

ASPIRE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

EXPLOSIVE NETWORKING

BUILDING YOUR BUSINESS BY
ESTABLISHING WIN-WIN RELATIONSHIPS
AND HELPING OUT OTHERS

By Shawn Kinkade



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EXPLOSIVE NETWORKING

INTRODUCTION

Building your business can sometimes be a hard and lonely thing to do. If you're like most small business owners, marketing isn't the first thing on your list – probably not the second or third thing either. It's something you know you need to do, but it often doesn't get the attention it deserves.

There are a lot of ways to market your business, but for most small business owners the foundation for all other marketing activities should be networking. A big part of being a small business and one of the biggest advantages over the big guys is the relationship you develop with your customers. You're not some big impersonal company with thousands of people on staff, you are the hometown provider and your customers see you or your employees at the grocery store, gas station or their kid's baseball game.

Networking is all about relationships and relationships are the key to business. There's a saying, the golden rule of networking, that's been around a long time that really sums this up nicely:

All things being equal, people will do business with, and refer business to, those people they know, like and trust.

It seems simplistic, but if you look at your own buying habits, how often does this rule play out? Have you ever chosen one store over another just because you like the people that work there more?

This even works online. Think about the great lengths that a company like Amazon goes to in order to make your relationship with them a positive one. They'll give you suggestions on other books or products based on what you're looking at. They'll share other customer's thoughts and reviews on their products – good and bad, and they'll generally go out of their way to make your experience a positive one. Amazon knows that it's important for you to know, like and trust them so you'll do business with them and tell your friends about it as well.

So how do you get people to know, like and trust you? Well that's the essence of networking.

Bob Burg, the author of *Endless Referrals* (great book by the way) defines networking as:

Networking is the cultivating of mutually beneficial, give and take, win-win relationships.

The key then is the focus on mutually beneficial, win-win relationships. Networking is much more than just talking to people and handing out your business card. In fact if that's your approach, you're doing it wrong and not helping yourself to build your business.

Let's look at the 10 steps you can take to get your networking to explode!

1. Develop a Networking Mindset

Free your mind and the rest will follow! There are plenty of techniques and tips to make you a better networker, but the real key is approaching it in the right frame of mind.

2. Develop a Great 30-Second Commercial

What's your unique selling proposition? Can you get across what you do in an interesting and concise way? Just like on television, you need to grab attention quickly.

3. Identify Your Target

Have you ever seen a fly fisherman that pulls in fish after fish? He knows what he's fishing for and he knows what those fish like. Do you know what you're after?

4. Identify Where to Network

Sure you can network almost anywhere, but there are only so many hours in the day so you should identify what will work best for you.

5. Prepare Your Meeting Strategy

One of the best ways to overcome fear is to be prepared – decide what you want to do.

6. Work the Event

You weren't planning on just showing up, having a few drinks and throwing your cards around were you?

7. Ask Questions

People enjoy being listened to. The secret to being a great listener is to ask the right questions.

8. Don't Sell

Don't do it...at least not at networking events, it doesn't work and it's likely to annoy people!

9. Go With a Team Approach

Not only is there safety in numbers, you can get a lot farther with teamwork than you can on your own.

10. Follow-up

If you were a farmer, you would have spent a lot of time determining the best thing to plant, preparing the field and going to pick out the seed. However there will be no crop if you don't actually plant the seed and water it.

1. DEVELOP A NETWORKING MINDSET

Let's face it, if you're a first time networker or even if you've been around the block a couple of times, networking can be intimidating and not seem very effective in terms of a growth strategy for your business. If you've been to a local chamber meeting, you've seen plenty of people that are uncomfortable with networking, they're standing off in the corner by themselves or worse, they're latching onto every person they can find and giving them the hard sell on their business.

Part of the reason for that is that networking is often misunderstood. Networking is not selling and it's not socializing. It's the process of creating and strengthening your business network, creating mutually beneficial win-win relationships.

