

Preface

The art and science of networking is simultaneously trivialized and lauded. People dismiss its value or sing its praises.

Those who don't accept its power or don't want to put in sufficient time, care and commitment to build relationships dismiss it as an activity for people who simply want to schmooze and hand out business cards with negligible results.

Those who logically create and implement a plan encompassing what to do before an event, how to work it and how to follow up extol its virtues as the most powerful, most effective and easiest way to increase sales and get a job.

I wrote this book for the latter group.

If you're ready to build relationships that last with people who are there for you day after day and year after year and vice versa, then you are in the right place!

Section One introduces you to *my definition of networking* and how networking is a sexually unbiased skill ... yet the ole boy network still exists. Learn more about the six degrees of separation. Read why in this online social networking age, face-to-

face encounters are still the much preferred way to start relationships. Online methods supplement the traditional follow-up methods.

Section Two, the longest and among the most important, shares what to do before the event. You'll spend pleasurable and valuable time as you *DISCover your networking strengths and limitations* and how to adapt and flex to build better relationships. My experience with helping tens of thousands of people nationwide gain this knowledge gives me valuable tips and techniques to share. You'll love learning more about you!

Then it's on to how to *polish what you say before you speak* as you learn the art of impression management. Learn how to influence the 10 things people decide about you within 10 seconds of seeing you by knowing what appearance and behavior "say." This is another fascinating component that many people overlook!

Take time to *create a relationship-building plan* so that when it's trout you are seeking, you won't be fishing in a catfish pond. You'll be ahead of your peers (and bosses!) when you take time to determine your business focus and unique offering and define your target markets and where to find them ... whether you are self or corporately employed. This will help you decide what organizations to join for maximum return.

Craft an effective Verbal Business Card – a tool I created – so that you will inform, intrigue and inspire others to want to learn more about you. You will have more meaningful conversations that will make you memorable long after the event is over. You will also pick up many *printed business card* tips.

Section Three equips you with all the techniques and information you need to successfully *navigate and work the event*. You'll learn general tips that are worth their weight in gold. My 10-Minute Rule to Work an Event will help you easily and sensibly move from icebreakers through conversational endings to increase your comfort level and success.

Section Four prepares you for the final step in the relationship-building process: *how to follow up*. You'll reap few rewards for the hard work you may have expended if you overlook the final step. I mix traditional with Web 2.0 follow-up methods so you can pick and choose your favorites. The key is that you do it!

Make *Breakthrough Networking: Building Relationships That Last* your constant, friendly companion as you build your network of "knob turners!"

section **One**

What Is Networking?

Introduction To Relationship Building

From the beginning, human beings have interacted with one another for psychological, social, business and biological reasons. This kind of associating or relationship building has many names – establishing rapport, developing alliances, networking, partnering, marrying, feeling a kinship – yet all of them share a common goal: to meet personal or professional needs and wants.

Networking is a relatively new term for the age-old practice of building relationships. The noun turned verb was coined in the 1970s, was popularized in the 1980s and is now a way of life.

Networking in the past was done for social reasons ... still one of its purposes today. Remember what happened in the days of the Pilgrims when reserved Miles Standish asked his outgoing,

gregarious friend John Alden to speak to Priscilla on his behalf? The now famous response “Why don’t you speak for yourself, John?” led to unexpected results.

It was also done for career advancement ... as it is today. In 1726 Cotton Mather advised young men preparing for the ministry in Colonial America to:

“Form a sodality. What I mean, is, Prevail with a Fit Number . . . of Sober, Ingenious and Industrious Young Men, to Associate with you, and meet One Evening in a Week, for the spending of Two or Three Hours, in a Profitable Conversation.” (1)

This sounds like one of today’s calendar of event listings in newspapers and on the Internet for networking-specific and myriad other types of organizations.

While the basic concept may be the same, the 21st century has certainly brought new methods of execution. Before we look at the two major ways to network, let’s examine the process more closely.

