

The Art of Networking

Written By The Business Group
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Networking is about making connections and building enduring, mutually beneficial relationships. You need to operate as a catalyst to ensure you meet the “right” people to include in your network and expand your sphere of influence.

Ultimately, it’s not about who you know ... but WHO KNOWS YOU!!

In today’s business environment we are constantly exposed to advertisements, emails, status updates, special offers and sales pitches, resulting in a cluttering of various messages. Personal relationships enable you to stand out, rise above the noise and remain top of mind.



Why Network?

- Learn dynamics within your industry
- Establish your business contacts
- Get “plugged in” to your community
- Seek new career opportunities
- Facilitate win-win relationships
- Create your referral networks
- Accelerate your professional development
- Develop knowledge resources

*The ABCs of sales has changed dramatically over the past few years.
ABC used to mean Always Be Closing.
Now, ABC means Always Be Connected.*

Networking Opportunities to Consider in the Manawatu

- Women and Business
- Chamber of Commerce
- 3 Keys
- Massey University Alumni Events
- Sports Groups
- Community Organisations
- Industry organisations/events

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06 358 3814 | PO Box 5558

info@womenandbusiness.co.nz | www.womenandbusiness.co.nz



10 Common Mistakes Made at Networking Events

1. We misunderstand the purpose of networking

The goal of networking is to **make and begin cultivating mutually beneficial referral relationships**. That's not to say that someone won't have another immediate purpose, i.e. finding a speaker for an upcoming event, locating a sponsor, or, if the offer is real and the timing is critical, a sale may well occur. But, our primary purpose is and should be relationship building.

2. We only hang out with the people we already know

3. We talk too much about ourselves

4. We don't describe what we do in a way that is meaningful to others

5. We don't have an effective follow up system

Use an Evaluation Tool after each event (example below) and maximise your networking with a follow up email, phone call or coffee catch up with any new connections you made at the event.

Event	What was my focus?	Things I did well	Things I did not do well	Meetings I need to set up

6. We don't meet the host/centers of influence

7. We are not good matchmakers

If you see someone new at an event, bring them into the group you're talking with or introduce them to other members. We all remember our first time at new events and it is always a relief to be welcomed by others.

8. We show up just to be seen

It is best to attend events at which you can make a meaningful presence and then be there long enough to have some positive impact on those in attendance.

9. We don't ask the right questions

Aspects of your conversations should be simply to find out as much as you can about what the other person does; why it is important to them; and how they can be of value either to you, your clients, or your existing referral relationships.

10. We don't attend enough networking events

The frequency of face to face contact really helps to build and cultivate those referral relationships.

"If you want to go fast, go alone, If you want to go far, go with others" – African Proverb.



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