

NETWORKING THAT WORKS

Connect Your Way to Business Growth

Featuring insights from Barry Moltz, Brian Moran and more



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A version of this content was originally published on openforum.com. American Express® OPEN Forum helps small-business owners find the insights, inspiration and connections to help grow their businesses. Learn more at openforum.com.

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Casting a Wide Net



Rod Kurtz
Editor-at-large, OPEN Forum

Connections are a common currency of the business world. As entrepreneurs, we take them, we make them—and they can be invaluable to the growth of any company.

Networking effectively, however, is hard work—a true mix of art and science, which can represent a significant investment of time and energy for busy business owners. It's also a constantly evolving practice. What used to be done with a handshake can now happen with a click or a swipe. Technology has no doubt made it easier to network, but with that comes challenges to make meaningful connections, not just racking up the most friends and followers.

It's important to remember that the fundamentals don't change. Networking has always been a give-take proposition, and the most effective networkers know how to strike that balance, sincerely. That's the spirit behind this guide, a collection of networking tips and techniques that have helped fellow business owners achieve success in the real world.

From chatting up peers at a conference to making introductions to mastering the art of the follow-up, in this guide, business owners and industry experts share their best strategies for building a strong network that can benefit your business over the long term.

You may think your time is better spent on the day-to-day of running your business. But ask any successful entrepreneur, and he or she will tell you that some of the most pivotal growth moments can be attributed to a customer or partner or mentor cultivated through networking.

It all starts with “hello.”

How to Network Like a Pro

Stop wasting time networking the wrong way. Establish meaningful relationships at your next event with these strategies.

By Barry Moltz

Business people network a lot. Unfortunately, most of it is a total waste of time. They spend a lot of their time at networking events talking to people who will never ever be a prospect or influence a customer to buy. They randomly go from person to person and event to event “hoping” to bump into someone that is valuable to their

business. Even worse, many people just use it as an excuse to get away from the office.

You can, however, make the most of networking events and make truly meaningful—and profitable—connections by following some strategic advice.

BEFORE YOU GO (30 DAYS AHEAD)

1

Write down your primary and secondary business objectives for attending the event. Is it to meet new prospects or to close existing business? Do you want to learn more about the industry or get closer to the people you already know?

Find out who is going and contact those people ahead of time. Many events are so big that just because a person is there, doesn't mean that you will bump into them. If the event has more than 200 people and takes place in more than one room, set a specific date, time and place to meet your contacts. Ensure that you have cell numbers if anything goes wrong.

Use social media to connect before the event. Go to the conference's Facebook page, LinkedIn discussion group or use the Twitter Hashtag to have conversations with other attendees before arriving on site. This will give a big head start in your networking and relationship building when you meet them IRL (In Real Life).

Practice your elevator pitch. When someone asks what your company does, practice an exact 15-second reply. It should state the pain your business solves and whom you solve it for.

AT THE EVENT

2

Confirm meetings already scheduled as arriving on site. This will ensure there are no missed opportunities with the meetings already set up or last-minute schedule changes.

Seek other people at the event that match your networking criteria. Listen for other prospects that are similar to the profile of the people you went to the conference to meet. This can be through questions that are asked in session or people you meet before and after each session. Ask people you already have a relationship with at the event if they know others that match the profile of prospects you want to meet.

Be open to changing course if the strategy doesn't work or you acquire new information. Just like in daily business, strategies may need to change. If you are halfway through the event and your strategy is not yielding results, than pivot in another direction.

BACK AT THE OFFICE

3

Reach out to the people you met within a few days. Remind them about your meeting and your common interests. Always offer to help. Do not try to sell them anything.

Keep them out of the business card graveyard. Enter their name into your contact management system and set a follow up a month from now.

Always give value. Remember, we can't sell anything to anyone. We need to be there when people are ready to buy. Build trustful relationships by sending valuable information that is not about selling your products. In the long term, people buy from whom they know, like and trust.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Barry Moltz

Barry Moltz has founded and run small businesses with a great deal of success and failure for more than 20 years. He now gets small businesses unstuck. He is the author of five bestselling small-business books, including his latest, *How to Get Unstuck: 25 Ways to Get Your Business Growing Again*, a member of the Entrepreneurship Hall of Fame, a frequent guest on MSNBC's *Your Business* and NPR and hosts his own business radio talk show on AM560 The Answer.



