

What's The Net Worth Of Your Network?

By Anne Baber & Lynne Waymon

Are you a smart networker? If you answer all 10 questions "Yes," you're a networking whiz. If not, use the tips to make your networking pay off.

1. Do you look for ways that your resources and information can help others fulfill their personal and professional goals?

TIP: When your conversational partner mentions an interest, enthusiasm, or challenge, listen generously by suggesting a resource, book, or website that will interest her, or by introducing her to someone you know who shares that interest or concern.

2. Do you know at least 100 people well enough (professionally or in the community) to call and say, "Hi, this is _____" and they know who you are and what your skills and talents are?

TIP: Think of networking as TEACHING who you are and what you're good at.

3. Do you belong to at least four professional or community organizations and are you visibly active in at least two?

TIP: Take an active role so that you can demonstrate your capabilities and showcase your talents.

4. At social and business events, are you comfortable with introductions, can you remember names, do you introduce people to one another and do you greet the leaders, hosts, and speaker?

TIP: Make your own name memorable. Remember other people's names. (For lots of tips, see our book, *Make Your Contacts Count*, available through Amazon.com.) Up your visibility by greeting the movers and shakers.

5. When people ask, "What do you do?" do you avoid labels and titles and explain what you do in a way that starts a conversation?

TIP: Tell people what you want them to remember about you.

6. Do you make people aware of the kinds of problems you can solve, so they refer the right contacts and resources to you?

TIP: When somebody says, "What's new?" tell them a short story, with you as hero, saving the day, serving the customer, or solving the problem. Share your excitement in and pleasure at what you do.

7. Do you use conversations as a way to find a reason to exchange business cards?

TIP: Use cards to verify contact information so you can set up another meeting or provide some kind of information. Make notes and follow up quickly.

8. Do you know how to end conversations comfortably?

TIP: Say, "It was great to hear about your marketing plans. I'll look forward to seeing you next month, Jean." Shake hands

9. Before you go to an event, do you create a mental list of what you want to get from the people you meet?

TIP: Talk to people about upcoming challenges, what or who you want to find, what you want to know more about.

10. Do you find ingenious ways to re-connect, follow up, and stay in touch?

TIP: Share rides to meetings; call and make plans to sit together at an event; or make a networking contact your exercise buddy.