In order to do that, you have to start with a mindset of creating value for others. You're not doing it so they'll owe you; you're doing it because it's the best way to connect with people, and ultimately it's those real connections that will drive to real success.

The other thing that people struggle with is fear. Often you're walking into a room of strangers and if you're a new business owner or if you're business isn't where you'd like it to be, you have the added pressure of needing to see some success. It's natural to be fearful in these situations, but there are a few things you can do to manage that fear:

- Acknowledge your fears and develop a plan to address them.
- Be patient, networking is a long-term strategy not a quick fix. It's about farming, not hunting.
- Keep in mind that it's a networking event, everyone is there to meet other people and many of them are probably just as nervous as you are.
- Go to events with a friend or acquaintances and work on introducing each other to new people.
- Start with events where people have similar interests – if you're into photography, go to a photography club meeting and just get used to meeting people.

Having the right mindset as you develop your networking strategy will go a long ways towards leading you to a successful outcome.

Universal Truth of Connecting

The question you have to ask yourself is: How can I make people better as a result of connecting with me?

Note well: This is not just a strategy to connect at a networking event, this is a strategy to connect anyone, anywhere at any time.

- Jeffrey Gitomer
(Little Black Book of Connections)

2. DEVELOP A GREAT 30-SECOND COMMERCIAL

One of the key things that can make the networking process much easier is developing and getting extremely comfortable with your 30-Second commercial.

A 30-Second commercial is exactly what it sounds like. Also known as an elevator pitch, it is a concise, focused and interesting description of who you are and what you do. The intention – just like the 30-Second commercials on radio or TV is to pique interest, give them just enough to get a glimmer of something interesting...and nothing more. You want to engage your audience, give them an interesting overview of what you can do – and then promptly move on to talking about them.

Remember that the primary focus of networking is to establish a connection by focusing on the other person. However, even if you get the ball rolling by asking them questions, at some point they will ask you what you do. By having a response that you're comfortable with and that is intriguing / not boring you can convey the important up front stuff, make an impression and go back to focusing on making a connection.

So how do you create a good 30-Second commercial?

There are several ways to create a good commercial and you should definitely plan on refining it over time, but here are a couple of thoughts that should get you started:

1. **Figure out what is unique about what you do:** This gets to the idea of your unique service proposition – what makes your business different than others in the marketplace. “I develop websites for small businesses” isn't nearly as effective as “I create an effective online marketing presence for small businesses that includes professional design without the high cost of custom web development”.
2. **Get to the point:** Start with something that grabs their attention, a hook, it could be your slogan or tagline if you have one. If you don't have one, it might be worth the effort to develop one.
 - Instead of “I'm an architect” it could be “I help people turn their dreams into reality”
 - Instead of “I'm a financial planner” you could try “We help people create and manage wealth”
 - Instead of “I'm a portrait photographer” you could try “I make people look good”
3. **Keep it simple:** In general use clear, simple, evocative language that quickly gets to the point. Briefly explain who you work with and how you solve your customer's problems. Keep it to no more than 2 or 3 key ideas. You might actually be able to do everything under the sun, but if you want to be remembered you need to narrow it down.

4. **Invoke your passion:** You're in business for a reason, and it isn't just to pay the bills (or at least it shouldn't be). What excites you about what you do? Tap into that passion and motivation when you're describing your business.
5. **Write down and air it out:** The act of writing it down will force you to think it all the way through. Once you're done writing, practice saying it out loud, rewrite as necessary. Once you think you've got a good starting point run it past some friends and get their feedback. Incorporate changes and repeat as necessary.
6. **Memorize it but improvise:** Finally once you've got something you're happy with and excited about, practice it to the point that you can internalize it, so that it's second nature to you. Depending on the situation you might be fairly formal and use your entire 'pitch' or if it's a more conversational 1 on 1 discussion you might just use parts of it.