Get More Bang for Your Networking Efforts

By *Brian Moran*

Done correctly, networking can help you learn from others, broaden your knowledge and connect with potential clients. But what works for one person may not make sense for someone else. Still, I believe there are five common networking rules that everyone should follow:

1 Learn to reciprocate.

Like any good relationship, networking is not a one-way street. Look for opportunities to help others while you also try to further your own interests. If you're always a taker and never a giver, people will pick up on that and quickly begin to avoid you. Asking the simple question, "Is there anything I can do to help you?" can make a lasting impression. Getting help from you, whether that's in the form of leads, business contacts or the name of a new vendor, can put people in a reciprocal mood.

2 Be respectful.

Everyone is busy. When you're networking, don't waste someone else's time by hounding them in person or on social media. When you meet someone new, especially if they've been introduced to you by a mutual friend, give them your full attention, ask questions and be an active listener. Be genuine and generous.

3 Honesty is the best policy.

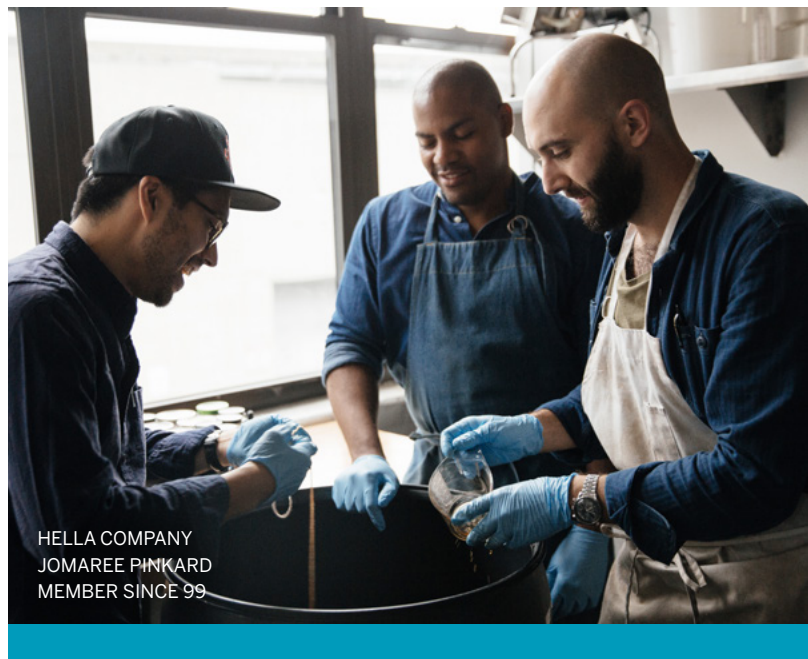
Be straightforward in your communications. If there's a business opportunity you want to discuss or a referral you need, don't pretend you're just interested in getting to know the person. Instead, let the other person know your intentions up front. Say what you mean, and mean what you say.

4 Seek new opportunities.

There are many ways to network, so it's important to find out which ways work best for you. If you're focused on developing business within your local community, get involved in organizations like your chamber of commerce, local service clubs or professional organizations. In addition, look for opportunities to sponsor local events. Online connections through Twitter, LinkedIn and other networking sites may be effective, too.

5 Stay connected.

Effective networking is an ongoing process. Create a system to help you keep track of the people you meet, and maintain regular contact with those who can help you achieve your business goals. An occasional email to say hello, even when you don't need anything specific, is a good way to develop that type of relationship. Additionally, look for ways to connect others—even if there isn't an immediate benefit for you. Forging these relationships will help grow and strengthen your network.



“Create a system to help you keep track of the people you meet, and maintain regular contact with those who can help you achieve your business goals.”



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Brian Moran

As the founder and CEO of Brian Moran & Associates, Brian Moran is dedicated to helping entrepreneurs to run better businesses. He leverages his more than 20 years of experience in small-business publishing (*The Wall Street Journal, Inc.*, *Entrepreneur*) to assist entrepreneurs with everything from social media to accessing growth capital to expanding into the global marketplace. In 2012, Moran received the prestigious Lou Campanelli Award at SCORE's national conference in recognition for his years of service in the small-business market.

The 4 Laws to a Perfect Elevator Pitch (and How to Create One)

Convincing investors to listen to you, let alone give you funding, is no easy feat. Here's how to increase your chances.

By Neil Patel

If you've been in the business world for any length of time then you've probably heard about the elevator pitch. But have you heard of the four laws of the elevator pitch? And have you heard that if you ignore these laws your elevator pitch may fall flat on its face and investors may ignore you?

You probably don't want that to happen. And convincing investors to listen to you is not easy to do. But if you obey the following laws and follow the advice I'm about to give you on crafting a perfect elevator pitch, then your chances of success may increase.

