designed to give you practical knowledge and hands-on tools that will get you networking once you complete this book.

You learn something every day if you pay attention.

Ray LeBlond

CHAPTER ONE

NETWORKING FOR SUCCESS (I)

Networking is an effective way to spread your value through those around you. Understanding the basic mechanics of networking will increase you success in delivering the right message about yourself to others. In this chapter, you will learn how to create an effective introduction and how to make a great first impression.

CREATING AN EFFECTIVE INTRODUCTION

The first two minutes of your conversation is when most people form an opinion about you. That is why an effective introduction is necessary when networking. In fact, you may only have a few minutes with the person you are meeting to share with them who you are and what you do. In order to create a good and lasting impression use the MEETS technique to introducing yourself.

MEETS stands for the following:

- Make eye contact
- Emit a smile
- Engage in a handshake

- Tell him or her your name
- Share what you do or whom you work for

Using these steps will ensure that your introduction gets your message across without taking too much time. Avoid talking too much at the beginning. Allow the other person to introduce him or herself. You should engage the person you are meeting by asking for their information. Short effective introductions help to send a positive message about you.

Your goal is to introduce yourself and share some relevant information about what you do in 30 seconds. You should practice your introduction as if it were a short speech. The more practice you have doing this, the more comfortable you will be in the real setting.

MAKING A GREAT FIRST IMPRESSION

You do not have to do a lot to make a great first impression. Sometimes, if you focus too much on making a great impression, you could end up with the opposite results. Making a great first impression is not making it about you. It is making it about the other person. You want to make the other person feel important and worth meeting.

In order to do this you should use the Five B's. The Five B's are the following:

- **Be on time:** when you are on time, you demonstrate to the other person that you care about their time and value them.

- **Be yourself:** when you are yourself, you come across sincere and show you want to build an honest relationship with the person.
- **Be positive:** when you are positive you create an inviting environment. When you have a negative attitude, people will want to drift away from you.
- **Be courteous:** when you are polite and courteous, people will remember this aspect and create a lasting positive impression.
- **Be brief:** when you are talking, avoiding taking too much time. Being too talkative may be seen as a negative trait and this could hurt your first impression.

Your best first impressions will be the ones when you show you care about the other person's time by valuing their time and thoughts by actively listening to them. Make the interaction less about you and more about the other person and you will make great first impressions.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Michael shook like a leaf. He looked a guppy in a sea of sharks. Michael had never been taught the art of networking. People buzzed around him. Michael stood frozen in time. Kayleen ran into him. Michael almost toppled offer. Kayleen offered to help. Michael's nerves were bundled up. Kayleen explained that Michael needed to dive right into a conversation in order to shoo away the jitters. Michael shrugged his shoulders. He had no clue how to strike up a conversation. Kayleen demonstrated her networking skills. Michael's mouth hung open in awe. Kayleen nudged

Michael into a conversation. Michael would have to sink or swim. Anxious seconds went by, then; Michael gathered his nerve and started to speak. To Michael's surprise people listened. Kayleen applauded his efforts and left him wax poetic.

The way of the world is
meeting people through
other people.

Robert Kerrigan

CHAPTER TWO

NETWORKING FOR SUCCESS (II)

Networking is an effective way to spread your value through those around you. Understanding the basic mechanics of networking will increase you success in delivering the right message about yourself to others. In this chapter, you will learn how to do the following:

- Minimize you nervousness
- Using business cards effectively
- Remember names

MINIMIZING NERVOUSNESS

Being nervous is a common occurrence when meeting new people, but being overly nervous when meeting people could be seen as a negative trait. You should always try to minimize being nervous. Nervousness comes from fear of the unknown. Meeting new people brings a level of not knowing and this could cause nervousness to manifest. While being a little nervous is normal, extreme nervousness could result in a very negative experience for both you and the other people you are meeting.

Being with someone who is obviously nervous is reason enough to move on to the next person. Visible nervousness like excessive sweating, breathing heavy, twitches, etc. could be very distracting and affect your ability to network effectively.

Here are five quick steps to help reduce nervousness:

- Prepare for the event. The more prepared you are, the less nervous you will be. Gather as much data about the event and create a plan. Avoid putting yourself in situations that will cause you to scramble at the last moment.
- Think positively before and throughout the event. Avoid thinking negative thoughts or worse case scenarios. This type of thinking will only increase your nervousness.
- Practice what you are going to say and do. This is a common technique for public speaking and it helps reduce the fear of speaking in public. This works the same for networking events.
- When at the event, focus on the present. Avoid thinking ahead. Make small goals that you want to achieve at the event. Thinking about future events because of the event could result in unneeded stress.
- Finally, remember to breathe deeply and monitor you physical reaction to the situation. Take breaks and refresh.

USING BUSINESS CARDS EFFECTIVELY

Everyone carries business cards and they are usually given out when networking. The goal of this lesson is to make the best use of your business card. Using business cards should not only be used for specific networking events or contain basic contact information.

Here are eight ways to increase the effectiveness of your business cards:

- Always keep business cards on you even when you are on your personal time. This will enable you to give someone your card when an unexpected meeting occurs.
- Always carry your business cards in a special holder. This will keep them neat and presentable at all times.
- Take advantage of bulletin boards at restaurants and other public areas where they allow the placement of business cards.
- Whenever you have to use a piece of scrap paper, use the back of your business card. This way the person receiving the card (even if they are not the intended party) will take it with them and keep it. This could lead to him or her giving it to someone else in the future.
- Put something useful on the back of your business card. Perhaps you can put your mission statement or inspirational quote.
- Always include a business card in all your correspondences. This will give the recipient something to put in their wallets.

- Get business cards for all your employees of your business or department.
- Always give a business card to every new person you meet, even if they are not your intended audience.

Your business cards are an effective tool for networking. The basic idea is to make them interesting and to give them out whenever possible.

REMEMBERING NAMES

When you are meeting people, it will be important for you to remember names correctly. Forgetting someone's name could be seen as a common problem and this is usually forgiven. However, when you are able to remember names, people will find this a positive trait and they will be impressed.

Use the CARE model to help you remember names better.

- **Commit to remember names:** making a conscious effort to remember names will make this a priority when meeting people. You may need to write this down as a goal. Later in this workshop, we will learn how to make SMART goals.
- **Associate names to other things and events:** when meeting someone new try to associate that person's name to the event or place where you met them. When you do this, you will begin the memorizing process.

