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## Non-Stop Networking

By Andrea Nierenberg

The following article first appeared in *Dartnell's Prospecting Newsletter*.

Networking is a process, one that can create business connections to last a lifetime. As salespeople, we are constantly developing, building, and cultivating relationships, and the truly smart salesperson develops contacts that act as his or her advocates.

A gardener tends to his or her flower garden by planting the seeds, watering them, checking in on them, and allowing them time to grow. That's exactly how we can build a "bouquet" of people around us.

The following are 44 networking tips that you can use any time of the year. Follow them, try them out, and see what happens as you progress. Here's the secret to making them work: as you continue to add a new tip, keep practicing the previous tips. Each tip works with the others. When you use them like building blocks, you'll be guaranteed to get excellent results.

1. The opposite of "networking" is "not working." Leave no stone unturned by keeping in mind that everyone you meet can either become a prospect, a client, or a friend.
2. Build relationships by immediately thanking those who have referred you. My experience has proven to me that if Tom refers me to someone, I'll call and write that person ASAP. Then I'll go back and thank Tom and let him know that I've made contact and will keep him posted.
3. Remember the 250 theory. Joe Girard, the author and famous car salesman, pointed out that everyone knows at least 250 people in his or her life. Now think about who those people are and let them know what you have to offer.
4. The 3 "P"s of networking \_ people, power, and promotion. Relationships with people are the foundation of everything. Power is a perception; if you think you have it, you do. And perception is reality, so make it a reality that you're a people person who is powerfully connected.
5. Support and empower others. When you meet someone with whom you're prospecting, be open, listen to him or her, and help

that person with his or her needs - it will come back.

6. Networking is about relationships and the results that happen. When you cultivate people into your life, you'll reap rewards both professionally and personally. They both take time and are worth it.

7. Demonstrate expertise and use it to prospect. Become a resource in your industry, perhaps as a speaker with a specialty in your field, and present at trade association meetings.

8. Make lists. Keep a list of your strengths and skills that you can use to prospect. Review it monthly and update it. They might include: great follow up, sending personal notes and emails, or having a friendly attitude. Whatever they are, keeping improving them.

9. List five great achievements. Keep a list that has the top five successes that give you the greatest pride. For example, maybe you networked your way into a major Wall Street firm, or sold two programs overseas.

10. Learn to ask for help. Call a business friend or associate and say, "I need some advice." Then follow up with a short thank you note.

11. Think first impression. There is only one opportunity to make a first impression. Therefore, make the most of it. Your image and actions speak louder than words. People remember what they perceive about you.

12. Be clear and concise in your approach. Remember the KISS method - Keep It Simple Sweetheart. Don't waste people's time.

13. Make frequent eye contact. Look at a person when you're speaking with him or her. Focus as if he or she is the only person in the world.

14. Be at ease in a group. Always rehearse your pitch and know your material before you call on a prospect.

15. Keep repeating someone's name in a conversation. It's the sweetest sound for a person to frequently hear his or her name.

16. Reintroduce yourself to people. People will forget who you are. Therefore, let them save face; when you see them, say: "Hi Bob, I'm Andrea Nierenberg. We met a few weeks ago."

17. Promote yourself and your business. Send your prospects shorts notes with any newsworthy information pertaining to you and your company.

18. Business cards are treasures. When you receive one, treat each one as a possible "closed deal" worth thousands of dollars. It represents the person with whom you're trying to connect.

19. Keep detailed notes about the people you meet. Maintain a record of the date and event, who introduced you, the information you discussed, and what your follow up will be.

20. Acknowledge people who inspire you, even if you've never met them. Perhaps you've read their book or have heard them speak. Write to them and let them know what you think.

21. Nurture your network. Make calls and send notes even when it is not directly business-related. As you stay in touch with people, they will remember you, thus will contact you when a need arises.

22. Each week, call one person with whom you haven't spoken for the past 90 days. Give that person an idea for his or her business, a thought, or a new promotion you might have. It's a way of staying in touch and keeping your face in front of your prospect.