Law 1: Short

Most people have short attention spans. Busy investors have even shorter ones. That means you must communicate your pitch quickly.

Sure, your pitch has to do a lot in that time span, but if you can't write down the basic idea around your company on the back of a business card, then you don't truly understand what you do.

And if you don't understand it, how do you expect other people to understand it?

Law 2: Easy to Understand

The last thing you want when pitching is to confuse the listener. Once you've confused them, you've lost them. Even the most complex or strange ideas should be broken down into easy-to-understand statements.

Law 3: Greed Inducing

Investors want to make money, so your pitch needs to tell them that your idea will make money and how it will make money. The more money it can make, the better.

Law 4: Irrefutable

At the end of your 60 seconds, the investor should not have more questions. All the pieces of your pitch should fit together, and they should fit together logically. In other words, people should be nodding and saying, "That makes sense."



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How to Craft a Perfect Pitch

It's not easy creating a killer, 60-second pitch. It takes time and hard work. But the following steps should help you hone your message so it's compelling, clear and concise.

1. Create the Story

Your very first step is to get everything about your business down on paper. Here are some tips on how to get started:

- **Block some time** – Schedule about an hour and a half to do this. And make sure you schedule it during a time you are the most productive, whether it's in the morning or evening.
- **Turn everything off** – Demand that nobody disturb you during this time. If it helps, go somewhere that people can't find you. Turn off your phone, too.
- **Silence the inner critic** – Do not edit yourself when you are writing! Relax and just write. If it helps, drink a cup of coffee or two.

- **Tell a story** – Write as if you are telling a story to a close friend or family member... and remember that all good stories have a conflict.
- **Write a lot** – Do not worry about having too many words. It's much better to edit down words than it is to add words. If you have a 1,000-word draft, don't worry.

2. Walk Away

Once you've got a rough draft of your pitch, walk away. Shut down your laptop and go for a run or walk or long drive. Let it sit for awhile, preferably a day or more.

What you are doing at this stage is allowing your mind to work on the pitch subconsciously. If an idea about your pitch comes to you, write it down, but don't return to the rough draft yet.

3. Work on Your Hook

After you've let the rough draft sit for a while, sit down and read through it. Start to edit it down. As you do so, start thinking about your hook.

The hook is where you are going to start your pitch. It should take up about 15 seconds, and it's one of the most important parts of your pitch because it is going to convince the investor to listen to the remaining 45 seconds!

How do you write a good hook? A good hook starts with a great first sentence. Here are four great ways to start your hook:

- Imagine if...
- Picture this...
- What if...
- Ever wish...

And a good hook has the element of curiosity or suspense. It also is built on a promise of sorts. For example, "Imagine if we not only had a vaccination for malaria, but a cheap way to get it to everyone overnight."

That's a start of a really good story with a bold promise. There is also a conflict in there, namely, the idea that we could end malaria by getting people a vaccination overnight.

At this point your investor is probably wondering how you plan to pull this off. They're intrigued, leaning in as you speak... and that's what you want!

4. Explain How It Will Make a Profit

You may have the investor's attention at this point, but probably not his or her wallet. In order to get him or her thinking about actually investing, you have to show how your product will make money.

You need to explain the market size, and prove that the market actually can pay for your solution. In my example above, as an investor I'd be wondering who was going to pay for the vaccinations since most

people who suffer from malaria live in third-world countries. Could they afford this solution?

5. Create a Sense of Urgency

Your pitch wouldn't really be complete without a sense of urgency. You need to show the investor that the clock is ticking.

How do you create a sense of urgency? One way to do that is to suggest that there is a race for a patent for your product and if you don't act now, someone else will pounce on that patent.

Sometimes it could be the timing of the product entering the market. Maybe you need to ship by the Christmas season or before New Year's to capitalize on purchasing habits. It could be that you need to ship before the next election.

It's also very important to remember the smart way to creating urgency: Never use urgency to push people to invest. Use urgency to prevent people from procrastinating.

6. Practice Your Pitch

Just like any good actor who memorizes and practices his lines, you need to memorize and practice your pitch. You don't ever want to pitch with just a handful of dress rehearsals under your belt.

Here are some ideas from the world of acting on how to practice your pitch:

- **Record yourself** – Then listen to your pitch. As you listen, make edits to it, tweaking the language and re-organizing sentences and paragraphs if you need to.
- **Pitch to friends** – You really need to be comfortable pitching in front of people, and this is one of the best ways to help you do that.

