



# The Importance of Networking

Part 2 of a 3 part series

by Natalie Zifcak

Networking is a great way to find business opportunities. If this is something that interests you, then the first step is to determine what your goals are for networking. It is important to select groups or meetings that will help you get what you are looking for. You should be able to answer the question, "What do you do?". A proven method that will enable you to answer this quickly & professionally is to develop what is called an "elevator pitch". This refers to a short explanation of what you do, why you do it, and what differentiates you from others in your field. By easily articulating people will be more likely to refer you to opportunities. It is also important that you are able to describe what you are looking for and how others may help you. Too often people in conversations ask, "How may I help you?" and no immediate answer comes to mind. Being confident with your response and how you look and feel will yield a great first impression. Once you have met people that may help you with a business opportunity it is important to follow up quickly and efficiently. When others give you referrals, your actions are a reflection on them. Expressing gratitude and respect will allow your referrals to grow. On the flip side, you may be able to help others with their business. Stay in contact with people you meet whom may benefit from what you do and vice versa. You both stand to gain from building a mutually beneficial relationship through sharing ideas. To search for people who might be able to help you with your goals, try to ask open-ended questions. This will help set the foundation for an open and honest discussion and shows your listeners that you are interested in them. In some cases, you may not meet somebody you become connected with but instead grow the relationship through other forms of communication. Do your best to persist in your networking efforts and continue reaching out to help others and in turn they will want to help you. Don't fear rejection. You won't know how a person will react to you if you don't step up and introduce yourself first.

Every day we grow and learn as individuals. Networking with other people can also provide us with a way to develop personally & professionally as well as provide us with important industry resources. If one of your goals is to learn more about your industry, seek out events that will allow you to network with colleagues in your field. As you attend various events, make a lasting impression by appearing as a professional, competent industry resource with your clothing choice, a positive demeanor, and your conversations. Be sure to think about how others in your industry dress. Be sure to choose appropriately in formal business attire, or for more casual meetings, a simple blouse and skirt that will complement your personality and figure. Another great tip to grow personally is to tap into your passions. It is much easier to make conversations with people when you are passionate about the topic.

*Look for part 3 of this 3 part series in an upcoming email.*

## ***About the author***



Natalie Zifcak is a successful business women, great mom and high energy personality who always looks sharp and dresses professionally. She has had successful careers in public accounting at Coopers & Lybrand, global product marketing roles at Polaroid Corporation and investment banking assignments at Investors Bank & Trust Company. Natalie moved from Boston with her husband and has reinvented herself in a budding Real Estate career selling homes and doing professional consulting on the side. <http://www.nataliez.com/>

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