- **Repeat their names:** throughout your conversation with the new person repeat their names as much as possible without being too obvious. Make sure you use their name when you say good-bye.
- **Engage yourself in the conversation:** when a person introduces himself or herself and they say their name, become engaged in the conversation and focus on learning about that person, and focus on learning their name using the techniques discussed previously. Avoid thinking about what you are going to say next or about other things in general. Remained focused and you will remember names better.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Mary's knees knocked loudly. Her stomach turned. Mary had never been to a networking event. Mary just knew she stuck out like a sore thumb. Diana noticed the beads of sweat pooling around Mary's brow. Diana's eyebrow quirked up. She asked if Mary needed assistance. Mary's eyes nearly popped out of her head. Mary needed more help than Diana realized. Diana took over and paraded Mary around like a prop until Mary became comfortable dealing with a crowd. Soon, Mary mimicked Diana's behavior and found herself smiling and passing out business cards like they were candy. Mary knew that if Diana hadn't swooped in to show her the ropes that the networking event would have been a giant thorn in her side for years to come.

More business decision occur over lunch and dinner than any other time, yet no MBA courses are given on the subject.

Peter Drucker

CHAPTER THREE

THE MEET AND GREET

Meet and Greet functions provide an excellent opportunity to network. Many local organizations host meet and greets and you should be ready to participate in these functions with understanding that there are crucial steps and considerations to take when in the Meet and Greet situation. In this chapter, you will learn the following:

- The Three-Step Process of Meet and Greets
- The four levels of conversation
- Use these skills in a case study

Understanding the process involved in meeting and greeting is our first discussion in this module.

THE THREE-STEP PROCESS

The purpose of meet and greets is to mingle and meet as many people as you can during the time allotted. When there is not a strategy in place for meeting and greeting people, this could result in inefficiency in meeting new people. The goal is to meet with someone, talk with them for a few minutes, and then politely move to the next person.

Having a strategy for meeting and greeting people is helpful. A possible strategy to adopt is the Three M approach. In this approach you meet the person, monitor the conversation and then move on to the next person.

Here are some more details on this strategy:

- **Meet**- you introduce yourself and share some information about yourself. You create a great first impression by using some of the techniques mentioned earlier. Finally, you engage the person by asking questions that focus on them instead of you.
- **Monitor**- you should remain focused on the discussion. If you see the conversation becoming off topic or that the conversation is slowing down, then you need to move on. If you have a goal to meet a certain amount of people for that event, then plan a certain amount of time you will spend with each person. Either way, you need to monitor the conversation to determine when the conversation is becoming counterproductive.
- **Move on**- when the time is right, break the conversation politely and move on to the next person. Being honest is the best policy. You may need to tell the person you are speaking with that you wish to meet other people. Hand them a business card and offer to meet with them on another occasion (this is optional). Thank the person you are speaking with and then continue mingling.

THE FOUR LEVELS OF CONVERSATION

Communication among us humans can occur at four distinct levels. Understanding these levels will help you determine how you want to communicate. This in turn will help you plan your topics for discussion and avoid discussion that could be seen as negative.

There are four levels of conversation based on the degree and amount of personal disclosure. They are:

- **Small Talk:** This is commonly referred to as the 'exchange of pleasantries' stage. In this level, you talk only about generic topics, subjects that almost everyone is comfortable discussing. These subjects include the weather, the location you're both in and current events.

  The small talk stage establishes rapport; it makes a person feel at ease with you. It's also a safe and neutral avenue for people to subtly 'size up' one another, and explore if it's a conversation or relationship that they'd want to invest in.

  If the small talk goes well, you can proceed into the next level: fact disclosure.

- **Fact Disclosure:** In this stage, you tell the other person some facts about you such as your job, your area of residence and your interests.

  This is a 'getting-to-know' stage, and it aims to see if you have something in common with the other person. It's also a signal that you are opening up a little bit to the other person while still staying on neutral topics.

If the fact disclosure stage goes well, you can proceed to sharing viewpoints and opinions.

- **Viewpoints and Opinions:** In this stage of the conversation, you can offer what you think about various topics like politics, the new business model ---or even the latest blockbuster. It helps then to read and be curious about many things, from politics to entertainment to current events.

  Sharing viewpoints and opinions require the 'buffering effect' of the first two stages for two reasons:

- First, a person needs rapport with another before they can discuss potentially contentious statements, even if they're having a healthy debate.
- Second, sharing viewpoints and opinions opens a person to the scrutiny of another, and this requires that there is some level of safety and trust in a relationship.

  The controversial, and therefore potentially offensive, nature of an opinion exists in a range; make sure that you remain within the 'safe' zone in the early stages of your relationship.

- **Personal Feelings:** The fourth stage is disclosure and acknowledgment of personal feelings. For instance you can share about your excitement for the new project, or your worry about your son's upcoming piano recital. Depending on the context and the level of the friendship, you can disclose more personal subjects. This stage requires trust, rapport, and even a genuine friendship, because of the intimate nature of the subject.

Different people have different comfort levels when it comes to disclosing feelings, and there are cases when you'd need several conversations before they would trust enough to open themselves. In some cases, you never get to this stage. Just make sure to be sensitive and test the other person's readiness before opening an intimate topic.

Listening is vital in all stages of the conversation but especially so in this fourth stage. Listen with empathy and understanding to acknowledge that you heard the feeling that they have shared.

At any given time, you can be engaged in any or all of these levels. Nonetheless, understanding what each level is helps you better strategize your approach to meeting people. For example, you can plan an opening discussion after you introduce yourself around a current event. You can review a topic in advance and be prepared for that conversation. Next, you can plan to have a brief discussion about yourself. Again, you can plan what you want to say about yourself and focus on those items only. Finally, the last part of your discussion could focus on your product or service you represent.

Understanding the levels of conversation will help you plan the specific topics you want to discuss and approach the meet and greet with a level of security that is no easy to achieve.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION (I)

In this scenario, John seemed unprepared for the meet and greet. Overall, he did not do a very good job of networking. The two men listened to him, but they did not engage or find his discussion interesting.

Here are some things John did well:

- He had enthusiasm to go a meet and greet.
- John had the right focus for his discussion.
- John attempted to network.

