

10 Highly Effective Habits of Networkers

1. **Take Selfless Action** — Decide to go to an event with the sole purpose of only helping others. Not ready for full commitment? How about the first 5 people you meet? Every question from you. Your focus. Is on their needs. Not yours. Think that would feel good? It does. And it is not a waste of time. Because while a rare person will walk away having sucked you dry, most will want to make sure to ask you about your needs. Regardless, it will be a nice break from your own “needs”. One way to do this is to adopt someone new at the event. Someone who is clearly smart but uncomfortable. Introduce them to a few folks and then look for the next person standing on the outskirts looking for a friend.

2. **Show Relational Intelligence** — I wrote a post on relational intelligence for job search a while back after interviewing Steve Saccone, author of a book called “Relational Intelligence”. Steve is a pastor up at Mosaic church in Los Angeles. Summing up this concept? It is “the capacity to connect with other people with skill, warmth, authenticity and compassion”. If you have this capacity or show an interest in developing it, then I am in.

3. **Provide Introductions** — Really good networkers are called “Super Connectors” because they have a passion for connecting people. And, over time, they meet more and more people that might be a good friend to someone they already know. You can do this at events, via e-mail, on Linked-In and even on Twitter. For example, if you thought two guys you met should know each other, you could post this on Twitter: “@Steve Jobs You should meet @BillGates for coffee. Lots in common for sure!” Whether they actually meet is up to them. But you have started the ball rolling and, as a result, may gain “influencer” status for having done so.

4. **Build Real Friendships** — While it is easy to go to events and build acquaintances, a great goal of networking is to slowly develop real friendships. You can’t do it with everyone of course, but when you connect with someone, don’t let that moment pass. Set up a series of coffee meetings to create multiple impressions. It takes about three personal meetings to turn a first meeting into something that looks like a friendship. And it is not just the time. It’s also the commitment. Demonstrated by completing a few transactions (i.e. doing something for each other). This builds mutual trust, which is critical to that early friendship. Great example? Be the accountability partner for three people. Meet them for four successive Fridays and keep them on task!

5. **Speak Boldly** — This is a pet peeve of mine. When people speak too softly and/or without a strong voice. First, I need to hear you. Especially when addressing a group. If I can’t hear every word clearly, I will likely tune you out. If your delivery is not clear or if you meander, my confusion will be frustrating and I won’t get your message. And I may not decide to introduce myself to you after the intros are over. Finally, if your delivery is timid, I won’t know that you are ready to do what you say. So be strong in your words. Let me hear you. And give me a reason (or two) that I can invest some productive time in a conversation with you.

6. **Know Objectives Of Others** — How do you do this? Ask really good questions. Why are they at the event? Looking for work? Consulting projects? Just here to help? Once you know this, you can be a much more active networker for them. And for the people you know

that may value an introduction to them. One way I do this for job seekers is through my Watchlyst™. If I know you are looking for work, I will invite you to sign up for the Watchlyst job lead sharing tool so that I can keep a keen eye out for you. And perhaps send you a lead. You can keep your own Watchlyst by downloading my simple spreadsheet on the free job seeker downloads page. It allows you to keep track of the objectives of those in your network. A powerful tool that helps you remember key needs of key people.

7. Remember The Early Days — Sit back from the computer and think about your first days walking into a networking event. The feeling of insecurity. Come on, we all felt a bit of that, right? You know no one. And, often, no one turns and, with a big smile, says “Welcome!.” You probably looked a little timid. A little unsure. And then remember that first person who introduced themselves. The first who sat with you and told you their secrets. Now that you remember all of that, go look for someone to help. Someone who needs your knowledge and experience. Someone whose path would become clearer as a result of spending time with you.

8. Stay In Touch — Of course after all this hard work at the event, you can’t just let it all fall away. Relationships don’t build by themselves. You need to stay in touch. Ask everyone you meet: where can I find you online? Once you know their Twitter and LinkedIn addresses, life gets easy. And fun. Here’s a neat trick. And an alternative for the back of your Flashcard™, add your social media addresses to the back like this...

9. Show Respect — While you shouldn’t let too many rules inhibit your networking strategy, You need to be careful. Because you can bruise your network. So respect (1) the time of others – don’t take more time than you deserve. Have a great 5 to 10 minute discussion at an event, then politely disengage so that they can move on. And so can you. (2) Respect the network of others – don’t overuse a name you were given or tell everyone you know about your new contact at XYZ Company. Use the contact, report back to the provider and ask, if possible, if you can share it with others. And (3) respect the personal information of others. Don’t share phone numbers or e-mail addresses with a big crowd. Be more purposeful than that.

10. Make Eye Contact — When talking with groups and especially when talking one-on-one, maintain eye contact. It shows respect and indicates you are actively listening. It is a subtle but critical action that says you are engaged and interested. One trick to use when speaking to groups? Engage someone’s eyes long enough to fill a water glass. Three or four seconds allows someone to feel that you have noticed them. And that connection will give them a reason to listen more attentively to the rest of what you have to say.

11. Here’s a Bonus . . . Smile — It says that you are open and friendly. I’m not saying to fake it. I’m saying that you should signal to others that you are comfortable in your shoes and willing to engage. Put up a “hard, business-like” persona and you may get fewer conversations and fewer follow-ups days later.

So there you have it. I hope each of these Things To Do can be implemented easily. Tomorrow or at your next networking event. These are critical characteristics and skills to build into your networking strategy.