- **Rehearse in front of the mirror** – You may need to spend a significant amount of time alone in the bathroom before you are comfortable pitching to friends. That’s okay.
- **Hire a professional** – It’s a really good idea to get a professional’s advice on your pitch. But if you can’t hire one, ask someone you know to listen to your pitch. Make sure they’ve been pitched before, possibly a CEO.

7. Be Prepared for Follow-Up Questions

You know you’ve done a good job with your pitch if investors ask follow-up questions that probe deeper into your idea. Perhaps they want to know why you think the market is the size you say it is. Or maybe they’ll want to know what research you did to come up with your price point.

That kind of detail doesn’t need to be in your pitch, but you definitely need to know it in case you get asked the question. So be prepared!

Conclusion

Your elevator pitch is all about first impressions so it’s very important that you spend a lot of time getting it right before you share it with someone. More than likely you’ll only get one shot at impressing that investor, so make sure you are ready.



“You know you’ve done a good job with your pitch if investors ask follow-up questions that probe deeper into your idea.”



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Neil Patel

Neil Patel is the co-founder of Crazy Egg, Hello Bar and KISSmetrics. *The Wall Street Journal* calls him a top influencer on the web, *Forbes* says he is one of the top 10 online marketers and *Entrepreneur* says he created one of the 100 most brilliant companies in the world. He was recognized as a top 100 entrepreneur under the age of 30 by President Obama and one of the top 100 entrepreneurs under the age of 35 by the United Nations.

4 Great Ways to Be a Better Conversationalist

Have genuine conversations that lead to sales opportunities by following these four rules that tell you what to say—and what not to say.

By Rohit Bhargava

We have all met people who are amazing conversationalists, and wondered, “How do they do it?” They’re smooth without being too smooth, interesting without being condescending and genuinely enjoyable to talk with. And they can turn any conversation into a sales opportunity. For many of us, it feels awkward to talk about sales while people are socializing—but it’s not the topic that’s awkward, it’s the way we approach the conversation that makes it so uncomfortable.

Remember, conversations are just what they are—nothing more—and it’s up to you to find the right ways to bring up your business and what you do. But the good news is, it doesn’t have to be awkward. How do you do that without devolving your conversations into something that seems like a sales pitch? The trick can be in rephrasing four specific sentences during your exchange.

- ✓ **Do say: “What are you really excited about right now?”**
- ✗ **Don’t say: “What do you do?”**

One of the reasons that so many people dread networking events is because of the “What do you do?” question. We generally hate to describe what we do and rarely have a way to share it that we’re happy with. Asking the alternative question about what someone is excited about now is rarely hard to talk about. Most people will have an answer to that question that is far more interesting than the recitation of their job title and company. More importantly, when anyone shares something they are excited about, their tone changes and the conversation improves right away.

- ✓ **Do say: “That reminds me of ...”**
- ✗ **Don’t say: “What I do is ...”**

Instead of listening to someone just while you’re waiting for your own chance to speak, try actively listening, which means paying attention to what someone else shares with you. When you do that, you can find the right way to share something back that relates to their conversation—and make a deeper connection.

✓ **Do say: “How can I help you?”**

✗ **Don't say: “How can you help me?”**

This is easily the most powerful sentence you can say, because it demonstrates that you're ready and willing to offer help to someone else in a generous way. The conversations and moments that it opens up for people to share their own stories, and authentically seek your help, can be amazing.

✓ **Do say: “What I believe is...”**

✗ **Don't say: “What I did this weekend was...”**

A common question from people might be about what you did over the weekend. Rather than giving them a generic story, why not shift the conversation to talk about the passions that you may have and beliefs that you hold and perhaps share? Digging deeper in this way helps you get beyond the superficial to have better conversations.

You might be thinking that these sentences could also just be gimmicks to try and sell something... and the truth is that most of them probably could be. The key to making any of these techniques work first and foremost is that you need to actually care about the person you are talking to and his or her story. If you don't, then no framework can help you fake a successful sales conversation.



“[W]hen anyone shares something they are excited about, their tone changes and the conversation improves right away.”



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rohit Bhargava

Rohit Bhargava is a trend curator, marketing expert, storyteller and *Wall Street Journal* bestselling author of five books on topics ranging from the future of business to building a brand with personality. He is the founder of the Influential Marketing Group (IMG), teaches marketing and pitching at Georgetown University and has been invited to speak in 31 countries around the world.

How to Use Improv to Build Networking Skills

Next time you have a business meeting or networking event, try these improv tools and make a better impression.