Steve Strauss is a columnist for USATODAY.com and the author of the "Small Business Bible". He has a great example of how a good elevator pitch can make a big difference:

"And then it happened. I met Teddy Roosevelt, and he changed my life.

You see, one day I was lamenting my lack of progress in my nascent speaking career to a fellow speaker. A rotund gentleman who would dress up as Roosevelt, our 26th president, and share T.R.'s ideals to business and civic groups, he had plenty of engagements. I asked him to tell me his secret.

"What is it you talk about Steve?" he asked.

"Oh, small business success, basically," I replied.

Pregnant pause. "Hmmm," he finally responded.

So I asked, "Well, what is it you talk about?"

"Me?" he answered excitedly, "I share with groups the values and ideals of Teddy Roosevelt and show them how they can use those values to make a difference in their world. By the time I'm done, they are so excited and so committed to the idea of making a difference at home and at work that I usually get a standing ovation."

Now, if you were going to hire a speaker, and the choice was between animated Teddy and boring me, whom would you choose?"

3. IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET

As you focus on planning your networking activities, it's important that you have a clear picture of who your target market is. Often business owners will make the mistake of having too broad of a picture for their target market. 'Anyone that has money' or 'Anyone that can fog a mirror' are bad examples of a target market.

Although it may be technically true that anyone, or almost anyone, could buy your product, the reality is that your product appeals most strongly to some subset of potential buyers. Additionally, you are going to prefer to deal with some subsets of customers over others. All things considered, you are much better off selling your products or services to customers that have a genuine need for them, have enough money to afford them and are located somewhere convenient for you to do business.



One way to hone in on your ideal prospect is to take a close look at your existing customers. What traits do your best customers have in common? You need to be as specific as you can be, starting with the more obvious things like their demographics:

- Age
- Income Level or Revenue
- Gender
- Occupation or Industry (for Business to Business)
- Geographic location

As an example, one client I work with has identified his ideal demographic as 35 – 45 year old mothers whose children attend exclusive high schools in particular neighborhoods: essentially affluent soccer moms. By drilling down to a fairly detailed level, it becomes much easier to determine the best way to reach that audience through various marketing channels. What publications do they read, what shows do they watch and where do they like to meet or hang out? This level of information will not only help you target your marketing, but it will make your networking much more effective.

Using the example above, it doesn't make much sense for my client to spend a lot of time in outlying cities or suburbs that are outside of where his ideal prospects are located. Sure some of them might be willing to travel farther for his product, but it makes the sale much more difficult and unless you are out of prospects, you are much better off focusing on the ideal situation.

That's not to say that you only need to attend networking events based around your target market. A lot of times it's extremely helpful to network with other businesses that overlap with your target market. If you build a connection with them, it's likely that you can share leads or even partner with them in some way.

Although you never know who might turn out to be a great contact, staying near your target works best.

4. IDENTIFY WHERE TO NETWORK

The reality is that you can network almost anywhere. There are people that find customers at their kid's basketball games or at the airport for a flight home. However, some locations and events are going to be much more productive than others. Obviously your target market demographics will play a big role in what kinds of meetings or groups make the most sense.

Here are some ideas that you can check out:

1. **Local Chambers of Commerce:** This is always a great place to start and should probably be the foundation for your networking efforts. The Chambers generally have a mission to support local businesses and networking and they will be happy to work with you to make introductions and get you started.

A note on Chambers: When you first join a Chamber it can be intimidating to go to your first meeting. There are usually a lot of people there and you will likely feel like the outsider. Work with the Chamber staff and volunteers and ask them to help you out – they'll be glad to do it and they can make that initial learning curve much easier. In fact you might consider becoming a volunteer yourself. It is usually much easier to introduce yourself as someone representing the Chamber than representing yourself.

TIP: Your local newspaper and Business Journal will usually run a calendar of business networking events for your area on a weekly basis.