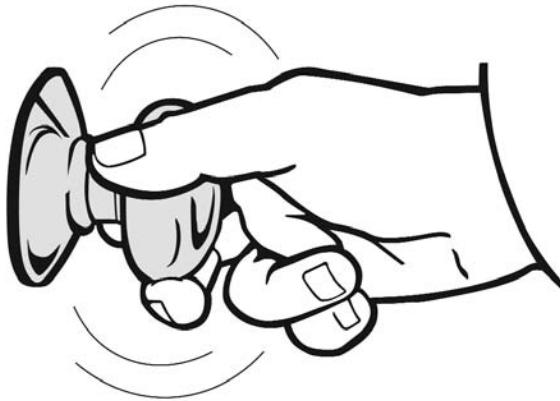
My Definition

Networking is an active, dynamic process that links people into mutually beneficial relationships to build a new kind of wealth: social capital.

- ▲ **Active** – You cannot sit back and wait to be contacted or approached. You have to make it happen! The knight or princess on the white horse will not ride up to your door with referrals or job offers. You have to take the initiative to participate and meet others.
- ▲ **Dynamic** – People, events and information are constantly changing. No two interchanges are the same. You have to keep up with your industry, your business, your company,

your community, your friends, and, most of all, you have to hone your techniques continually so you can apply them universally.

- ▲ **A process** – Networking is a series of hierarchical actions and interactions that leads to an end: a result, a solution, a relationship, an answer, a sale, a job.
- ▲ **Links** – The process connects, bonds and couples people with one another. Just as a chain is only as strong as its weakest link so is your network only as strong as your weakest link.
- ▲ **Mutually beneficial relationships** – Networking is as much about giving as it is about getting. You and people you connect with and connect to others need to mutually profit from the interactions to make it work. You can't take money from your savings account until you deposit it; likewise, you can't take from the universe until you have helped others. And you don't need to keep track because the natural law of reciprocity makes sure you will get when you give.



- ▲ **Social capital** – It's your network of "knob turners" and the kind of wealth that helps you amass financial capital. "Who" you know is more important up front than "what" you know. Advanced degrees and experience won't open doors for you. It's people who do that.

Your Networking Chain



Your chain is comprised of different size links as well as broken links. Decide whose names go where and how much work your chain needs to make it whole again.

- ▲ **Big, thick links** = people with whom you have strong connections and can always count on.
- ▲ **Thinner links** = people with whom you have more casual relationships and can usually count on.
- ▲ **Thinnest links** = people you may or may not be able to count on. You need to work on strengthening the relationship.
- ▲ **Broken links** = relationships that have gone awry because you haven't bothered to stay in touch. You need to repair these vital links to make your chain as strong as it can be.

Networking greases skids, thaws phone calls and warms up prospects to make it easier for you to call prospective customers and employers. It helps you find more “knob turners” to open the doors you can't open on your own. It also helps you find more people you can connect to those in your network.

Once inside, of course, you need to rely on your knowledge, expertise, professionalism and product and service quality to get the sale or the job.

If Bob Jones were an acquaintance of yours, which call would you respond to more favorably?

“I am Tom Smith. Bob Jones recommended that I call you. He told me you are looking for marketing services.”

“I’m Tom Smith. I’m calling to tell you about the marketing services we offer.”

Tom took the time to build a relationship with Bob Jones, and that’s how he got the recommendation to call you.

Networking is not selling. It is planting seeds. Sales is harvesting, and the more fertile the ground in which you plant seeds, the more likely you are to get a bumper crop. When people tell me they network a lot and it doesn’t produce results, I ask them about their target markets and where they are networking. The process works! It is people’s implementation that is often faulty. I talk more about this in Chapter 4.

The “thawing or warming up” process takes time. Networking is not a quick fix. It is a long-term solution or a series of long-term solutions, depending on the quality of relationships you build.

Networking Is An Art And Science

Many relationship-building pundits agree that networking is an art. To quote from Webster (*Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 2004):

- ▲ “A branch of learning.”
- ▲ “A skill acquired by experience, study or observation.”

Few agree with me that it is also a science. Again, from Webster:

- ▲ “The state of knowing: knowledge as distinguished from ignorance or misunderstanding.”

- ▲ “Something (as a sport or technique) that may be studied or learned like systematized knowledge (have it down to a ~).”

I have yet to meet someone who did not become a better networker through the knowledge s/he gained from reading and hearing about the process and then systematizing and practicing.

You have already taken a major step to increase your networking prowess by buying this book. As you read the upcoming chapters and practice what you learn, you, too, can become a master networker.