23. Invite people to accompany you to events. Take a prospect to a lecture so that you can discuss it later. Let him or her enjoy an event or party with you so that the connections from these events will begin.

24. Send people articles that may interest them. By sending newspaper or magazine articles, it will let people know that you're thinking of them and their business, even if they are not clients right now.

25. Traveling is also a good time to listen and strike up a conversation. You never know who you'll meet. I've been hired on airplanes, on trains, and even while standing in line waiting to buy stamps.

26. Keep a log of when and to whom you've written. Keep them in your computer and include notes on special events, vacations, birthdays, and correspondence.

27. Return every phone call within 24 hours. It's professional and courteous, two qualities which are being lost with all the technological advances.

28. Follow-up notes should have follow-up points. For example, thank people for something specific, introduce a new element to stimulate interest (such as an industry development), and conclude with a "next step," such as, "I'll call you again in one week."

29. Become an active and perceptive listener. Tune in, remember what someone else says, and use it in a future conversation. Since we only listen with 25% of our listening capacity, you will definitely have greater networking successes if you increase yours.

30. Never be late; in fact, show up early. When going to any type of meeting, get there early enough so that you see people walk in. Then scope out your strategy, and make unexpected connections.

31. Know who will be at trade shows so that you can plan a strategy. Find out who will be attending. If possible, drop a note in advance that says, "I understand you'll be at the \_\_\_\_\_ and I'd love the opportunity to spend a few minutes with you."

32. Go where they go. If you want to meet certain contacts, find out where they spend their time. I remember wanting to meet someone who went to a particular restaurant for lunch. I started eating there and created an opportunity to make a connection.

33. Go solo. If you're at an event to meet new people, split off from your friends or co-workers and start talking to other people. Walk up to strangers and ask them friendly open-ended questions. Join other groups and be open and approachable.

34. Learn about successful people and their networking techniques. Jack Welch, the most successful CEO of GE, has written many personal, handwritten notes. I do the same and now feel that I'm in great company.

35. Have a strategy and plan. It might include a goal of meeting two new people this week, setting up a meeting with them, writing a short note, and then calling them one week later.

36. Devote at least 20 minutes to networking per day. Remember, it's a process. Think of all the prospecting you must do to create a contact that becomes a client. That 20 minutes could be spent writing three notes, or making three extra phone calls - all for the sole purpose of networking and staying in touch.

37. Ask for referrals and leads from satisfied customers. They will truly be your advocates. They already believe in you. Therefore ask them for help and who they might be able to introduce you to. Remember to follow up and let them know how much you appreciate them and their faith in you.

38. Thank people for the referrals, even if nothing has happened. Many will thank others for referrals that worked out. Especially when you thank people even for "dead ends," it will separate you from others who are making the same requests.

39. Follow up in unique ways. My friend Randy Rosler has a wonderful line of Business Greeting cards called IntroKnocks. There is a unique card for every occasion, everything from the customer who won't return calls to jokes to help "break the ice" for new clients.

40. Suppliers are great people to network with. Ask them who they can refer you to, and then follow up the referral. They are in touch with other people like you all the time and can help you open doors.

41. Do what I call the "Power of Three." Each day, write three personal notes or cards; the power comes from them being handwritten. At the end of the week, you've made 15 contacts, and at the end of the year, over 750 goodwill connections. I have done this consistently for 15 years - it's the simplest and most powerful technique I know.

42. Write your return label. By writing it on the notes or letters you send out, it will appear more personal and give the effect that you really took the time to address the envelope.

43. Organize business cards. Start to form a "library" of

opportunities. I keep them in my database on my computer. I have all my information together and know what the contacts do, where they live, and their area of expertise. I can then also refer them to others and act as a networking catalyst.

44. Surprise the other person by remembering something that he or she told you. The highest compliment you can give someone is to listen and remember what he or she says. I recently ran into a prospect and remembered that her daughter's name was Susie and she was an artist. I started off the conversation by asking, "How's Susie and what's happening with all of her artwork?" The prospect was so amazed that I remembered, that she set up a meeting for the next week and gave me a huge project.

Follow these tips - and keep the process going - to become a real non\_stop networker!

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