Here are some things John needs to improve:

- John needs to focus on the function and remove distractions (cell phone call).
- John needs to have a plan in place before he gets there. He should have known there would have been people he did not know there.
- John should have prepared a quick introduction.
- John should have asked questions of the two men instead of speaking about himself.
- John should have offered his business card upfront so he would not have to fumble for it if the party decides to leave.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION (II)

Patrick: *Hi, I've seen you looking at the golf display. You must be a golfer.*

Mindy: *(laughs) Oh, no! I was just admiring the display. Hi, I'm Mindy.*

Patrick: *I'm Patrick. Pleased to meet you… This is a great assembly we're having.*

Mindy: *Yes, it is. Moreover, the Continental seems like a good place for it too. Is this your first time in the assembly?*

Patrick: *Yes, it is. I wanted to go last year but our company felt the venue is too far for me. I work with DataCorp, based in San Diego.*

Mindy: *DataCorp? Yeah, I saw your company name by the registration table. I think we're going to the same conference. I am with ManualWorks, in Maine. This is our third time; we went last year and the year before as well.*

Patrick: *Oh, so you're a veteran to these things! I'm new, but I like it so far. The registration was well organized and the program they sent looks comprehensive. It's good the committee is taking the conference seriously.*

Mindy: *Yes, it's well organized. I think they're getting better as they go along. In addition, the program looks more interesting. Last year wasn't as good, to be honest.*

Patrick: *How was it not as good?*

Mindy: *The topics are a bit outdated. In fact, when I heard that we're going again, I was a bit annoyed. I didn't want to waste another week with a bad conference. However, am delighted I did, it promises to be different this time.*

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Cassie stood looking at herself in the mirror, pretending to have a conversation. Angela heard her speaking, but didn't see anyone with her. Angela looked quizzically at Cassie. Cassie explained she'd been practicing for the Meet and Greet. Angela scoffed at the idea. Words had always come easily for Angela. Cassie shrugged and looked back at the mirror. Angela stepped in and offered to role play with her. Cassie liked that idea and they started mock conversations. It only took seconds before Cassie and Angela were soon chatting like birds of a feather. Angela wanted to test their theory and called in Heather. Heather agreed to join in the practice session and, again, the conversation ran smoothly. Cassie couldn't have been more delighted. Practicing made her attempts almost perfect.

Dressing is a
way of life.

YVES SAINT LAURENT

CHAPTER FOUR

DRESSING FOR SUCCESS

Networking is a face-to-face event and how you dress can help you make the best impressions. Understanding what is communicated through the clothes you wear will help you develop a wardrobe that will enhance your networking and public relations goals. In this chapter, you will learn the following:

- The meaning of colors
- Interpreting common dress codes
- Deciding what to wear

The meaning of colors is important to know and this should reflect in you're the clothes you wear.

THE MEANING OF COLORS

The colors you wear when networking could send a message you did not want to send. Understanding the basic meaning of colors will help you dress in a way that will help you be more successful in making connections with new people.

Here are some basic colors and their meaning:

- **Red** = action, courage, vitality and confidence
- **Brown** = order and convention
- **Green** = life and well being
- **Blue** = youth and peace
- **White** = cleanliness
- **Black** = stability
- **Gray** = security and maturity

The color you choose will depend on the audience and type of function you are going to encounter. When in doubt, dress with the basic colors (ex. Black, blue or gray).

INTERPRETING COMMON DRESS CODES

Many times, a dress code will be announced for a networking event. Understanding how to interpret dress codes will ensure you will not be the odd person dressed at the event. The three most basic dress codes are appropriate attire, business casual, and business professional.

Appropriate attire presents a challenge to you because what does "appropriate" mean. When meeting people in a business environment, it is best to be on the safe side. Here are some safe guidelines for this type of dress code:

- Wear casual pants or skirts (avoid jeans)
- Button, polo shirt or blouse (a dressy T-shirt may be used, but ones with decorations should be avoided)

- Closed toed shoes (no sneakers)

There will be times when a function has a theme or it is held outdoors. In that case, you may need to confirm if shorts and opened toed shoes are appropriate.

Business casual is more formal and is similar to appropriate attire but without T-shirts of any kind. Khakis and polo shirts are the most common garments worn in a business casual environment.

Business professional is more stringent and may be the most common dress codes for networking events in the business world. Business professional include the following garments:

For men

- Slacks, button shirts with a tie (minimum)
- Jacket
- Shoes with non-rubber soles

For women

- Pantsuits
- Power-suits
- Blouses with tailored skirts
- Professional shoes

If the dress code is unclear, it is best to be a little overdressed that under dressed. You can always remove the jacket, tie, and be business casual.

DECIDING WHAT TO WEAR

Sometimes deciding what to wear is a stressful event. Here is a helpful tip to make deciding what to wear a little easier. It is called **PEAR**.

This acronym stands for the following:

- **Place**- determine where the event will be held. If it is at a fancy restaurant, then you know that business causal or professional is more where you should begin. If it is at a causal place like a grill, then you may be able to go more casual.
- **Environment**- the environment is also a helpful indicator on what to wear. If the event is outdoors on a boat, beach, or golf course, then this could be less formal or require special clothes.
- **Attendees**- who will be attending is another helpful indicator on what to wear. For example, if your CEO will be present then you are better off being more formal.
- **Reason**- the reason for the function is also a key indicator of what to wear. If the function is reunion of professionals, then you should be dressed according to that line of work.

PEAR is a helpful guideline on how deciding what to wear. The next time you are invited to a particular function you should ask questions that help answer the PEAR model. The answers will give you a better understanding on what to wear.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

John had all eyes on him as he sauntered into the office. John donned a top and tails for the Meet and Greet. Camden pulled the good egg aside and offered some advice. John didn't understand how his fancy duds weren't appropriate for the Meet and Greet. Camden gingerly explained the work events didn't call for formal attire. Pulling photos from the last event, Camden enlightened John about what style would be appropriate. John's face reddened. He'd gone too far. Camden patted him on the back, assuring him that all would fall into place. John ran home to change and returned wearing appropriate business attire, tipping his top hat at Camden before tucking it away in his cubicle for another day.

Easy reading is
damn hard writing.

Nathaniel Hawthorne

CHAPTER FIVE

WRITING

Your written communication leaves a lasting impression on those who read your documents. Writing is a large part of your communication and it should be done well. Great written communication will help you demonstrate your value and ability to convey ideas. In this chapter, you will learn the basic structure of the following types of written communication:

- Business letters
- Proposals
- Reports
- Executive summaries

Business letters can be used in many situations. Let's begin with this form of written communication first.

BUSINESS LETTERS

Effective writing is essential in networking. Many times, you will need to following up with a contact by writing a letter. The business letter is the most basic form of written communication. Understanding the elements that make up a business letter will ensure you are writing at the minimum standard.

There are seven basic elements to a business letter. They are the following:

- **Letterhead** or return address
- **Date**- type this two to six lines below the letterhead/return address. Type the date out and avoid using the numerical format (ex. MM/DD/YYYY).
- **Inside address**- this is the address of the recipient. The first line should include the recipient's name. This is then followed by their address.
- **Salutation**- if you know the person's name use Mr., Mrs., or Ms., and their last name only. Remember if you are writing to a doctor, use Dr.
- **The body of the letter**- try keeping this brief and specific. Business letters should not be too long. You should use double spacing between paragraphs. This will give your letter a better appearance.
- **Complimentary close**- there are many ways to close your letter. To make it simple, use "Sincerely". This is a happy medium between very formal and informal.
- **Signature block**- after you complimentary close, add three spaces and then type your full name. The spaces give you an area to sign your name between the complimentary close and your typed name.