Many people learn networking skills informally, even haphazardly, by attending events and behaving as they think they “should.” The “should” often comes from unreliable, uninformed or misinformed sources.

I have long been a proponent of teaching this skill in colleges and universities and through community and continuing education face-to-face (F-2-F) and online courses. In fact, I created a five-part series of online courses, “Building Relationships for Business and Career Success,” that launched in fall 2008. Visit www.duoforce.com to enroll.

You will benefit your entire life from learning how to build relationships in a structured way. You will also learn to build on the commonality you share when taking the same F-2-F course. In fact, keeping in touch with fellow students is one of the most overlooked relationship-building tools. In most cases, you spent four years with many of the same people in high school or in college. That’s plenty of time to have begun building relationships!

It’s also time for college and university alumni organizations to rev up their efforts to help former students stay in touch for life.

I also propose that corporations include networking courses in their curriculum, both as orientation for new employees (to save countless hours as new employees try to figure out who's who and where to go for what) and as ongoing relationship-building programs for seasoned employees.

A Fortune 500 company called me when they wanted to send about 50 engineers to a conference and trade show. The manufacturing company believed (correctly!) that it would be helpful for the normally more reserved engineers to have more insight into working a trade show and building relationships ... to benefit themselves and the company.

In addition to skill building, we also assigned "tasks" to the engineers based on the conference programs listed in a promotional brochure, i.e., people were assigned to attend certain programs and visit certain booths with accountability to the conference manager upon return. On the way to the conference in the company-rented bus, the manager also facilitated a review of relationship-building skills based on my materials. It was a major win for the employees and the company, which got a far better return on its investment than if it had sent the employees "cold."

It is unfathomable that companies with sales forces lack the foresight to include in-depth relationship-building skills in their training.

What is encouraging is that the Relationship Networking Industry Association, of which I am a founding member, has a committee devoted to education and is considering certifying people who teach this skill.

Networking Is A Sexually Unbiased Skill

Networking is also a skill, and that's good news. You can improve your relationship-building abilities!

Building beneficial relationships knows no gender boundaries. It is equally beneficial for men and women, and the process can be equally daunting or equally easy for members of either sex.

There are some differences that impact the networker's bottom line. Male chauvinists and radical feminists agree on one thing: Women, probably by nature or because they are the bearers of children, are more nurturing and tend to be more cooperative, empathic and understanding in a non-biased manner. After all, they share their love unselfishly as they give birth to and rear boys and girls.

Most women are natural networkers. They, their mothers and their grandmothers have been recommending recipes, hair-dressers and skincare products across kitchen tables for generations. Where the challenge for many women arises is in the business arena. The increased emphasis on teaching relationship building is helping women become more confident and competent at transferring their skills to the workplace.

Some "older" women were taught by their mothers (who thought them to be positive qualities) to be seen and not heard, not to exploit their personal relationships or to "brag" about themselves. Hopefully, parents today are teaching their daughters that it is acceptable for women to be just as assertive as men, socially and in business, and that as their daughters become mothers this issue will be largely non-existent.

As a reminder, assertive behavior is what all human beings strive for: to be concerned that the other person gets her/his needs met while you do the same. Passive behavior is when you are concerned only that the other person gets her/his needs met

while you don't put any emphasis on yours. Aggressive behavior is when you are concerned only about meeting your needs and pay little attention to the needs of the other person.

What does remain a challenge is that in business likes tend to want to work with likes, i.e., women with women and men with men. Because there are only a handful of women CEOs in the Fortune 500 companies, it's easy to understand why women may not have the same opportunities to build high-value business relationships. This will change only as more women rise to top jobs at major corporations and become more than token members of corporate and organizational boards of directors.

That's exactly what the ole boy network was and in some cases still is: men at the top helping other men rise to the same levels. Women are not yet as privy to networking in these elite places so, while their skills may be top-notch, their results may be less impactful and powerful.

Women, however, are gaining in numbers what they lack in force. Because of the corporate glass ceilings (they still exist!), so many of them are starting businesses and becoming owners and presidents that they are beginning to gain clout through sheer numbers. This, in turn, adds clout to the relationships they are building.

While they may not be managing the same number of people individually, in aggregate they are managing as many or more people as their corporate counterparts. They are learning important leadership skills as they grow their businesses and become involved in civic, professional and community organizations.

