

Networking in Albuquerque

Networking has always been an invaluable tool for doing business. It is a tool that is used effectively for highly successful business professionals and one that is often neglected by those who, not surprisingly, are struggling in their industries.

I am asked constantly, "Where should I go to network?" and "Is ___ going to be a good networking event?" It all depends on who your potential clients are and where THEY will be. You can find a list of local organizations in our "Business Resource Organizations" section of this book. Go to their websites and look at their "Events Schedules" to find ones to attend. Ask other industry colleagues which organizations they frequent. Attend as many different functions as you can and you will soon find the organizations on which to focus your energy. Join these and become helpful. Become the "Go-to-person" and the "Resource".

Don't discount social organizations either. Fraternal organizations, community groups and church groups all offer chances for networking. Do you know what the person walking to the parking lot does? "This could be your next big client." No matter where you are, be prepared.

A great networking event for me is one that allows me to meet and talk with Decision Makers without pressure on either side. My advice is to get a feel for each other, learn a bit about each other's businesses, and ask if it is alright for you to give them a call or send them an email within a day or two of the event. Please do not, under any circumstance, push your product or service on them or push to have them pull out their Blackberry during the networking event. People do business with people they like, trust and respect.

Consider the format of the event as well. Is it a mixer at a bar/club, sit-down breakfast, luncheon, or trade show?

Club and bar mixers should be much more relaxed compared to the others. It is never advisable to use the availability of alcohol to treat these events as frat parties. Consider how you want to represent yourself and your company. If it is an RSVP only presentation/awards mixer at a stand-up event, these tend to be more formal and professional in nature. Have courtesy during the presentations, nobody wants to be overrun with noise from the crowd.

A number of groups and organizations have structured events that incorporate breakfast or lunch. Get there early enough to take advantage of the time prior to the actual presentation/speaker. You may find that once the event is officially over your possible connections are running out the door to get to their offices.

Your industry no doubt has trade shows and conventions on an annual or semi-annual basis, these are another great source to not only network, but to view the showcasing of products and services offered by your peers and your competitors. Some of the best networking you can do may come from out-of-town companies in

your field. It is funny how we tend to overlook connections just because they are not in our city. They may have stronger ties to decision makers here than you do. They may have national connections that you may find invaluable. And in the unfortunate event that your position or company is dissolved, you may find that these connections can help you land on your feet.

The ultimate Sales and Networking Guru that I have had the pleasure of meeting is Jeffrey Gitomer. I would urge you to read his books, attend his seminars, and visit his website for more information at www.gitomer.com.

"If I haven't met you yet, I look forward to meeting you. How can I help you?"

Bob Farrell is the publisher of the Business Resource Guide, www.brgnm.com, and a member of Albuquerque Economic Development, Albuquerque Convention & Visitors Bureau, the Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce, the Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce, NAIOP, Commercial Business Network, and Vice President of Membership for the Albuquerque Independent Business Alliance.



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