

4 Power Networking Strategies for Successful Self Employed Women

Many of the women who work with me are shy. And so was I when I first left my “job job” and began networking. When I worked in the university setting, the only networking I did was at conferences where we’d share our curriculum and research findings with others... it didn’t feel like “selling”.

When I left behind that “academic identity” 10 years ago, I knew it would be important for me to get out and meet people to share information about my career coaching services and to establish myself as an expert in this field that was new to me. I was quite nervous about this activity but recognized the value enough to talk myself into attending 3 different networking meetings each month. This week, I want to share what I learned with you about what works in networking.

Strategy #1: Intention. Before you attend a meeting, get clear in your own mind, what you would like to have happen. Play the scenario out in your mind like a movie. My intention is usually to meet at least 2 people who can help me by referring clients to me and whom I can help in some way that will be powerful for them.

Try out a networking event before you join. Each has a different flavor –find the ones that are comfortable for you. I recommend joining three. I currently belong to my local Chamber of Commerce, my local chapter of National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO.com) and a mastermind group. I usually attend 1 breakfast meeting, 1 lunch meeting, 1 dinner meeting and one 5:00-7:00 pm “mixer” each month.

Strategy #2: Be curious about people. Here’s a simple formula that works every time. Set a goal to have this conversation with at least 3 people each time you attend a networking event. Approach the person and say “what is your business or what is your work?” Once they tell you, say “what kind of person is your ideal client?...I’d like to know so I may be able to refer people to you.”

Ask them for 2 or 3 cards that you can share with others. When they hand you their card, look at it for a moment, comment on it if you like something about it and jot down a note on it to remind you of how you might help them.

When you get back to your office, put them in your database. If you have an ezine or newsletter, send them your most recent issue with a note saying “this may be of interest to you or may benefit someone you know. If you’d like to subscribe...click here (to your subscriber link) or if you don’t yet have an electronic database set up, say “if you’d like to subscribe, shoot me a message back and I’ll add you to my list.” “If you know of someone who would benefit by this information, I’d appreciate it if you’d forward it along.” “If you have a newsletter or ezine, I’d also like to see yours.”

During the following weeks, if you see an article that contains information that pertains to that person, forward it to them with a note. If they are helpful to you in anyway, send a thank you card. The fact that are thinking of them and wanting to help them will help establish a relationship.

Strategy #3: Practice answering the question – “what is your business?”

You need to have a quick, specific answer that you can say with ease and confidence.

This takes practice and fine tuning and that’s ok. As I mentioned early in this ezine, I just attended a conference this past weekend. I was struck by how many people could not answer this question easily when I asked it of them. Many people said to me “wow, you are so clear.”

Here’s what I said when someone asked me what my work was: “I work with women over 40 who want to be self employed. They either can’t decide what business to start, or they have started a business and need help growing it so they can make plenty of money.”

Strategy #4: Use Both Sides of Your Business Card. Don’t agonize over your first business cards and don’t spend a ton of money on them. No doubt, you will change your mind about the design/content over time. I recommend Vistaprint.com. Don’t forget to use the valuable space on the back of the card. You can use this space to list your key services or speaking topics or include a great testimonial here.

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Ann delivers smart, simple ways for people to acknowledge what they love to do and do more of it. Her articles, products, and books have motivated and inspired readers in numerous print and online publications. She regularly leads coaching programs, tele-seminars and live retreats, bringing the message to audiences internationally that living a passion-based life will bring prosperity and success.

She was recently selected from a nationwide search to be featured in *Discover Your Inner Strength*. The book features best-selling authors Stephen R. Covey (*Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*), Brian Tracy (*Million Dollar Habits*), and Ken Blanchard (*One Minute Manager*).

Learn how you can start applying my secrets to creating your successful business TODAY!
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