Another positive force for women is the number of company-sponsored women's networks that are being formed within major corporations. Some of them, though, are still perfunctory.

A representative of a newly formed women's group at a Chicago accounting firm contacted

me to present a program on relationship building. We agreed it would provide valuable skills for the women's professional development. When we started talking fees, she said there was no budget. Ironically, she continued to state how top management (all men) was so supportive of their initiative ... yet they wanted to get a speaker – a woman – to donate her time. It was even more pathetic that management wouldn't even agree to pay my travel expenses (simply gas mileage from a Chicago suburb)!

Perhaps, I am optimistic in stating how far women have come!

Time will tell. You, as men and women reading this book, can greatly help the process move forward positively.

Networking Opportunities Are Ubiquitous

You can network almost any place, any time, in person and online (more about this shortly). Only your creativity limits your possibilities. In person, you have obvious work-related events, opportunities over the backyard fence, at weddings and family gatherings, your kids' sporting and school events, when shopping – even when waiting in line.

Years ago Mike, a graphic designer, told me that one day at the post office he observed a woman in line behind him holding a stack of newsletters. When she came outside, he introduced himself and offered to give her a reasonable quote on producing those newsletters. She agreed, and Mike got the job.

Mike was observing one of the cardinal rules in networking: Anyone within three feet of you is a prospect for your product or service.

My favorite personal experience happened when I was discussing some packaging issues with the printer for my *52 Ways to Break the Ice & Target Your Market* relationship-building product.

We met near her office in a hotel lobby where I was waiting to join someone for lunch. I was agreeing with her that her solution was plausible, but it was more expensive and less attractive than I had envisioned. A man came over to us and said politely, "Forgive me, but I overheard your conversation and wondered if I might give you my card. I'm in the packaging business!" I looked at him, formed a positive first impression, and replied, "Yes." Turns out he lives near me and did have a creative solution that I bought. Further, he gave me two speaking referrals for associations he belonged to and introduced me to the corporate head of educational services for a Chicago-area Realtor.

Use your common sense. If someone scowls at you, appears unwilling to talk or gives a short, curt reply ... back off. Some people may consider it an intrusion. Honor their right to think so. I may give this impression at a grocery store where my sole purpose is to get in and get out. Sometimes, it even appears to be an intrusion on my time!

You can also make a sale when someone else approaches you.

When I owned my business leads organization, I received a cold call from a financial planner. While I was not in need of his services, I noted his sales skills, enthusiasm and dedication. When he was finished with his pitch, I said, "Do I have something for you! I own a networking organization called Better Business Contacts, and it helps you increase your business through

word-of-mouth referrals. It can help eliminate cold calls like this.” A short time later, he started a new chapter for me!

How Many People Do You Know?

A lot more than you think! Everyone knows 250-500 people on a first-name basis. Consider former and current business associates, friends, family, neighbors, former classmates from elementary school through college, your children’s friends and their families, fellow club and organization members and the people to whom they have introduced you.

Since totals vary among people, let’s assume you know 300 people. And let’s further guesstimate that each of these 300 knows at least 300 people. That’s 90,000 people you have access to!

Our goal is to help you master networking techniques so you can make the most of each interaction, one at a time.

What About People You Want To Meet?

You’ve probably heard the phrase, “Six Degrees of Separation,” which is also the name of a former Broadway play and television show. This proven theory espouses that anyone can be connected to any other person in the world through a network of no more than four intermediaries.

I had heard this theory expounded again and again; however, I spent years unsuccessfully trying to find the source. Then the theory itself came to my rescue. I remembered hearing an ad for a telecommunications company based on “Six Degrees of Separation.” I repeatedly called the company’s advertising department and, ironically, got voice mail and no return calls!

So I decided to be proactive. I called an acquaintance at the company, someone I had appeared with on a home-based business panel. We had completed step one: We knew each other. She diligently made phone call after phone call and several months later let me know it was Ithiel de Sola Pool (MIT) and Manfred Kochen (IBM) who first tried to prove the theory mathematically. They were never able to solve it to their satisfaction.

Stanley Milgram, a sociologist, devised a new way to test the theory in 1967. His findings were published in *Psychology Today* and were the basis for the phrase, “six degrees of separation.” His findings were discounted because of the small numbers involved in his research.