2. **Tip Clubs or Networking Groups:** This includes national organizations like Business Networking International (www.BNI.com) or local variations like the American Club Association (www.acanetwork.org). The advantage of groups like these is that they exist solely for the purpose of helping members generate referrals for each other. They often follow fairly strict procedures and guidelines but that's just to keep the process on track. Generally there is a fee for belonging to groups like this.
3. **Peer Advisory Groups/Mastermind Groups:** These are smaller groups of business owners, generally facilitated by a business coach, that meet on a regular basis with a focus on helping each other out. Because they are closed, stable groups that focus on each other's business issues and successes, the level of networking possibilities and referrals are much higher than other networking options. However participation in these groups requires a commitment and a monthly fee. (Check out www.aspirekc.com/bang.html for an example)

4. **Industry Specific groups or associations:** There are groups and associations for almost any kind of industry that you can imagine. A lot of times the meetings will be structured around educational topics or speakers, but there are generally plenty of opportunities to network as well. Your first choice would likely be an industry group that addresses your target market, but it may also be worthwhile to consider networking at the group focused on your industry. You never know when you might find people to collaborate with.
5. **Service Organizations:** This includes things like Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs, Kiwanis etc. These are not business oriented groups and they will generally frown on someone openly trying to sell or conduct business at their meetings, but luckily you are not trying to sell, you are trying to establish connections and get people to Know, Like and Trust you. And when that leads to business down the road, everyone will be happy for you and your customers.
6. **Other types of clubs:** This would include social clubs, hobby clubs, and alumni associations, really anywhere that people hold regular meetings. These obviously are not business or industry related, but depending on what you sell, they may very well be the best way for you to reach your ideal prospects. If you are selling a new type of camera equipment, establishing genuine connections with people in the local Photography club will likely be very beneficial (remember you are NOT selling, you are building connections first).

As you can see, the opportunities for you to find somewhere to network can be overwhelming. The trick is to find a couple of groups that you enjoy, that are a good fit for what you're looking for and really get engaged with those groups. You'll be better spending quality time with fewer groups than shotgunning across a bunch of groups.

It is not a good strategy to go to every single possible event. You will not be effective and by not spending your time or attention in a handful of places, you won't be able to establish a long-term connection which is the whole point.

5. PREPARE YOUR MEETING STRATEGY

You've identified your target market and 'power groups' that might make for good strategic alliance partners with you. You've identified the meetings or groups that you want to initially focus your networking efforts on and you're almost ready to attend the meeting. Don't forget to bring enough business cards.

Before you go you need to consider a few more things:

Goals: Before you attend an event, you should set out some goals for yourself. These should be reasonable and attainable, but they will help keep you focused and give you a sense of momentum coming out of the meeting.

A good example of goals that you might set for yourself:

- Meet at least 5 new people that fit your target profile and collect their cards
- Set up at least 2 follow-up calls or meetings
- Reinforce at least 3 relationships that you made previously
- Meet with a specific person that's on your targeted list of individuals. This could be a potential hot prospect, someone that's well connected into your target market that could introduce you around or a candidate for a strategic alliance.

Focus on your Communication Skills: It's important to periodically refresh yourself on what you want to do while you're meeting people. You need to plan on being present and paying attention. Listening is a key skill that is very difficult to master but it's key to succeeding in networking.

Think about questions that you might want to ask that are specific to this group. What would be interesting to the people that are likely going to be attending?

Keep communication modalities in mind. Communication modalities are the ways that people communicate with each other. All communication follows this breakdown:

- 55% of Communication is Body Language
- 38% of Communication is Tonality
- 7% of Communication are Words

It's critical that you concentrate on how you say things and how interested and focused you are on the other person. If you're bored, your posture and your body language will give it away every time.