By Jacob Harper

A lot of entrepreneurs don't see the point in learning about improvisation. Maybe they don't think they're funny. Maybe they don't think they're quick-witted enough. Maybe they just don't see how improv skills translate to the business world. Fair enough.

Good improvisers don't learn to be funny or quick-witted—that's just a byproduct. What they really learn is how to navigate the unknown. They learn to build something tangible out of chaos, or out of nothing. As it relates to business, think of your last networking event. How much did you know about the people you met before you met them? I'd guess it's about as much as an improviser knows before he or she steps on stage: zilch.

The tools of improvisation can be incredibly useful for learning basic networking skills, from improving your listening and retention skills, to making interesting discoveries in conversation, to thinking on your feet and avoiding the dreaded “deer in the headlights” look.

So what are these tools?

Yes, and ...

I studied improv for a year at the iO Theater in Los Angeles, and learned the most basic tool in the improviser's belt is the simple precept of “yes, and...” All this little mantra means is that to propel something—

say, a conversation—you accept the information that was given to you and add something related to that fact.

You don't literally say "yes," then "and" in response to everything that comes out of another person's mouth. What you do is accept the fact that it was said ("yes"), and build off of his or her statement by adding more relevant information ("and"), which gives your conversation partner something to comment on. And thus the conversational tennis match has begun.

Of course, using "yes, and..." requires you to ...

Listen by Staying in the Present

Like the "yes, and..." rule, listening seems easy, but then why are people so bad at it? Simply put, when life is going on, they're busy thinking about other things.

We all do it. It's important to remember that you're not tuning out because you're willfully ignoring someone. Your mind is already thinking of what else to say (worrying about the future) or judging something you already said (worrying about the past). While you're thinking about these things, new information is being presented by the other party—information you can't hear because you're listening to your own brain.

And then your "yes, and..." chain breaks, because you didn't really hear the last thing said because you were in your head.

Which is why another tool of improv you should incorporate is...



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jacob Harper

Jacob Harper is a journalist and comedy writer. He is a regular contributor to *Vice*, and also has written for *McSweeney's*, *Not for Tourists*, *American Foodie*, *Munchies*, *Funny or Die* and College Humor's channel, CH2. He was a writer and story producer on the second season of Travel Channel's *Booze Traveler*. Most recently, Harper was a staff writer on the first season of Science Channel's *The Quick and the Curious*.

Tell Your Brain to Shut Up

An improv teacher once told me, "Your brain is a liar and a jerk," and I find this useful when engaging in conversation. Of course, he wasn't suggesting that thinking at all is a bad thing, or that only the most banal subject matter is good for conversation. What he implied was that the little voice that pops up during conversations telling you that you just made a bad joke or you're not engaging in conversation correctly is not helping you, and is in fact keeping you from living in the present and engaging in a meaningful way.

What if your brain was talking again, and you missed something? To help you stay focused, try to...

Retain Information by Repeating It Back

This actually brings us back to the "yes" part of "yes, and." A common trick in improv for remembering names is to repeat them in your statements (your "and" ones).

Let's say you're talking to someone, and they give you their name. Repeat it, and not just immediately after hearing it. Use it again later when making a statement to them: "You know, Jacob, that reminds me..."

These simple improv tools, while born out of comedy, work well in the real world. They were designed to keep things focused, help you retain information and build and discover things with whom you're conversing. Next time you're meeting someone for business, see if you can put them to work for you.

12 Ways to Create Offline Networking Opportunities

How do you turn social-media connections into bonafide face-to-face contacts? Here are a dozen ways to brush up on your offline networking skills.

By Anita Campbell

Social networking sites like Twitter and LinkedIn may be popular, but they haven't replaced offline networking completely.

For most small-business owners, there's value to be gained by meeting with potential customers, business partners and peers in person. Here are actions that successful networkers take to network with one foot in the online world and one foot in the offline world. Savvy networkers:

1 Tell Social Followers About Events

The week or day before an event, smart networkers will tweet or update their LinkedIn or Facebook status to state they will be at an event. Some of the best networkers will issue an open invitation to meet up for some face-to-face time. Example: "I'll be at the XYZ Mixer tomorrow. Who else will be there? Would love to say hi."

2 Tweet During Events Using Hashtags

At large events with thousands of people and sprawling venues, it's easy to miss other attendees. Fortunately, most large events have a dedicated hashtag assigned to help attendees connect and share.

Good networkers know that when they tweet about what they're seeing at the event using the event hashtag, it also doubles as a networking opportunity. Others in attendance will see the tweets. Seeing a person you know (or want to meet) tweeting can lead to getting together on site.

