



Part of the Washington SBDC Podcast Series

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Small Business Networking:

Networking: “a reciprocal process based on the exchange of ideas, advice, information, referrals, leads and contacts where resources are shared and acknowledged” or “the ability to walk into a group of strangers and walk out with a group of new business prospects.”

Misconception: networking must provide instantaneous results. Rarely does a first time contact at a networking event generate a same-day sale.

Five rules of networking:

- 1) Be patient. It takes time to develop relationships with those who will become patrons and find the best opportunities.
- 2) The networking event is not a sales call, focus first on establishing business friendships not customers.
- 3) Persistence pays for those who are patient. It takes time to find the key contacts, those who are well connected and have lots of networking experience. Make it a priority to become part of this inner circle.
- 4) Be an active volunteer. Think of your local Chamber of Commerce, community organizations and civic clubs. Sincerity and personal commitment are essential .
- 5) Be sure to actively follow-up with a quick handwritten note, remembering birthdays and special events, sending notable articles, etc. Keep your body language in mind (good posture, eye contact, strong handshake, etc.).

Summary: As a small business owner you cannot afford not to do active networking. A small business owner must network. Start slowly, remember the rules, and approach it as enjoyable social time and not office time.

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