All these elements should be on the left side of the page and in block format. Using this basic format will ensure your letter will look professional. If you are enclosing an item with your letter, remember to add the word “Enclosure(s)” near the bottom of the page. This will tell your recipient that there is an item included in the envelope.

WRITING PROPOSALS

A proposal is a useful tool in communicating your ideas to decision makers in and out of your organization. There are many reasons to write a proposal. You may wish to resolve an organizational problem or propose a new idea that will help your company be more successful in the marketplace. Perhaps you need to propose your product to a client. In general, your proposal should be detailed enough to make a decision, but brief so busy leaders will not put it aside because it is too wordy.

The goal of the proposal is to evoke a decision to move forward into a project or purchase. Of course, how your organization, department, or client handles projects/purchases is something to consider. The key to writing good proposals is being consistent. A format is the best approach. Here are eight basic elements to a proposal:

1. Summary: this is a brief and concise statement of your request along, including information about yourself, your overall plan, what you need in terms of resources and money.
2. Introduction:
    - History

- Accomplishments
- Company background, vision, and mission

3. Problem/Need Statement: state the specific problem or need. Explain how your proposal will correct or meet that need. Use data as applicable.
4. Objectives:
   - Objectives should be derived from you problem or need statement.
   - State as outcomes and benefits you anticipate.
   - Make objectives time limited, measurable, about changes, and quantifiable.
5. Methods: tell specifically what you plan to do. Why you want to do it and how you plan to resource your project with people.
6. Evaluation: discuss how you plan to measure success.
7. Funding needs: provide a cost/benefit statement. Also, if possible, provide how the project will bring a return on the investment.
8. Budget: provide a summary of how you plan to use the funds.

REPORTS

Reports are used to discuss findings or results. Reports can range in length due to the complexity of what the report is trying to communicate. Reports are used to communicate to organizational leaders all the information they need about an issue or result. Reports are meant to present as much fact as possible in a concise format. Management may use your report to make decisions.

The goal is to write reports that are compelling and accurate. Proper language, grammar, and spelling are essential. The language in your report should be objective and written in the third-person. Avoid exaggerating the report for effect. The report should not evoke emotions. In fact, your report should be persuasive by the factual content and the level of detail. Reports that appeal to emotion may be discarded.

When writing reports, remember the following elements to a report:

- **Title section:** this could be a title page or it includes a table of contents if the report is lengthy.
- **Summary:** this section should contain a concise description of the main points, conclusions, and recommendations.
- **Introduction:** in this section, you should provide the background of the situation or problem and demonstrate to your target audience the importance of this report. Give a brief description of how the information is arranged. Keep the language simple in this section.
- **Main body:** this portion of the report may contain several sections with subtitles. You may use technical words or jargon, but try to define concepts as you go along. Remember to arrange your

data logically. Prioritize your information with the most important facts first.

- **Conclusion:** your conclusion should be logical and should strive to pull the investigation together. You may also provide options for the future. Remember to write this section like the introduction, in plain English.
- **Recommendations:** provide a suggestion. Make a clear and determined statement in plain English.
- **Appendices:** in this area, you will put your technical data that supports your report. The language here can be very technical.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

The executive summary is a short report that can be placed at the beginning of a larger report or it can be presented as its own document. The executive summary presents only the most important information to executives, managers, and or supervisors.

In order to be successful writing an executive summary, your document should leave your reading audience with the following understanding:

- Nature of the subject
- Essential points
- Decisions needed
- Alternatives with cost and benefits

- Your recommendations
- Sources of additional information

Here is a brief outline of what should be included in your executive summary:

- Title page
- title
- version
- author(s)
- abstract (very brief)
- Body
- Every page has a footer with the following elements:
    1. subject
    2. version
    3. author(s)
    4. running page number *and* total number of pages
    5. The title page is page 0 (or more properly, page i).
- References

Here are some recommendations the style of your executive summary:

- Be succinct
- Use a very structured format for the layout of your summary
- Design your summary so it can be placed onto a slide for presenting
- The reference page should always begin on a new page

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Tania's head plopped on her desk. Sadie heard the bang and went running to help. Tania looked up from the desk, her eyes rolling in her head. Tania needed help. Her presentation deadline loomed and Tania didn't have the words to put it together. Sadie read what Tania had written and stifled a laugh. Tania slumped in her chair, saying that she gave up. Sadie swallowed her laughter and offered to help. Tania gave her the chair and paced while Sadie reworded the presentation, plucking one word at a time. Two hours whizzed by and Sadie created a masterpiece full of eloquent prose and built to withstand any criticism. Tania read over it word for word. Sadie had hit the jackpot. The presentation sounded perfect. Tania thanked her and prepared to make the presentation feeling much more confident than she had this morning.

A goal without a plan is just a wish.

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

SETTING GOALS

When networking and managing public relations, you should have clear and measurable goals in what you want to achieve when networking. Unclear goals could lead to missed goals and frustration. Understanding how to formulate goals that are realistic and achievable will help you network with results. In order to build great goals, you will need a basic understanding of the following:

- Understanding goals in general
- SMART goal writing
- Helping others with goal setting

These are the topics in this module. We will begin with a general understanding of goals.

UNDERSTANDING GOALS

You can call a goal a dream with a deadline. In business, goals are essential for success. Goals state an expected outcome or achievement. Goals have to be planned and written down. Goals also have to be clearly defined. You cannot say, “My goal is to be the best sales person this year.” While this is something noble to say, this statement is more of a mission than a goal. Instead, you may say, “My goal is to sell 20 widgets to each of my top three customers in 12 months." The second example clearly states aspects of a goal that is visible.

The benefits to having clear goals are the following:

- You will accomplish more because you will have a clear list of items to achieve instead of broad mission statements.
- You will make better decisions because you clear goals will allow you to have boundaries that will guide your alternatives.
- You will be more confident because you know what you need to do to reach your goals and you will not be caught off guard.
- You will be seen as someone who gets things done.
- You will have a clear direction and purpose in your life because what you do every day will drive towards your goal.

Goals do not have to be confined to your work life. You can apply goal setting to these areas of your life:

- Your career
- Retirement
- Family goals
- Educational achievement
- Physical/diet

Remember to align your work goals with the overall mission and vision of your organization. You want to ensure success by producing results that help the organization achieve their goals.

SMART GOALS

Goal writing should not be an unstructured activity. The more structure and consistency your goals are, the easier to achieve them. How do you write a goal? In the last lesson, we talked about making goals too broad. Broad goals are usually unachievable because there are no tangible aspects that mark success or achieving of the goal.