3 Use LinkedIn to Set Up One-On-One Meetings With Local Connections

Strong networkers who are visiting another city on business search their LinkedIn contacts in advance to identify locals to reconnect with in person. Then they send a LinkedIn message to set up a meeting.

Just keep in mind, people are busy. They may not welcome one-on-one meeting requests unless there's a clear purpose or a good preexisting relationship to rekindle.

4 Use Social Media to Get People Into Their Trade Show Booths

Those who exhibit at conferences or run a booth at a trade show don't just tell followers they'll be at the event. They give them a reason to come to the booth. Example:

They might hold a contest with a tempting giveaway for booth visitors, and tweet about it on social media before and during the event using the event hashtag.

5 Take the Conversation Back Online After the Trade Show

Speaking of trade shows, master networkers leverage social media the week after the event, too. They encourage booth visitors to follow their social accounts by telling them about special discounts, buy-one-get-ones and other offers they will be publicizing on their social accounts after the event.

6 Use Social Networking Features Built Into Event Registration Pages

Many event registration pages have social networking features built in, such as attendee profiles and the ability to share contact data. Smart networkers fill out their profiles fully so they can be found. They also search through the registration list or profiles to identify people to meet in person.

7 Use Social Platforms to Share “Around Town” Favorites

Aside from events, social media is good for sharing “around town” experiences such as favorite restaurants. If you take photographs of meals and post them on Instagram or create short videos or Vines, colleagues may see these, and something in common leads to stronger bonds. Even complete strangers such as foodies may strike up conversations.

8 Use Social Media to Set Up Interviews

Those who have blogs, podcasts or YouTube channels see conferences as golden opportunities to meet digital celebrities and well-known people in their niches. They use direct messaging on social channels to request to interview the person. Most people are flattered and rarely turn down an invitation.



9 Don't Ignore Old-Fashioned Email

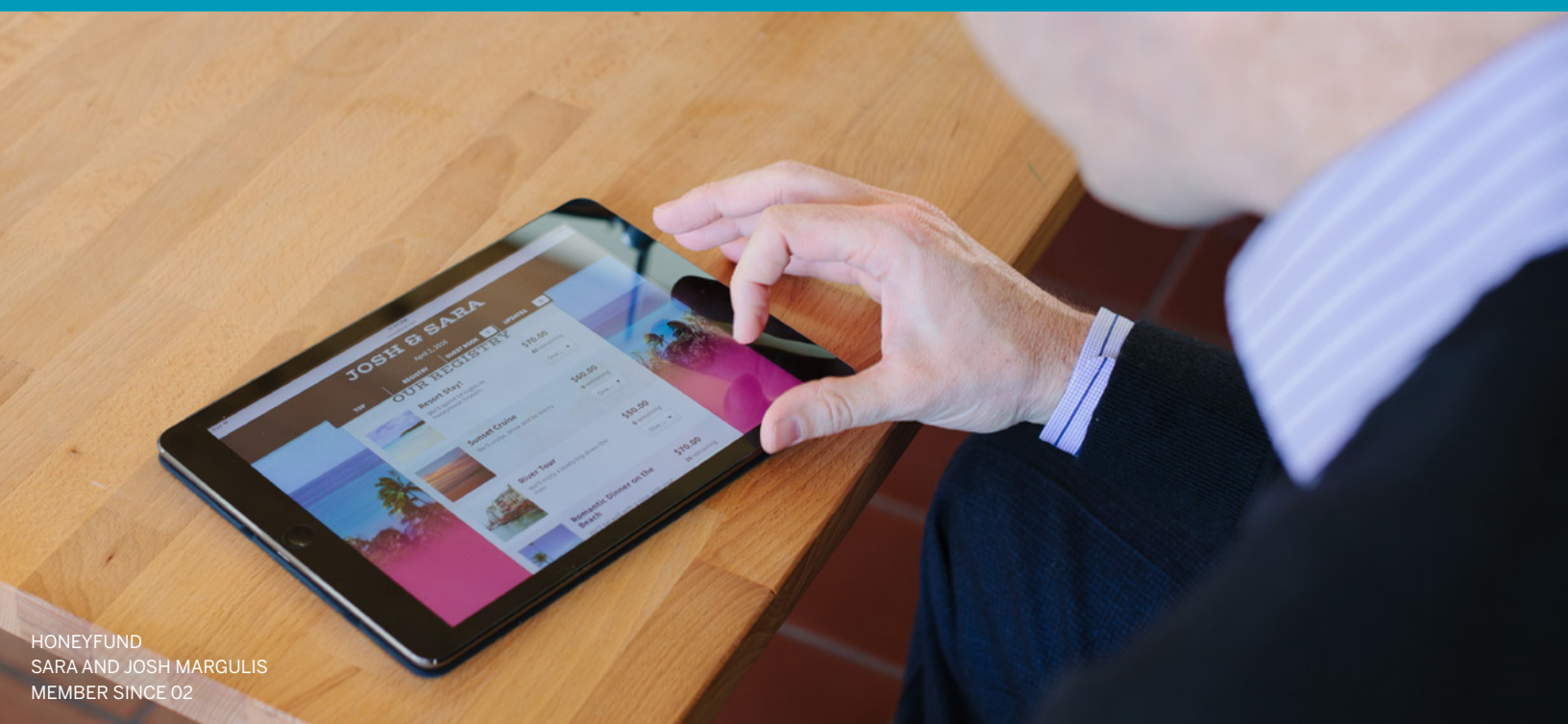
Smart networkers know that the signature line of their emails is a perfect place to share their conference plans. They also go through their contact lists and send personal emails (not generic blasts) to selected people, inviting them to connect at events.

