

Myths About Networking

Myth #1: Networking means you're looking to use people to achieve selfish goals, or opportunistically ask people for help.

REALITY: The definition of the word network according to The Oxford Dictionary:

nétwerk n. & v. a group of people who exchange information, contacts, and experience for professional or social purposes.

Therefore, networking can be defined as one's efforts to create this group, and of course it can be done honestly and considerately.

You take people as far as they will go, not as far as you would like them to go.

- Jeanette Rankin

Myth #2: You have to be a born networker or a natural at it.

REALITY: The skills needed to be an effective networker can be learned by anyone. Start by getting comfortable asking folks you meet, "So, what are you working on these days?" or, "What do you need help with right now?" Then, read the new book titled, "I'm at a Networking Event—Now What???" for more ways to further develop your networking muscle.

...relationships take time, getting to know folks requires patience, and people are generally cautious – if not fearful – of Johnny come lately that is asking, rather than giving.

- Jeremiah Owyang, Sr. Analyst at Forrester

Myth #3: You must have above average charisma to be a good networker.

REALITY: You merely need to be thoughtful, sincere and genuinely helpful. You get offered a job or opportunities from people who are trusting of you. There IS a hidden job market out there, but you have to be willing to be open and giving to be part of it.

To be successful, you have to be able to relate to people; they have to be satisfied with your personality to be able to do business with you and to build a relationship with mutual trust.

- George Ross

Myth #4: You have to be a good talker or an overly chatty "schmooser" to be a good networker.

REALITY: The truth is it is almost the exact opposite. According to Guy Kawasaki, co-founder of Garage Technology Ventures, Forbes columnist, and author of the recently published, Reality Check, "The mark of a good conversationalist is not that you can talk a lot. The mark is that you can get others to talk a lot. Thus, good schmoozer' s are good listeners, not good talkers."

You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you.

- Dale Carnegie

So, in closing, why should you bother with networking?

Just like you can never receive too many gifts at the holidays, you can never have too many contacts in your network. Being well-connected connotes success and influence -- the kind of cachet every serious professional seeks to achieve.