6. WORK THE EVENT

This is going to sound contradictory, but it's important to realize that this is a working event, every bit as important to your business as meeting your best customer. However, it's also important that you have fun. You want to meet people and you want to establish genuine connections with people you like. The best way to do that is to relax and be your self...but avoid the alcohol. Here are some things you should do:

- Be focused – go into the meeting with your head clear, a plan in place for what you want to do and a good idea of how you want to do it.
- Get there early – it will take the pressure off of going into a crowded room and give you more quality time with other early arrivals.
- Be particular about who you spend time with. You will only have a limited amount of time at any given event and you want to make sure that you meet the goals you set for yourself.
- **Be interested not interesting!** It's a lot harder to be interesting and not nearly as effective when it comes to establishing a connection. When you are genuinely interested, you are actively listening and concentrating on how you can help the other person.
- Be a connector. If there are other people you know at the event that would be a good fit for the person you're talking to, go out of your way to introduce them. If you know of someone that would be beneficial that's not at the event, ask if the other person would like to meet them.
- Get their information. Make sure you collect a card from anyone that you connect with. If you didn't connect, don't ask for their card (unless it would just be rude not to).
- Take notes – either on the back of their card or in a notebook. It will help you with follow-up and it shows a tremendous amount of interest that's very compelling.

Here are some things you don't want to do:

- Don't be shy – everyone in the room is there to network. Smile and say hello, it's okay to break into a group that's already talking (as long as your polite about it).
- Don't prejudice – even though you want to target your likely prospects, if you end up talking with someone else be sure to give them your full attention and respect. They might just know the perfect prospect.
- Don't just hang out with the people you already know. It's often terribly tempting to stay in your small circle of friends or acquaintances, but you are there to meet people. Remember your goals.
- Don't get too comfortable – at a lot of meetings there are drinks available. It's fine to be sociable and carry something around, but you need to stay focused which means you shouldn't actually be consuming alcohol.
- Don't give your card out unless someone asks you for it. More than likely they will ask if you ask for theirs, but if they don't ask there's no need to force your card on them.

TIP: One thing that sometimes comes up is how do you 'escape' from someone that isn't a good fit for you.

You could excuse yourself to get a drink, go to the bathroom etc., or you could explain that you have a goal of meeting several people at the event and you need to move on.

Be polite but firm and you should be okay.

7. ASK QUESTIONS

It's been mentioned before, but the real key to establishing a connection with someone is to actively listen to them and keep them talking about their favorite subject, themselves! The best way to do that is to be prepared with a list of questions that can start the ball rolling.

It's important not to look like the Spanish Inquisition when you're doing this. It takes skill and practice to keep someone talking about themselves, but it is well worth the effort and it will make you a much better networker (and salesperson).

The questions should be open-ended (i.e. not Yes or No) and should encourage them to get into some details. You don't want to monopolize their time, but it's reasonable that you would ask 5 or 6 of these questions. Here are some ideas you might consider:

1. **How did you get started in your business?** (This is almost always good for a story that people enjoy telling and it will usually give you a great summary of their background).
2. **What do you like the most about what you do?** (This is a great way to get them to open up about what drives them or what their passion is.)
3. **How has the current economy impacted your business?** (Depending on what business they're in and what's going on, this might be enough to keep you there all night. If you ask a mortgage broker or a banker how they feel about sub-prime loans, I'm sure they'll have plenty to say.)
4. **Can you walk me through how people actually work with you?** (This gives them and you a chance to get an insider's view on how they do business, which sometimes is important especially if you're not clear on what they do.)
5. **So how do you generally market your business? What's been most effective?** (You might run across some ideas you can use or other networking venues that you were unaware of.)
6. **Can you describe what makes an ideal prospect for you?** (This question is really important and it's good to save it after you've talked for a while. This demonstrates your interest and hopefully gives you a tangible and actionable way to help them out with a referral.)

Beyond these kinds of questions, you can also ask about their families, what they like to do for fun or what they're passionate about. Once you've found a common interest, it's easy to come up with interesting follow-up questions.

If you are having trouble getting them to answer in depth, then you might find it worthwhile to ask reflection questions – i.e. “So when you said you liked marketing, what did you mean?”

