



5 top tips to gain the results you want from networking groups

Business networking groups can give you many benefits if you know how to make them work for you. A networking group works well when connections work together in a fluid way. Read these five top tips to make sure you are the bright spark in your group.

#1 You reap what you sow

‘You eat what you kill’ is a maxim used by financiers on Wall Street and the City of London. While it is aggressive, it illuminates the importance of making an effort. Just as an ambitious trader in the City only takes home what she or he makes, your success in your networking group hinges on how you help others. Think about how you would like someone to make an introduction for you. The more preliminary introductions you make for contacts, the more results you will receive.

Remember: In this world of technological innovation, the old-fashioned way of networking is still important to many people. After receiving an introduction, send a handwritten thank you note to the person who referred you to the contact. The attention to detail of writing a handwritten thank you note will make people remember you, which is vital in a competitive business environment.

#2 Delegate your time

The Roman philosopher Seneca stated that “Time discovers truth”. If you want to be successful in business, you know that you must delegate the time you have efficiently. If the group needs members to commit to help with administrative duties, can you give your time or do you have other commitments that require your attention? Can you get help with those commitments? The return on investment of giving your time to a networking group is limitless. Iconic inventors such as Thomas Edison worked within a sphere of contemporaries, investing their time to share ideas with each other. History is proof of how well things worked out for him.

Remember: Time is money. One networking group brought in over £1,000,000 in just 12 months, all from devoting time to build the “word of mouth” power of the group. Another group meet online using the latest technology and avoid the time and cost of travelling.

#3 Assess your location

Wherever you are based is going to have an impact on how you can generate revenue for your business. When you are choosing your networking group, think about where it is. If it requires you to drive for two hours to reach the venue, this might not be practical if you have a busy family life. If your ideal networking group is too far from where you live, think of joining a group closer to home. The advantages will outweigh the disadvantages, such as ensuring that you arrive on time for group meetings.

Remember: The growth of local business means that you can find a networking group for your own neighbourhood or area, not just the city or town that you live in. If community is important to you, join a local networking group. Take it one step further and start your own networking group, perhaps online, if you notice that your neighbourhood does not have one.

#4 Be yourself

The flavour of a group is determined by the people who take part in it. If you are a bubbly and vivacious person who likes to meet new people, join a group that has many members. This way, your personality will melt in with the outgoing personalities of a large group. If you are a quiet individual who wants to come out of your shell, try joining a medium sized group. This will allow you to ask questions and be outgoing without feeling overwhelmed because of being surrounded by many people.

Remember: Use your personality to your advantage. An introvert can ask fellow members of the networking group what their key interests are which allows them to talk about themselves. For example, if you find that you share a love for sport with another member, you will find it easier to be part of the group because you have a shared interest that is outside business.

#5 Improve your work ethic

Writer George Bernard Shaw once said “When I was young, I observed that nine out of ten things I did were failures. So I did ten times more work”. When you are participating in the networking group, expand on your work ethic and bring your best qualities to each session. It is not enough to just come to meetings to talk to people about your business. Someone has to create the framework for the networking group to grow. If you are brilliant at maths, offer to be the treasurer of the networking group. If you are an expert at promotions, use your skills to encourage new members to join the networking group. All of this effort for behind the scenes work will not go unnoticed.

Remember: You get out what you put in. If your fellow members see you working tirelessly to help sustain the group, this shows that you are committed and passionate about people and business. These two qualities are treasured in professional relationships.

Use these five top tips to be the best that you can be. Anytime you feel as if networking is difficult for you, remember what motoring pioneer Gottlieb Daimler said: “The best or nothing”.

Joining and taking part in business networking groups can take you one step closer to being recognised as the best in your field. You will be meeting people who have made the same commitments and exhibit as much drive as you. These top tips from Beyond Networking are among the tools you need in your networking arsenal to be successful.

Was this useful? You can find out more on the blog:

www.beyondnetworking.co.uk/blog/

Find out about us at: www.beyondnetworking.co.uk

or **call** 020 7100 2437 / **email:** jason@beyondnetworking.co.uk

Connect online: @jasoncobine or <http://uk.linkedin.com/in/jcobine>