10 Use Meetup-Type Sites to Connect Offline

CoFoundersLab brings together entrepreneurs for events in a structured, in-person setting and is currently held in select cities worldwide. Meetup.com events, of course, are a great way to connect with people locally who share an interest.

11 Initiate a Conversation Online First

Smart networkers are always networking. They don't wait for events. They actually engage and converse online regularly. That way, when the opportunity to meet in person does come up later, there's a more powerful online connection.



HONEYFUND
SARA AND JOSH MARGULIS
MEMBER SINCE 02

12 Make a Memorable In-Person Impression

Last but not least, when meeting face-to-face for the first time, smart networkers know the best approach is rooted in respect and professionalism.

A firm handshake, a warm smile, a hug (if appropriate) or a shared laugh can make a personal connection more memorable. Expressing interest in the other person is powerful.

Savvy networkers don't forget to exchange business cards or "beam" contact information to the other person's phone, or make sure they're connected on a social network of choice.

Remember, online networking is valuable in its own right. But online networking is an order of magnitude more valuable when used to meet people face to face IRL (in real life). Then, you can use those in-person conversations to grow that relationship again online.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Anita Campbell

Anita Campbell is the founder and CEO of Small Business Trends (SmallBizTrends.com), a website and magazine providing news, insights and resources to 2 million small-business owners and entrepreneurs each month.

11 Great Networking Apps to Help You Expand Your Business

These networking apps and services can help you meet more like-minded professionals and grow your business network.

By Glen Stansberry

To say networking is important would be a massive understatement. When you operate a company, who you know is often more valuable than what you know. It can be important to continually reach out and make connections with new people, especially those within your industry.

Here are some of the best networking apps and services out there that can help you find new business connections.

LinkedIn

With over 380 million registered users, LinkedIn is the most widely used service for business networking. Many of the apps we'll list later use LinkedIn's data as the backbone for their apps as well.

The best feature of LinkedIn may be the sheer size of the service. Odds are, you've probably already got an account or at least been invited to use the service. This can greatly increase your chances of getting an introduction through a connection to just about anybody.

Rapportive

Rapportive is an app for Gmail that allows you to quickly see information about the person you've just received



email from. It connects your LinkedIn profile and gives you data about the contact's job titles, location, etc. It's a social CRM that can help you put a face to a name, as well as company and other useful information.

Happening

Happening provides help with the other side of networking: meeting people in real life. The Happening

App allows you to find events in your city that you and your friends may be interested in attending.

Weave

I'll be the first to admit that the concept for Weave may be a bit unusual. Weave is essentially a matchmaking app for professionals, but in a non-romantic way. The service's algorithm matches you up with people who you might have similar interests in and are near your location. You swipe through profiles until you find some interesting matches (a la Tinder) and then initiate the connection.

Weave also has a concierge service to match you up with other professionals every Friday, but it's invite only.

Lanyrd

Conferences can be an incredible opportunity for networking, and Lanyrd can be a great tool to have if you're trying to find one.

Lanyrd is a social conference and event directory. It uses data from social profiles and LinkedIn to show what conferences your friends and connections are going to as well. You can browse conferences by location, date, industry and other criteria.

Meetup

Meetup is in the same vein as Lanyrd, except the scope is much more focused around location. Meetup helps you find events and groups that are happening around you. This could be small to large groups of people, ranging from a myriad of interests.

