

TEN COMMANDMENTS OF EFFECTIVE NETWORKING



WHY PASSING OUT YOUR
BUSINESS CARDS
IS NOT ONE OF THEM!

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Welcome. I hope you enjoy the information in this free report and learn from the ten 'best practices' that I used to transform my networking. You may already be good at some and not so good at others. All are important and contribute to your success whether you are an entrepreneur who wants to grow her/his business by networking or a business woman who recognizes the importance of having a *warm* network both within and outside the organization in order to advance in her career.

- ✓ Good networkers are *both* born and made
- ✓ Good networkers are *both* extroverts and introverts
- ✓ Good networker may be fearful at times and proceed fearlessly.

Jean's Journey Learning to Network: I wrote this report on networking not because I am the extroverted, natural-born, savvy networker. For a long time I was awful at networking. So if I can learn to enjoy networking and become good at it, so can you.

Throughout my corporate career, I had to do a lot of mixing and mingling with customers and colleagues. I am an introvert and small talk with customers, prospects, and the guys I worked with was not my favorite thing. Actually, I hated it!

When I first became an entrepreneur, I recognized the importance of networking even more and knew, love it or hate it, networking was an essential skill for an entrepreneur to master.

I thought this meant more small talk and worse yet that it meant selling my services and products. I sucked it up and attended tons of networking events.

I passed out countless business cards with limited success in building relationships with potential clients, JV collaboration partners, or referral generators. I was playing a role in a movie - Jean being the business woman - networking.

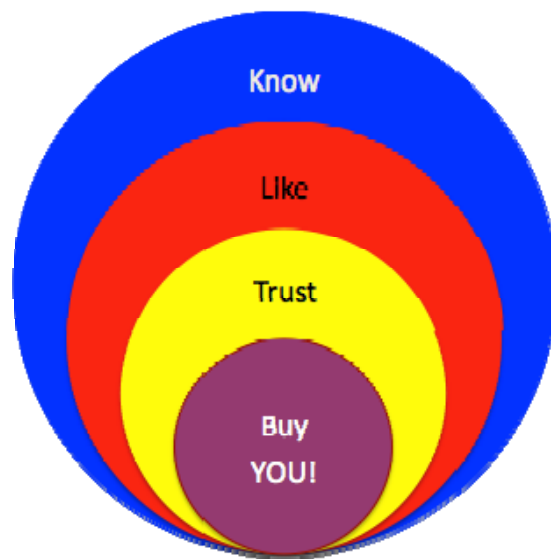
I thought, if I got a new business card, a better website, changed my elevator speech, or was better at selling I would get different results. **I had it all wrong.**

Once I realized networking was about building relationships, **I totally turned around my attitude and my results.** Now I am genuinely interested in listening to the business adventures and life stories of the people I meet.

I listen more than I speak, especially for an opportunity to suggest a referral, a resource, or a business tool that can help others be even more successful.

Now I know effective and enjoyable networking means:

- ❖ Getting out and doing it and enjoying the process
- ❖ Getting to **know** lots of new people
- ❖ Reconnecting with people I have met before and moving deeper into the **know, like and trust** process
- ❖ Forming ongoing relationships
- ❖ Following up fearlessly
- ❖ Transforming former strangers into business friends and fans!



Ten Commandments of Effective Networking

1. **Network in the right places** where you will find ideal clients, customers, referral agents, joint venture partners, or others you can help and who may be able to help you grow your business or be a referral generator.
2. **Have Clear Response to *What do you do?*** A clear, precise and concise response to this universal networking question, sometimes called an elevator speech, 30-second commercial, or marketing impact statement, is essential. Speak authentically about how you provide solutions to your ideal client's problem, pain, need, wants, or desires. Give an example. Know what you stand for. Speak about benefits not the process. Don't give a *speech*.
3. **Have a Clear Intention.** Know what you want to accomplish by networking. For example: Identify 3 people as potential collaborators, add 10 names to your newsletter list, find someone to be a guest speaker for one of your groups or a teleclass.
4. **Be Authentically Interested versus Trying to be Interesting.** It's not about you. Get to know the people you meet first. Be genuine when asking questions and interested in listening to their answers. People will connect with you more easily if you express interest in them and their business needs, issues, and success.
5. **Give Out Your Business Card Only When Asked.** Networking is not a contest to see how many business cards you can distribute. Simply passing out business cards means you are only building a *house of cards*. Do not give out your business card unless there is sincere interest in what you do or you are asked. (Be sure your

card has a call to action on the back.) **Be sure to get the cards of those with whom you want to create an ongoing relationship.**

6. **Be a Problem Solver.** Listen to other people to uncover their business needs. Think, "How can I help?" Suggest resources. Offer to help them solve problems or put them in contact with someone you know who may be able to help them.
7. **Focus on Who Knows You.** Introduce yourself to others. When you ask a question in a meeting or seminar, stand up (if it is a large group), and always introduce yourself prior to asking the question. Asking questions is a way to get "face time" with a group. Make sure the question is meaningful. Never start with "this may be a dumb question but..." it minimizes the value of what you say.
8. **Have a Presence.** Create an impression. Do this by the way you dress, the way you speak, act, shake hands, and move about the room. Pay attention to what your body language is saying. *Wear a distinctive item of clothing,* or an interesting accessory. This can be a conversation starter and make you more memorable.
9. **Don't Cling !** Circulate. Don't stand around the food table or sit down and drink wine and talk to only a few people or just your friends. When someone is clinging to you because you are friendly and easy to talk with, you will need a way to break free. One technique that works is to invite the *clinger* to circulate with you. It is easier than simply walking away. Say, "I want to go over and talk to _____ - why don't you join me and I'll introduce you."

- 10. Follow Up Fearlessly.** Effective networking is not complete until you follow up. Develop a strategy to stay connected to quality contacts. Start with a follow up e-mail or phone call. Forward a link to an interesting website, a program, or an article. (Attentive listening and asking questions will help you know their interests.) If you made a connection with an ideal client or someone you want to do business with, call them. You are not bugging them when you are following up on the interest they expressed when you met.

Bonus Tip! **Have Fun!** Approach networking as if it were a social event in your own home where there are some guests you do not know. Get to know them. Help them feel comfortable with you. Networking with the right attitude means you will do it more often and more effectively.

Coaching Tips

Use these networking 'best practices' wherever there is an opportunity to connect with others - not just at formal networking events. You can have a networking conversation when you are getting coffee, in an elevator, the grocery store, or at a soccer game. Networking is a conversation not an event.

These ten commandments can help you be more effective at networking if you use them. They **will not help you overcome fears or resistance to networking**. If you are shy or introverted and avoid networking you must stop the negative chatter in your head telling you "I'm not good at this" or "I don't like to do this."

Examine what it is that you are resisting. It is essential that you embrace your resistance, which is usually based in fear. Follow the advice of Susan Jeffers PhD in her best-selling book "Feel the Fear and Do it Anyway."

If you enjoyed this free report on networking, check out my newsletter www.JeanCaton.net/archive/ and my blog www.JeanCaton.net/blog/ for more business tips for Business women who are entrepreneurs and executives.

If you would like to speak on the phone for a complimentary career or business strategy session, simply email me your request at info@JeanCaton.net

*To your continued success,
Jean*

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