



HELPING YOU DISCOVER THE NEXT LEG OF YOUR JOURNEY

Do You Hate Networking?

**If you say yes, then it's possible you are probably doing it wrong.**

**Networking can seem to be intimidating, boring, a waste of time and loathsome.**

**Business expense**

**But as a business tool, it is essential. It is how you build your rolodex and appear a lot more intelligent than you are. I am living proof. And I'll tell you why. When I was in the business I would get a call every other day or so from someone asking me how to do this or that, who I knew or what my opinion was on a certain matter. I had a reputation as "a go-to guy". The truth is that I didn't know squat. BUT I usually knew someone who did have an answer.**

**How did this help me? Well, first off, I knew what was happening. I was able to gather intelligence on a potential deal where money could be spent. Maybe it was something I could go after or partner on it. I would always circle back to the person that I referred to just to be sure he could help the caller and perhaps gain further insight into the possible deal. That was a lot cheaper than paying a lead service.**

**Now I'm not going to pretend that networking is easy especially because I am an introvert. Before going into any networking event I would sit in my car with my stomach churning - introducing myself to strangers, listen to some usually boring speaker, eating some cheap, poorly cooked chicken hoping they would have some warm coffee to stay awake. Each and every time I would force myself out of the car. (Does this sound like you?) Why would I do this to myself? Because by the time I left I was patting myself on the back because I made my self-imposed quota of meeting at least one new person that I could contact.**

**The follow up was important. I would go back to the office, google my new contact(s), check out their LinkedIn, make them a contact, add them to my Act database and give them a call or send an email to cement our new relationship.**

**Fear of the unknown is the biggest problem for humans and one of the reasons we miss out on so much. Let me review some of the unknown to better prepare you for your networking engagement. I'll describe some of the possible venues to expect.**



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Once you go to one or two you will see that the venue is generally consistent for each organization.

The lunch venue. Expect to walk into a room set up with round tables for 10 people. One of the tables will be reserved for the speaker(s) and organization type people. If one of the people you want to shake hands with is one of the speakers, make sure you get a seat closest to the dais or stage. Once the program is over, there will be a line of people and getting there first is important. We'll talk more about later. If meeting the speaker isn't so important then aim for the middle of the room.

If lunch is not being served then the room will be set up with chairs. Depending on the expected size of the audience there may be a center aisle. The aisle seats will go quickly just like on an airplane so people can stretch their legs during the program. It is always best to carry in a closed day-timer of some sort and put it on an aisle seat to reserve it. Then you will be free to network empty handed without worrying about getting stuck like a sardine. I find this seating arrangement most uncomfortable because I like to bring a cup of coffee to the seat once the program starts to either help keep me from dozing and to take a sip in case I get the urge to cough. It embarrassing to get a scratch in your throat and start coughing during the program. The problem is that there is nowhere to put the cup or glass except the floor. Then you have to worry about kicking over and someone else kicking it over. That plus who wants to drink from a cup that has been exposed to a dirty rug and people feet. Gross. It also is difficult to take notes in these chairs. And God forbid you want to check your email- way too obvious that you aren't paying attention.

If you are lucky, the venue will have round tables where you can sit and sprawl a little. And maybe they'll have a pitcher of water and glasses in the middle. It becomes easy to take notes and lay down your smart phone to make it less obvious if you want to check your email.

These are a few tips for networking. I'll have more as I expand on this subject.

Just remember- networking is critical to success. Suck it up and get out there.