

Networking Genius.

How did you find your last home? Where did you go for your last vacation? How did you choose the last restaurant you visited?

I can almost guarantee you that you got the information from someone you knew or someone within your network.

We do it all the time, it is a natural part of being human. We trust our friends before will trust anyone else. Even a friend of a friend is more trustworthy than the Yellow Pages or an advertisement. If you understand the dynamics of networking you will only have a lot more fun but you'll make more money and get rid of the time wasters in your business life.

Networking. What Is It.

If you went online and looked for a definition you probably find hundred different ones from 100 different people. No one really knows what it means, but everyone has an idea about it!

There are almost as many interpretations as there are people on the face of the earth.

I think networking can be looked at from at least four different points of view.

- What you do when you network. That is what activities do you perform?
- What attitude you take when you network.
- What is the process of networking?
- Networking as an organisational driver or barrier.

Let's look at these points in order.

First of all, the activity of networking networking is about helping people in a personal environment. Helping somebody to move to a new apartment, or recommending a nice restaurant all lending your car to your brother are just a few examples of how we constantly network in our daily lives.

If we go back to the statement that network is generally used to describe all the steps you undertake at a professional event, we get to something that many people fear in one way or the other. How do you feel when somebody says let's get networking, or if your boss orders you to go networking? Are you looking forward to it? Or do you feel the stress already?

Many people have questions like what do I have to say? With whom should I talk? Will I know anyone? What if they don't like me or don't want to talk to me?

Do you have one or more of these questions? If so, you will certainly benefit from the tips I'm about to give you. As a matter of fact most of this e-book is about networking action, about networking as an activity.

The attitude.

Before you start networking, be aware that your attitude towards networking determines the degree of your success. Your attitude is your foundation. However, only a few people are aware of their attitude towards networking. What about you? Are you aware of how you feel about networking?

There are many mental barriers to networking. Donna Fisher pointed out in her book *People Power* that you may limit your networking audience abilities with the following attitudes:

- They probably don't have time to...
- They wouldn't want to...
- I don't need anyone's help.
- I can do this by myself.
- I don't know what needs to be done here.
- I don't want to bother people.
- I can't call her she is too busy.
- I don't know them well enough to call them.
- People will think I'm weak or stupid if I approached them about this.
- I should be smart enough to figure this out by myself.
- I have no right to expect others to help me out.
- They probably don't know anyone who could help me.
- I don't want them to realise I need help with this.
- I do want them to know I don't know how to handle this.

Have you ever wondered where these emissions come from?

In modern life, we are conditioned by the culture we live in and by the people who surround us. In our early years we can't choose; our parents choose for us. Mostly without doing it intentionally, next to positive values and beliefs, they pass on certain values or belief that prohibit you, me and many other people from networking optimally.

But there are seven types of conditioning that we probably use without realising. Later on I will be showing you where you can find a solution to each of the following attitudes.

- Don't talk to strangers.
- Be strong.
- Be a big boy, or be a big girl.
- You can't trust others.
- Don't bother that person.
- Don't depend on others.
- Don't let yourself be heard.

The most important networking attitude of all.

“Sharing information in a proactive and reactive way without expecting anything in return.”

In this definition “information” refers to both very general and very specific knowledge. For example, how do you record a television program with a video recorder? Or what is the specific code of the newest software programming language? Information is also about business issues like sales leads, and about simple day to day stuff like what are the opening hours of the supermarket.

In a professional environment information is, for example, a job opening, sales lead, a new supplier or employee, opportunities for partnerships, interesting training courses or tips to work more efficiently.

“Sharing” involves two parties. Networking is not a one-way street, but a two or more way boulevard. It is always about a win-win situation, in which all parties are satisfied. What's important in this concept is that you are comfortable with making requests and being open for help and being willing to accept this help yourself.

“In a proactive and reactive way” means in the first place that you offer information or help when you are asked to do it, but it goes further than that. You can send people information and refer them to others without them asking to do this. Make sure you don't spam them. A good approach could be to let them know you have this information and that you are willing to share it, especially, when you don't know people well. This might be a nonconfrontational approach.

“Without expecting anything in return”. In this era of short-term benefits it's not a concept that is immediately embraced by everybody. It is the one that works best in the long run, and it builds trust and makes you more attractive to other people.

By giving without expecting anything back, you will eventually receive much more than your initial investment, but you never know from whom all when. Do something many people have difficulty with, but for me it is a golden rule and later on I will show you plenty of examples of how to give without expecting anything in return and more examples of how I have received benefits in taking this approach.

Networking is a long-term game that always involves two or more players. You reap what you have sown. Start sowing now and you can read more and faster!