The most consistent way to write goals is using the SMART format. SMART stands for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timed. Writing your goals in this format will help you write better goals and increase your ability to achieve them.

Let's look at SMART goal writing in detail.

- **Specific**: write a well-defined goal statement. Here are some examples of a goal statement:

  1. I want to increase my sales.

  2. I want to obtain new clients.

- **Measurable**: include in your goal statement a measurable number. Having a clear number that you can measure will help you know if you are going in the right direction. I will also help you know when you achieved the goal. Here are some examples:

3. I want to increase my sales by 10 percent.

4. I want to obtain five new clients.

- **Achievable**: Setting big goals is great, but setting unrealistic goals will just de-motivate you. A good goal is one that challenges, but is not so unrealistic that you have virtually no chance of accomplishing it.

- **Relevant:** Before you even set goals, it's a good idea to sit down and define your core values and your life purpose because it's these tools, which ultimately decide how, and what goals you choose for your life. Goals, in and of themselves, do not provide any happiness. Goals that are in harmony with our life purpose do have the power to make us happy.

- **Timed:** always include some type of deadline that marks the end of the period to achieve the goal. Without a timeframe, you will never know if you have achieved the goal or not. Here are some examples:

5. I want to increase my sales by 10 percent by the end of the year.

6. I want to obtain five new clients by the end of the first quarter.

Of course, it will take practice and feedback to achieve excellent goal writing skills. Sharing your goals with your manager is a good practice and this will demonstrate your desire to achieve goals.

HELPING OTHERS WITH GOAL SETTING

For some, goal setting is a daunting task. Sharing best practices with others is a great way to strengthen your network. If you encounter someone having difficulty with goal writing, invite him or her to spend time with you and help him or her with the goal writing process. At least once a year, a manager has to write goals for their department or employees. Watch for peers that are finding it difficult to writing goals. Share the SMART method of writing goals.

In addition, allow yourself to be their source of feedback when writing goals. Helping others with their goal writing will create a strong professional relationship that will spread throughout your network. Remember that networking is not only about what you can get out of it. It should also be something you invest time and effort to by helping others grow professionally.

- You help to create a stronger network
- You may learn some new ideas
- You get to practice goal writing some more
- You get to see others achieve success

At the center of this, should be a desire to see others achieve success. When you put people at the center of your goals, you will see your network grow and it will be strengthen.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Jenna's wheels were turning, but headed in the wrong direction. Bree tried to intervene and ground Jenna. Jenna felt like she didn't have enough arms to get the job done. Bree offered her hand. Jenna's eyes glossed over. She'd had enough. Jenna needed a clear goal in mind. Bree grabbed her tool bag of tricks and the two began to build a solid plan with measurable goals and deadlines. Like two surgeons, Jenna and Bree tore apart the scenario and laced it back together, hoping that it would stick. Jenna looked back at what they'd done and like what she saw. On the board, they'd created a road map to Jenna's success. Jenna no longer had to twiddle her thumbs and fret about where to begin. Jenna had a clear plan in front of her and dove in to get to work feeling much more organized than before.

Television doesn't make stars. It's the written media, the press, that makes stars.

Chevy Chase

CHAPTER SEVEN

MEDIA RELATIONS

Managing media relations is another facet to networking. In this chapter, you will learn how to leverage the following type of media:

- Television
- Print
- Web, blogs and the Internet

Let's see how you can leverage television in your networking strategy.

TELEVISION

If you are lucky, you may have an opportunity to speak on a television program as an expert or other resource. However, you may not want to rely on luck. You may be able to create an environment that can get you on a television news program. Using the news media could help increase your network exponentially and across the country.

There are six steps to prepare and get your message on television.

- **Create a brand.** Develop a message that tells who you are, what you do, and why you are unique. The media wants to find someone interesting and ready to talk at a moment's notice. You should have materials ready for the press to use and this should be aligned with your brand message. You can search the Internet and find press kits that will help you structure your information for the press.

- **Develop your elevator speech.** An elevator speech is a 30-second advertisement about you. This is also called a pitch. You should make your message concise, but reflecting your passion in what you do. Short pitches are more effective. Remember, the media has a short attention span. Be ready to deliver you pitch at any time.
- **Seek out the media.** Use the Internet to find many ways to research media that may be out looking for your information. Take names down of producers of programs and attempt to contact them. When you do get a chance to connect with a producer always, compliment their work. This way you demonstrate your interest and the time you invested in researching him or her.
- **Respond immediately.** If you do get the chance to speak to a media contact, you should respond immediately. Make sure the contact information you give is one that connects to you directly or that you can check many times throughout the day.
- **Be prepared.** Have your information and materials always updated and ready. You may never know when you will get that call.
- **Keep it simple and fresh:** Don't complicate your message and materials. Keep it simple and you will find that when it comes time

to be on television. Practice your message periodically so you remain sharp.

PRINT

Print media comes in many forms. There are magazines, newspapers, billboards, etc. Unlike television, print media is easier to access. Here are both advantages and disadvantages to using print media that you should consider.

Print media typically has a more consistent base of readers than say the Internet. If you choose to use a magazine or newspaper for your print media resource, the consistency of readers is easier to see. In addition, print media allows you the ability to select where you want your message to appear geographically. Print media also provides flexibility in the size or space of the advertisement. Print media outlets like magazines and newspapers specialize in drawing attention to your advertisement.

On the other hand, print media can be very expensive depending on what type of media you use. Print media also limits your ability to larger audiences. Print media requires physical contact in order for the readers to access your message. Another drawback is the planning you may need to get on a particular publication. There are usually strict cutoff times for your message to be placed on an ad. Finally, your message may be overlooked among the other ads.

Nonetheless, print media is a very viable option for a local market and provides varying degrees of pricing. The best thing to do is to plan well and understand the print media is one of many other options you can use to reach your audience.

WEB PRESENCE, BLOGS & THE INTERNET

The World Wide Web is a place where almost anyone can create a presence. The Web is a way of accessing information. It is an inexpensive method in getting your message out to an endless audience around the world.

The idea of creating a space with a collection of related files is called creating a Web presence. Many times, this is called a Website. At the most basic level, a Web presence is a collection of files on a specific subject. The first file of the Web presence or site is called the home page. The home page provides a starting point that allows the viewer the ability to navigate the other files.

For companies and organizations, the Website provides various tools for their clients to conduct business. For an individual like yourself, you can create a Web presence that allows you to share ideas and resources with your audience. These personal Websites are called blogs. Blogs are typically an online diary. However, if you want to network effectively, your blog should be a place that creates dialogue and sharing with your visitors.

Today, setting up a blog is relatively easy. Here are some basic steps to creating a blog.

- Buy a domain, which is your Web address.

