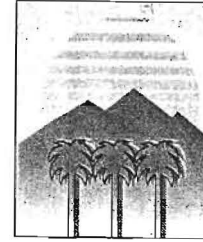


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Some networking tips to help you boost your career

Whether you're looking for a job, looking for a mate or trying to increase your business contacts, you must be versed in the art of networking. Rarely does opportunity come knocking on the doors of those who haven't done a little legwork first.

You probably have lots of business cards that you've collected over the years. One of the things I do whenever I make a new contact is write the date and the occasion of our meeting on the back. Weeks lat-

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tions. Be involved and stay active.

■ View every meeting as a chance to present yourself in a

er, I will be more likely to remember a new contact because I have taken a few extra seconds to jot this information down.

Networking isn't difficult, but it does take practice. Here are some tips to help you network more effectively:

■ Find as many ways as possible to meet others. Join professional or trade associations, clubs and community organiza-

tion. Have a short one liner (commercial) about yourself.

■ Be a good listener. Pay attention to what your contacts are saying. After you exchange business cards, you can jot down a fact or two about what they shared about themselves or their work. Follow up if necessary.

■ Be positive. Cultivate an upbeat, pleasant image.

■ Use your introduction to let others know how they can help you. Describe what kind of contacts you are looking for and how you can help solve their problems.

■ Remember to give and take. Research and offer infor-

mation that may be useful to your contacts.

■ Ask for names and phone numbers of others who might like to meet with you. Request permission to use the contact's name when calling.

■ Follow up by writing a personal thank-you note.

■ If you are in the job market, volunteer. A great way to expand your network is to do for free what you would normally do at work. Your work will speak for itself. Show your stuff!

■ Take a course. Continue your education on subjects that interest you. Not only will this keep you updated on current trends in that field, but you can broaden your network to include

faculty and fellow students.

Trying to find your "soul mate," perfect job or ideal business contacts will become second nature to you once you have perfected the art of networking. Practice makes perfect. Once you have invested time into your networking efforts, take care and keep in touch. The more people you foster good relationships with, the better your chance of achieving social and career success.

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