Duncan Watts, a professor at Columbia University, in 2001 continued his own earlier research, this time on the Internet. It confirmed Milgram’s earlier findings, and the phrase has earned a legitimate place in society.

My workshop audiences prove again and again that the principle works. I divide them into small groups, and they ask each other for a lead, referral or information they are seeking. Wide-eyed and exuberant, individuals have rushed up to tell me their success stories! Many moved a step or two closer to the people they wanted to call on or meet. Some have received solid leads from people they hadn’t even known 10 minutes earlier. The hard part is to get participants to end the exercise so we can go on with the workshop!

One woman who sold medical supplies had been trying for years to get her foot in the door at a certain hospital. It turned out three of the five people at her table at a chamber of commerce breakfast meeting knew doctors at that hospital and offered to make a phone call for her.

Another person who sold nutritional products wanted contacts in the Asian-American market because her company was expanding overseas. Someone at her table offered to take her as a guest to an Asian-American chamber of commerce meeting.

One of my favorites was the woman who wanted to meet Lou Holtz in the days when he was the head football coach at Notre Dame. Turns out one of the women at her table lived next door to him. I still don't know if she ever met Lou!

Another was the printing salesman who approached me with a look of disbelief. He exclaimed, "Lillian, I have a new client. Look, I have his name, company, phone number and what he needs. I can't believe it."

Believe it! The key to this theory and much of networking is that you have to be proactive. You need to tell people what you need and want before they can help you fulfill those desires. People in your network are not mind readers.

Interestingly, I have never tried it to reach Hillary Clinton; however, I did go to college with someone who was a former partner with her in a law firm in Arkansas. Hmmm, could be fun to try!

Face-To-Face Vs. Online Networking

With the advent of the Internet and the plethora of online social networking sites, much has been written and said about the merits of F-2-F networking vs. Web 2.0 tools.

Much of the advice I will be giving you about what to do before an event and working the event will deal with F-2-F. (My follow-up advice will contain both F-2-F and online social

networking tools.) There is a basic, important advantage to meeting people in person before you start building relationships. You can see that people are who they say they are.

This is especially true when you hone your skills through the use of the DISC behavioral assessment tool and the interpretation of body language, and you know how to read people when you meet them. While you can “read” people by their email and telephone styles, it can be more difficult, particularly for neophytes to the DISC system.

Remember Gen. Israel Putnam’s famous quote while he was commanding the Revolutionary Army at the Battle of Bunker Hill? “Men, you are all marksmen – don’t one of you fire until you see the whites of their eyes.”

I believe that the best relationships are begun when you can see the whites of another’s eyes.

People like to do business with and hire people they know and trust or people referred to them by people they know and trust. F-2-F networking is one of the major ways you get to *know* people and vice versa.

Trust is the second vital ingredient in relationship building. Online, you have no guarantee that people are even the sex or the age they say they are or employed in the occupation they tell you. How can you even begin to build trust or consider referring someone you don’t know?

Trust is built over time through your integrity, your honesty and your follow through. If you find someone online whom you want to build a relationship with, take time to do it thoroughly. If the “someone” is not geographically accessible, then spend time on the phone, through email, at her/his website and talking with people you know who know her/him before you commit to a business relationship. Often, it can be worth your time to fly to meet someone especially if the business venture is of any substance.

The Internet is a great research tool and can provide a plethora of information about individuals and companies before and after you have met someone. However, it will never replace the verbal and nonverbal information that is transferred in a handshake and F-2-F exchange.

When I checked the list of notable online social networking sites at wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_social_networking_websites in August 2008, I found that of the 130 listings, only three were business. They are LinkedIn, Plaxo and Ryze. My familiarity with the business-oriented ones is that they work well when you restrict your connections to people you know rather than linking to anyone who asks. And, of course, you can use your direct connections to introduce you to their direct connections just as you would do in person.

Email and Web 2.0 tools are a great way to maintain and grow relationships once you have met someone. They offer immediacy and ease not found in telephone or more formal written communication. (See Chapter 7.)

How Do We Start The Process?

Some people fail at networking because they don't take time to learn its intricacies, the myriad tips that turn a novice into an expert. Far more people fail because they don't master or even know that there are three parts to successful networking: what you do before an event, how you work it and how you follow up. I'll explain in great detail how to become proficient in each.