- Your hosting company usually offers a basic package with you Web site that includes a blogging application.
- Setting up your blog would take a few steps and your Web hosting company would provide the instructions.
- You need to practice using the blogging application, but once you gain the understanding, you will be writing content in no time. If you have the budget, you may hire a writer to help you update your blog.

Once you have set up your blog, you can place your Web page address on your business cards and share the site with whomever you meet.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Carrie put all her networking eggs in one basket. Carrie thought an email blast would keep customers happy. Her boss, Eli, rushed into her office, wanting answers. Carrie explained that emailing everyone made her job easier. Eli demanded that she use all the tools in place to handle the media relations. Carrie fretted and frowned. It seemed like too much work. Thomas heard the heated discussion and posed a solution for Carrie. Carrie happily accepted his advice. Thomas explained why they had to use many avenues to get their word out. Thomas proposed making a schedule that she could stick to keep customers and clients in the know about new products and promotion. Carrie didn't have to think long. She liked the idea and felt a weight lifted off her shoulders. She had a firm plan in place.

A crisis is an opportunity riding the dangerous wind.

CHINESE PROVERB

CHAPTER EIGHT

ISSUES AND CRISIS COMMUNICATION PLANNING

At times, you may be confronted with a pressing issue or crisis. Planning for such situations will help to position you favorably in what may be a time where chaos is prevalent. Having a plan before a crisis occurs will help you take better control of the situation and project confidence to your audience. In this module, you will learn the following:

- Gauging the crisis level
- Provide feedback and insight
- How information will be distributed
- Track overall effect

Each of these topics will help you be prepared for those times when a crisis occurs. Let learn how to gauge the crisis level first.

GAUGING THE IMPENDING CRISIS LEVEL

Being ready to confront a crisis is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your value and leadership, increasing your network. During a time of crisis, you will meet many people quickly. They can be local officials or top leaders of your organization. Being caught off guard will leave you paralyzed and contribute little value to the situation. When a crisis occurs, gauging the situation is essential in order to determine who extensive the problem is.

Once you gauge the crisis, you are able to determine action. In addition, you may be able to lend insight to the crisis response team or become a part of a crisis response team. Remember that you should remain calm during a crisis so you can be seen as a leader.

Here are some simple steps to gauging a crisis when it occurs:

- What happened? Sometimes the initial reports are inaccurate and sketchy. Your goal here is to determine what actually happened. Ask several resources and contacts. Take notes and compare the information. If you see discrepancies then the crisis has not been clearly assessed yet. Continue until you obtain consistent answers.
- Why did it happen? The reasons for the crisis may not be easy to determine. However, gaining this information could avoid more problems to occur and reduce further damage.
- Who is impacted? This is essential to obtain because anyone involved in the crisis will need some form of communication management to happen. If customers are affected, then you may need to make an announcement to the public. If employees are involved, you may need to contact their families. Identifying who is impacted is essential and this demonstrates your caring of others.

- What are the ramifications? Once you obtain the first three pieces of information, you will need to sit down and determine the ramifications. Here are some things to consider:

  1. What is the legal or liability involved.
  2. What is the cost of correcting or dealing with the crisis?
  3. What damage to the company image will occur?
  4. What affects does the crisis have with the ability for the company to run normally?

- Who is liable? Determine if your company or someone else is liable and seek legal counsel as soon as possible.

PROVIDING FEEDBACK AND INSIGHTS

Providing feedback and insight on a crisis is a delicate job, but doing it right will increase your credibility, allowing you to meet more people and increase your network. However, you must be credible first. In today's technology, people become quickly educated on a topic via online search engines and virtual resources.

The key to giving good feedback and reliable insight is to be knowledgeable about the crisis through quick data gathering. You can use the Internet and other sources that will give you the information you need to understand and make competent comments when necessary.

When a crisis occurs and you have gauged the situation, begin using the **RUN** technique so you can gaining the information you need to formulate an assessment and provide clear insight.

RUN stands for the following:

- **Research** and gather as much information about the crisis as possible. Try to find similar situations that you can draw parallels from and determine how they apply to the current crisis.
- **Understanding** of all parties involved is necessary. Try to see all points of view so you can provide unbiased feedback and insight. If you are clearly favor one side, you will find it difficult to connect with all parties involved. Understanding demonstrates your care for people, which will help to de-escalate the situation.
- **Neutral point-of-view** is necessary. When giving your thoughts and insight about a crisis, providing a neutral point-of-view is necessary if you want your message to be heard. Avoid blaming others. Instead, be calm and factual with your feedback. Avoid speculation and know your limits. If the crisis requires legal advice, then do not speak on topics that may be sensitive.

HOW INFORMATION WILL BE DISTRIBUTED

Waiting for a crisis to begin planning your communication is the wrong time to do this. In a crisis, you will have little time to sit down and think of all the people that need communication when a crisis occurs. In fact, some crisis may only require specific people to be contacted.

You should plan your communication for a crisis in advance. This way you can brainstorm different situations and determine whom all needs to be reached. Furthermore, you can plan what type of information should be sent to the recipients and how they receive it.

A communication plan is a simple way of organizing the communication process when a crisis happens. It should be done in advance and kept in an accessible place for you or someone who is your backup in case you are not available.

The basic communication plan includes the following elements:

- Party to contact
- How should they be contacted (ex. email, letter, phone or in person)
- What should be communicated
- When should they be communicated
- Who is responsible or owner for communicating to that party
- The date this party was actually contacted

The communication plan is invaluable in a time of crisis. Make sure to update the plan as contacts change or risks occur.

TRACKING THE OVERALL EFFECT

Once a crisis happens, it is a good practice to monitor its effects on the organization. There are many areas to monitor. Neglecting to monitor the situation could lead to negative information to circulate, damaging the image of your company.

A good method in tracking the effects is to scan the environment. The easiest way is to use search online to see what is being said about the situation. The results of a search engine are usually prioritized by popularity. If you do not see your company in the first few pages of a search engine results list, you can at least rule out the Web for now. However, you should monitor the Web for several weeks after a crisis.

If you do find results that related to the crisis and your company, you should monitor the reaction and respond to those reports that are damaging. A simple tool you can use is a tracking sheet.

The sheet contains the following fields:

- Date
- How the data was found
- Name of the source
- What was said
- Popularity of the source
- How does this affect your organization
- Can you respond to the source

In today's age of social media, it is good to monitor social networking sites for blogs and comments about your company crisis. Many times, you cannot directly change the information being reported on these areas. Monitoring that outlet gives you the ability to prepare for any repercussion it may cause against your company.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Frank and Bill were running around frantically. The ad went to print with a critical error. Frank and Bill were in crisis mode. The ad posed a huge problem. Frank had beads of sweat dripping down his face. Bill spoke a mile a minute. What could they do? They butted heads on the issue. Frank went up and Bill went down. Frank thought his idea would work. Bill thought it sounded like a train wreck. Naomi stepped in between the dueling gentlemen and proposed an easy fix. Naomi called the media and alerted them to the critical error. Frank and Bill waited with bated breath. Could their error be reversed? Naomi received word that the problem had been mended and Frank and Bill breathed a sigh of relief, glad that the impending doom had been a false alarm.