8. DON'T SELL

It's a guarantee that you will go to a networking event and be on the receiving end of a hard sell from someone at sometime. If you're like most people, you will attempt to get away from that person as quickly as you can and you will probably try to stay away from them in the future.

Don't be that person. Not only will you be ineffective, you will start a reputation as the pushy salesperson at the networking event and people will start going out of their way to avoid you.

That's hardly the way to make connections.

You will run into people that are immediately interested in what you do and will want to ask you about it. As hard as it may be, you need to resist the temptation to start selling to them and steer them towards a follow-up meeting. Not only does this demonstrate what a professional you are, it also keeps you from building a false assumption that you need to be selling at networking events.



It's also important to keep in mind that networking is a long-term strategy. As we mentioned before, you need to think of it as farming rather than hunting.

You are planting seeds that can and will bear a lot of benefits down the road, but you can't rush the process. If you try to short cut moving someone from Know to Like to Trust, you will more than likely lose them in the process – costing you a potential customer and a potential source of future referrals. It's not worth it.

Along the same lines, it's important not to go to a networking event feeling desperate for prospects or customers. People will sense it if you feel or act like you need to close a sale or if you're pushing too hard. They will do whatever they can to stay away from you. You can be successful and sell to prospects, you just have to be patient and develop that relationship first.

9. GO WITH A TEAM APPROACH

As you're networking, you should always be on the lookout for how you can connect other people (even if you won't directly participate in the follow-up). It's a great way to add value to 2 of your connections and many times it's really easy to do.

"You're looking for a painter? – let me introduce you to Jeff, he's a great painter and I'm sure you'd enjoy meeting him!" You just did two people a big favor.

Two Heads are Better than One!

You can take this a step further and start out focusing on a team approach. This might be helpful, especially if you are having a hard time getting started on your own. The idea is to go to a networking event with a key partner or two. The best kind of partners are those that are in a different business than yours, but close enough that it makes sense to network at the same events.

There is a perception of safety in numbers and as long as you don't overwhelm people by ganging up on them, it can be much easier to drive conversations. It also gives you the added benefit of being able to listen for several things that you or someone in your group could be interested in. The odds of you running into a likely useful connection have gone up substantially.

The suggested approach:

- Meet prior to the event to plan your approach
- Make sure that your networking 'partners' know what you're looking for (and vice versa)
- Focus on meeting people and introducing them as appropriate to your fellow networkers.

This requires that you and the other members of the group know each other's businesses very well and that you've all got a commitment to look out for each other first. However if you can clear those hurdles, you will have an opportunity to really supercharge your results.

The advantage to this approach is that making it a team effort it can be a lot of fun and you will more than likely come away with a lot more quality follow-ups than you might have been able to get on your own. There's also the added benefit that other people attending the event will be impressed with the visible connections you've got and that you're working as a team.

Dedicated (smaller) networking groups, mastermind groups or peer advisory groups are great places to consider organizing this type of approach.

10. FOLLOW-UP

A critical part of the networking process is to make sure that you follow-up appropriately after every event. If you told someone you would contact them and set up a meeting then that needs to be top on your priority list within the next couple of days. A missed follow-up opportunity can severely set back or even destroy your potential for connecting with people – making all of the rest of your networking efforts a waste of time.

On the other hand, a quality job of following up will further demonstrate what a consummate professional you are and that you can be relied on to do what you say. You just moved up another couple of rungs on the Know, Like and Trust ladder.

A lot of times you will come back from a large networking event with a pocket full of business cards. Ideally you were able to take the time to jot down some key notes on the people that you talked to that will help you remember who they were and some key points about what you discussed.

At a minimum you might want to come up with a simple system to help you categorize your contacts.

- A – Potential Prospect, great opportunity
- B – Potential networking partner
- C – Interesting person I'd like to stay in touch with, not sure how they fit
- D – Not a good connection for me

You could simply apply your 'code' on the various cards after you meet people. At the end of the night you should place that stack of contacts somewhere where you will notice them in the next day or so and allocate some time as soon as you can to 'process' those contacts.