Caliber

If you're in the tech industry, Caliber could be an interesting app to try. You sign in through LinkedIn, designate your role in the company and start swiping through relevant profiles. You can also filter and

“To say networking is important would be a massive understatement. When you operate a company, who you know is often more valuable than what you know.”

search for profiles, if you're looking for something specific, like “designers.”

1 Million Cups

1 Million Cups is a growing movement to help and connect entrepreneurs. Every week, entrepreneurs give presentations in their communities across the nation. Afterward, the audience has a Q&A session with the presenter and gives feedback about the business and presentation.

While 1 Million Cups is focused around entrepreneurship, there can be a great opportunity to meet like-minded people at the event. Not only may they have potential interest in business, they're also geographically located close to you.

CityHour

CityHour is an app that helps you find people in a 50-mile radius willing to meet face to face within the next two hours. You can find people within a particular industry or who have similar business goals, and if you're on the road and don't know the area, you can have the app suggest local meeting venues.

Shapr

New York-based startup Shapr provides an interesting twist on networking within your industry. Shapr allows you to choose 50 people who you know and trust well enough to share access to your network of connections. You'll receive up to five introductions a day through the app, allowing you to accept or reject each connection. Once both parties have approved the match, they're then able to chat.



“It can be important to continually reach out and make connections with new people, especially those within your industry.”



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Glen Stansberry

Glen Stansberry is the co-founder of the social network [Gentlemint.com](https://gentlemint.com). He's developed websites and startups over the past decade, and his work has been featured in publications like CNN, Forbes, *Time*, BuzzFeed and Fox News.

The New Networking: How to Be a People Curator

Though social media makes it easier for us to connect, there's something to be said for being more human when we network.

By Ted Rubin

Social media is the handshake of our generation, but it can also be a splendid vehicle for giving warm business referrals, or just introducing two people you know have something in common.

Introductions are an important part of our society. In fact, there have been entire books written on the etiquette of introductions and how to formally introduce one person to another. However, the digital age has made the art of making introductions much easier.

This LinkedIn article by WordImpress marketing manager Bridget Willard discusses this very thing—how we find people, make introductions and build an online community. She uses a phrase I've toyed with in the past, that I just love and have adopted: "Be a people curator." It's perfect because it describes exactly what we should be doing in real life, and what social allows us to do at scale: Be human by sharing connections and building community.

I can't tell you the number of people who have been connected to me through a social media referral from a friend—it must be hundreds by now. These are people I never would have met otherwise, many of whom have

joined my social tribe and become friends, even business partners. And I work hard to pay it forward, introducing people to others when I feel it would be mutually beneficial. I know that many of those introductions have resulted in a business transaction and/or an ongoing friendship, which makes me feel really good and cements the bond I have with both parties.

To me, this is the unsung power of social media—paying the connection forward. Not only does it increase your ability to build a community, but it also adds very real human value to both your life and the lives of your connections. That's also the reason I believe that individuals need to come out from behind their company brands and practice being more human on social channels. It opens up all kinds of opportunities to not only connect, but to be a relationship builder for others. Introducing people on social channels isn't just being nice—there's a benefit to you as well, and that's building your reputation as a person to trust. So spread the love! Introduce some folks to each other on Twitter, LinkedIn or Facebook. Look for people you can connect via Pinterest or Instagram, and don't forget to help facilitate other connections. Follow up with them to see how it went.

We all know that real-life, face-to-face networking is a powerful tool for good, so expand it to your social channels and build community as well. Spend a little time actively looking for a few people you can connect, and make that introduction. You never know what fruit these referrals will bear down the road. Some will go nowhere while others will result in life-changing relationships, but I promise that the social karma you receive from these efforts will lead to a positive Return on Relationship.

Your brand/business is what you do; your reputation is what people remember and share. Be a people curator.

“Not only does [social media] increase your ability to build a community, but it also adds very real human value to both your life and the lives of your connections.”



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ted Rubin

Ted Rubin is a leading social marketing strategist, keynote speaker and acting CMO of Brand Innovators. He is the most followed CMO on Twitter, according to *Social Media Marketing Magazine*; one of the most interesting CMOs on Twitter, according to SayMedia; ranked No. 13 on *Forbes*'s Top 50 Social Media Power Influencers list; and ranked No. 2 on the Leadtail list of Top 25 People Most Mentioned by digital marketers. He is the author of *Return on Relationship* and *How to Look People in the Eye Digitally*.



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