Social networking sites like MySpace and Facebook have literally exploded in popularity in just a few short years.

Mike Fitzpatrick

CHAPTER NINE

SOCIAL MEDIA (THE PR TOOLKIT)

Social media is a powerful tool that can increase the scope of your network greatly. Understanding the various types of social media outlets will help you formulate a strategy that can employ one or more of these tools. In this chapter, you will learn about the following social media tools:

- Blogs
- Wikis
- Podcasts
- Social bookmarks
- RSS feeds

Each took brings its own unique advantages. We will begin with a common tool called a blog.

BLOGS

A blog is short for a weblog, which is a journal made available on the Internet. Blogging is the activity of updating the blog. The journal is in chronological order and the blog could contain pictures and other media for sharing. A blog is a powerful tool for networking. You can easily share your blog Website address with others and they can view your ideas in detail from the comfort of their computer.

The blog authoring is a relatively easy system to use. You can design the blog to take comments from your readers. You can also provide an email for your readers so they can contact you. Unlike a traditional Website, a blog uses very few pages. Instead, the author adds posts and the page becomes longer as the posts increase. Blogs can archive past posts into month categories or topics.

Blogs provide a way for a person with little technical skills to create a webpage and share information with little training and expense.

WIKIS

A wiki is a database that contains pages that a visitor can edit. The comments on a wiki build the page. It is a system of sharing an adapting the page as the comments are entered. Usually there is a moderator to a wiki. They approve the comments before they are added to the page.

For networking, wikis make it easy to exchange ideas and data on any topic, projects, etc. Wikis also provide a venue for those who are intimidated by speaking with others face-to-face. The drawback to wikis is the validity of some information. Since wikis are built on comments from virtually anyone, the information going into one may not be accurate.

Overtime, the more comments added to a wiki page, the more accurate a picture you get. Wikis are great for connecting with someone in your line of work or industry. There are large wiki communities out on the Web and they are mostly free to use. This is a great way to expand your network.

PODCASTS

Podcasts are audio or video files that are to be viewed on your computer or downloaded onto a portable device. If you are able to create videos or audio files and make them downloadable files, then you can create podcasts.

Podcasts are usually series oriented, meaning they usually have several podcasts discussing one topic. The files are usually on a server or Webpage. The viewer or listener goes to the page, accesses the media, and downloads them to their computer for viewing or listening.

Podcasts are useful if you are comfortable talking into a microphone or a camera. Some communication experience is helpful in making your podcast look professional. In addition, you will need to plan the flow of you content before you record.

SOCIAL BOOKMARKS

Many times, you may want to share great information found on Websites you encounter throughout your life. Social bookmarking is a way for you to organize these links onto a Webpage and share it with others.

The social bookmarking system allows you to save links to web pages for sharing with others. These bookmarking pages can be public or private. The latest version of bookmarking Website allows your visitors to rate your links and leave comments, giving you the ability to engage in virtual conversations with others. Sharing great information helps to build your network.

RSS FEEDS

A Really Simple Syndication or RSS is a feed that transmits updates from subscribed Websites. This is a useful tool when a Website is constantly updated. Websites that offer this feature usually has the RSS symbol that when clicked adds it to your web browser as a feed.

For networking, you should add this feature to your web pages and blogs. This way your contacts will receive the latest updates on their computer and they do not have to navigate back to your page. Adding this feature usually involves a click of a button to add and it runs itself once installed.

This is a very powerful way of staying connected without having to push information out to others. Adding this feature will saves time, leaving you more time for other networking activities.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Travis didn't know which to go first. He had to build a social media platform. Travis needed help. Craig saw his friend struggling to juggle all of his tasks. Craig stepped in to take over for his friend. Travis leaped out of his seat, thankful for the assistance. Craig taught Travis to navigate the different online platforms. They twisted and turned between the web and blogs and more. Travis felt like his head would explode. With Craig's help, Travis soon found his way around. Travis learned to navigate the PR world and readied to set sail to build a huge campaign. Craig watched Travis soar high with his new skills. Travis built the best platform either had ever seen. Travis showed off his new toolkit and prepared for the accolades he would receive.

Communication works for those who work at it

John Powell

CHAPTER TEN

EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS

Communicating to your employees is a crucial part of your network. In this chapter, you will learn the following topics on employee communication:

- Verbal communication
- Non-verbal communication
- Email etiquette
- Negotiation skills
- Making an impact

Poor communication to your employees could lead to uncontrolled negative message about you. Increasing your effectiveness with employee communication will help reinforce your network and leverage the word-of-mouth power you employees have to your benefit.

Understanding each concept presented in this module will enhance your networking strategy through your employees. Verbal communication is our first topic in this module.

VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Verbal communication is the art of being able to say something with the least words possible. The listener retains about 10 percent of what you say. Keeping your verbal communication short and simple makes you a better verbal communicator.

When communicating verbally, your word choice is important. Words will have different meaning to different people. Using long and difficult words or jargon alienates your audience. Demonstrating how well you know hard words distract your listeners.

In short, the acronym **KISS** will help you remember to **Keep It Short and Simple.**

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS (BODY LANGUAGE)

What you do not say is sometimes more important than what you do say. Your non-verbal communication tends to dominate your message. When communicating with your employees face-to-face your body language and posture is what influences most of your communication.

Having knowledge of how non-verbal communication works is essential because it will help you monitor what you are projecting to your employees. Furthermore, understanding non-verbal communication will help you identify issues that may not be openly discussed verbally.

There are two basic categories of non-verbal communication.

- Static Features are those that deal with the following aspects of non-verbal communication.
- Distance—the amount of space between people could indicate attraction, conflict or avoidance.
- Orientation—how people place themselves (ex. face-to-face, side-by-side, etc.) indicates their attitude towards the other person. For example, a side-by-side orientation could indicate a collaborative attitude.
- Posture—how a person carries himself or herself is another indicator of their attitude. A closed posture (ex. arms crossed) could indicate a formal attitude.
- Physical contact—behaviors like shaking hands demonstrates a willingness to engage the person. Avoiding any contact could be interpreted as apprehension. As a manager, you should always keep physical contact at a minimum or only when necessary. Others can misinterpret physical contact.
- Dynamic Features are those that are observed as the person is talking or interacting with another person. Here are some of the basic non-verbal communications in this area.