For those contact that you want to follow-up with, get them entered into your contact management system and start the process of setting up a meeting with them and continue following through until you've met that obligation. This won't always be easy and sometimes you will find people that seemed happy to meet with you but can't or won't commit to any actual time with you. Give them a couple of chances and then move on. It's not worth your time and energy to pursue a connection with someone that's not interested.

There are various ways to follow-up with people, what you use should be driven by your personal preference:

- Email – very easy to use and low impact all the way around. Can sometimes get lost either as spam or just because a lot of people get a lot of email.

- Note Cards – done correctly, these are a very personal and classy way to follow up with someone. However it may take a few days for your card to get there and you could lose the momentum with your contact. One idea is to consider doing something like Send Out Cards, an online service that sends out cards for you.
- Phone calls – fairly easy to do, but you will usually end up in voicemail, which can be a difficult way to communicate. Phone calls can also be considered intrusive for someone you've only met once.

For those people that aren't really worth pursuing at this time, it's always a good idea to send them an email and let them know that you enjoyed meeting them and wish them the best of luck. This gets them entered into your email system (you could make them a contact as well) in case you think of something at a later date. This also gives them an opportunity to remember you as well, which might be helpful at some point.

Another idea for follow-up is to invite them to connect with you on a web platform like LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com). LinkedIn is an online networking tool (there are others as well) that is specifically designed to facilitate networking and connecting with people. It's not a replacement for networking, but it is a great tool that can be very helpful. Not only can you keep up to date with your contact, you can get first hand access to the people they are connected to, a la six degrees of separation!

TIP: If you connected with someone and there's good potential as a prospect or networking partner, you should ask them if you can sign them up to your newsletter.

Newsletters are a great way to stay in touch with your connections in addition to other periodic contacts. People can get to Know, Like and Trust you through your newsletter or blog.

Finally, it's important to remember that you have just started the process of connecting with people. If you're going to make that networking connection worthwhile, you will need to spend quality time over a period of months (at least) to really develop them into a true, lasting win-win relationship. And even then, it is always important to keep in contact with all of your connections.

Networking and supporting ongoing relationships can be a lot of work, but they are a key part of success, not only in business, but in life. These are people that you will be able to share good news and bad news with. They can help you succeed beyond your wildest dreams, just like you can help them succeed. These are people that will surprise you with their help and generosity when you are down and give you a safety net if you get to the point where you need to make a major change in your life. That kind of support is priceless and certainly worth the time and investment it takes to network successfully.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Hopefully you've found this report to be useful, but nothing replaces action. In other words, stop reading in your office and get out there and meet people. It will take time, it will take practice, but you will get better at it if you try.

Obviously this report is focused on networking, but there are many other ways to grow and manage your business. Many of my clients are looking for strategies, tools, feedback and perspective on the 'big picture' of their business. They know what they're doing, but it's a lot easier, more effective and fun to have an experienced, unbiased voice of reason (that's me) meet with you on a regular basis and help you drive things forward and get to where you are truly controlling your business and not the other way around.

Imagine making more money, having more fun and working a lot fewer hours than you do today!

If you'd like to learn about other ways Aspire can help you, contact me for a free 1 on 1 consultation. It's a no risk situation – I promise I won't even give you a hard sell...but we just might make a connection!

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Additional Suggested Resources:

Article in Inc. [Explain what your company does in 30 seconds](#) - Great article that takes you through the thought process of driving to what makes your business unique (and how to explain it).

Books:

[Endless Referrals](#) by Bob Burg – Great book that really breaks down how to leverage your networking into ongoing referrals

[The Little Black Book of Connections](#) by Jeffrey Gitomer – a must have for anyone that wants to do business.

Good Luck! Now get out there and meet some people!!!