  1. Facial expressions like smiles, frowns, yawning, etc.
  2. Gestures—clenched fists indicates tension
  3. Looking—poor eye contact could be seen as avoidance

Understanding all the possible non-verbal communication signals takes time to learn. The main thing here is to understand that using positive non-verbal communication. Having positive non-verbal communication will evoke trust from others and strengthen your network.

EMAIL ETIQUETTE

Receiving and responding to email is a large part of a manager's job. Using proper email etiquette will ensure you are not offending others or being rude. The email you send can be forwarded and remain in the inboxes of your recipient indefinitely.

Here are some tips to ensure that your emails are well-written and displaying good email etiquette:

- Avoid using email to write a long letter. Most people will not read the entire email if they have to scroll through it.
- Avoid getting straight to the point to your email. Do not forget to be polite and use common courtesies. For example, before asking for what you want, ask how they are or how was his or her weekend.
- Do not use shorthand or text messaging abbreviations in your emails.
- Make sure to use spell check and that you use proper grammar in your emails. Remember your written communication speaks volumes about you.

- Remember to say please and thank you.
- If you are contacting someone who is unfamiliar to you, avoid using his or her first name. Instead, use Mr., Mrs., etc.
- Never type your email in all capital letters. This is seen as screaming and is difficult to read.

Following these simple guidelines should help you write effective and polite emails, demonstrating once again that you care about others. This is the key to building a strong network.

NEGOTIATION SKILLS

Negotiating is a skill that should build relationships by creating win-win situations. Of course, the goal of negotiating is to get the best deal or outcome; however, if the negotiation turns out bad for the other party, you will hurt your chances of networking in that direction. Who knows? That company you just negotiated with could be a place you might want to represent in the future.

Here are four steps to creating a win-win outcome in negotiating:

- Determine what you need and want. As you prepare for negotiating, take time to assess what is it that you or your company wants to happen and keep this as the focal point of our negotiation. Many times, you may lose sight of this and overlook a crucial point during negotiations.

- Learn more about the other party in the negotiation. Find out what motivates them and what they would consider a success in their world. Work towards meeting their needs. You should not work towards a take-all situation.
- Structure the negotiation talks. Create an agenda and avoid getting into off-topic discussions. If other topics come up, suggest bringing them up in another meeting. If you are negotiating with internal employees, sit on the same side of the table and try to remain close to them. This will reduce the competitive tendencies usually found when sitting across from each other.
- Once you create your plan, do not change it, or give points away. Set a specific time to complete the negotiations. If you do not reach an agreement, then call time and meet at another time. Avoid extending the talks, because being tired leads to poor decisions.

MAKING AN IMPACT

Making an impact on others does not take a lot of effort. You do not have to be flashy or constantly be funny. In fact, the most impact is made when you demonstrate a sincere interest in the other person. Being genuine with others creates the most impact. Being very polished could be seen as insincere, hindering your impact.

Here are some simple ways to create impact with others:

- **Be a listener.** Listen more than you talk when engaging a person. People like to be heard and understood. In addition, being a listener gives you the ability to identify needs, which enables you to be a helper in those situations. Finally, listening to other people's advice and recommendations demonstrates you value his or her thoughts, which creates a huge impact on them.
- **Be a networker that networks both up and down.** Do not just limit your networking to those people above you. This will be seen as self-serving and limit the impact you have on others. Remember to network with people at the entry level or with those who have nothing to do with your business.
- **Be a seeker of feedback.** Asking for feedback demonstrates your attitude towards learning and improving. Coming across as a know-it-all will create barriers. Be humble and ask for help and feedback, as this will let you know how you did. People will see you as confident yet willing and open to feedback. This is powerful in the workplace.
- **Be ever enthusiastic about other people**. Remember that networking is about other people and not about you. If your intent is to further yourself, you will not have any impact. Making other people better because of you creates an impact in other people's lives. Be enthusiastic about this and always smile when doing so. This will create the most impact.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Josh had no idea what to do. Linda had no clue either. They worked for the same company, but the company didn't communicate the changes with them. Linda and Josh had no idea where to turn. Josh decided he needed to do some digging to get to the bottom of this problem. Linda agreed to join him. Linda asked questions. Josh demanded answers. Their employer's face reddened. He didn't realize that he hadn't given them the information. Josh and Linda walked away with the answers. Together, they sat down to study the changes. Soon, Josh and Linda had a pool of ideas to choose from and they hit the ground running to implement the changes. Linda and Josh couldn't have been more excited about having the tools in their hands to succeed

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

CLOSING THOUGHTS

- **Bob Burg:** The successful networkers I know, the ones receiving tons of referrals and feeling truly happy about themselves, continually put the other person's needs ahead of their own.
- **Johan Arndt:** Informal conversation is probably the oldest mechanism by which opinions on products and brands are developed, expressed, and spread.
- **Aldous Huxley**: Experience is not what happens to a man; it is what a man does with what happens to him.

Rick Chisholm made history when he single-handedly changed the professional Audio Visual industry by breaking all the rules and capitalised over 50% market share in Australia with very little capital, no partners, mergers or lenders and set up the first franchise operation of its kind in the world in the late 1990's and early 2000's.

As a 7x founder of companies and 30x businesses such as Innovest, AI Machine, Lightsounds, LSW, Light Emotion with revenue in excess of $300 million and having employed more than 1,000 staff over the last 35 years. Rick is known as the Start-Up and SME Guru and is Author of a number of books including Business Success for Life. Unlike many mentors, he actually walks the talk and has a number of businesses under management in such areas as Automation, Events management, Importing, Distribution, Retailing and E-commerce.

His BIG passion is Business Education empowering Businesses Owners through knowledge and skills. Whilst Rick has experienced great success, he has also endured many failures. Rick has faced and overcome the exact same challenges you are facing now.

Tala Chisholm is an SME specialist who has owned and managed several small to medium sized businesses in the last 20 years, several of which were eventually sold. She has extensive experience in the fields of retail, franchising, licensing, dealerships, education, importing, distribution and consulting.

Her expertise lies in building and implementing customised cross-platform database and software solutions for businesses, automation, IT, web marketing, advertising, graphic design, business administration, process refinement and implementation. Her business experience ranges from bricks-and-mortar Giftware retailing to highly technical fields such as Security, CCTV, Entertainment Lighting and Audio sales, hire and installations as well as e-commerce.

Throughout her career she also trained and mentored Franchise business owners as well as internal division managers. Some areas of training included retail operations, management practices, business strategy, accounting, cash-flow, marketing, customer service and IT. She has also headed up the drafting of Operating Compliance Manuals for Franchise operations and implementation of all the elements involved.

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