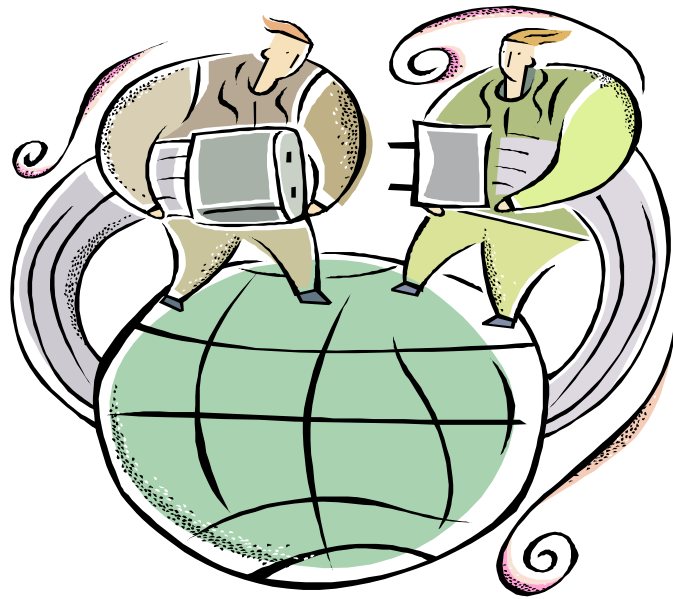


# Use the Power of Networking To Find Clients, Promote Yourself, And Grow Your Business



A Special Report

By

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*"Creative Careers Unleashed"™*

## USE THE POWER OF NETWORKING

Why care about networking?

“It’s not fair! They just got that job, contract, lead, [fill in the blanks] because they knew someone not because they’re the right one for the job!”

I’ve heard that lament hundreds of times over the last 15 years, in workshops and coaching sessions. And, I wish I had a buck for every time I heard it: I’d be rich.

You’re right *it isn’t fair! But, it is how the world works!*

People, yes that means you, prefer to buy from people they know and trust. Just think about it. Would you pick out a new doctor from the Yellow Pages? Not if you’re smart, you won’t. When buying personal services you want to get someone who you know will do the job in a way that works for you and who you *trust*.

The same is true for people who want to buy your services. They need to KNOW YOU. Knowing you is about having a relationship with you. And, the secret to helping people get to know you lies in something I call “Collaborative Networking”™

For more than 15 years, I’ve been writing about networking and presenting workshops to teach independent professionals how to use networking to find more clients. This little e-book contains 3 of my published articles.



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*Will Networking Work For You? By Lyle Lachmuth*

What does networking mean to you?

Before I tell you what it means to me I want to share some of the answers I got to that question when I asked a few of the Calgary professionals who are part of my network.

Doug McGregor, chairman of the Computer Education Society of Alberta told me: *"To me, networking is all about building professional relationships with one's peers for the improvement of the profession. Our focus in CESA is to provide professionals an opportunity to share information about problems and solutions."*

Gwen Reid, Western Sales Manager for Computer Action told me that: *"ideally networking is about sharing, about building a long-term relationship that involves both individuals providing guidance and mentoring for each other."*

Susan Letourneau, organizer of Calgary's Synergy Breakfasts, sees networking somewhat differently. *"Our focus isn't business contacts. People come out to these breakfasts because the people they meet here have similar values and beliefs. They get information from our guest speakers but most of all they come for the support and encouragement."*

I didn't manage to reach anyone at the Calgary Women's Network. However, according to the promotional material their breakfast meetings provide professional women the opportunity to develop professional contacts and a chance to share ideas, skills and experiences.

It seems then, that most professionals see networking as being about making business contacts and/or sharing ideas. My own particular view of networking has been most influenced by the thoughts and ideas of my colleague Debra Derksen. I like her idea that networking is really all about quality contact with others. That is, having interactions with others, in which there is a balance of taking and giving.

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When I asked Gwen Reid what networking behavior she most disliked, she said, *"I dislike individuals who want immediate business from you, as if the fact that they gave you their business card gives them the right to bug you for a sale."* Doug McGregor told me the kind of behavior that turns him off is, *"where the person seems to be motivated by personal gain. That is, there's lots of taking and very little giving."*

No doubt you've been at professional meetings where someone busily jammed business cards into the hands of any nearby breathing human.

Think about it. What kinds of interactions have left you feeling bad? Likely it's the ones that felt very one sided.

In my consulting workshops I teach consultants that the most effective long-term role they can take is one in which they act as a partner to their clients. For me, partnership starts right with the important first contact. It happens when you and I practice balance in our networking.

For me this balance of giving and receiving, this partnership, means that you and I give before we get. Like our bank account, before we make withdrawals we need to make deposits. Relationships work the same way: give then take.

Of course, I'm not advocating that you "give away the farm." The information, knowledge and ideas you have are your stock in trade, they're your product. You want to get paid, and paid well, for what you know. However, giving someone a hint, tip or fresh look at a problem is a good way to build up your relationship bank accounts.

But do be careful. It can be very tempting to impress someone by telling them everything you know. Too often I've seen inexperienced consultants – I did it too, folks – give away the whole answer to a prospective client's problem. And, they

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did it for nothing! Don't give in to the temptation. If you must talk, at least try to talk about what you can achieve and save the "how to's" for paid time.

Remember I said that networking was about giving and then getting. When you've given your idea, it's your turn. I believe its okay to then ask someone for a lead or referral. Say something like, "do you know anyone who might benefit from my services?" As Reid suggests, do be less aggressive about pressing your services on the person you're talking to. Nobody likes a "hard sell."

My wife tells me that God gave men one mouth and two ears for a reason and that it wasn't just for holding up their glasses. So use your ears and listen. Balance in your networking also means that you listen at least as much as you talk.

You'd be surprised what people tell a good listener. We all love to talk about what we are doing. So...go ahead, ask some probing questions. And then, LISTEN. You may not hear something immediately useful, but you could pick up some important tips for the future. And, at the very least, you'll have a better idea about what makes this potential client "tick" and what his business is all about.

Here's the number one networking tip from the people I talked to:

- Doug McGregor told me: *"Find the organization that best represents what you do professionally. Join it, participate actively and share your ideas."*
- Gwen Reid's advice was: *"Go to a meeting without any expectation of getting a sale, and give lots."*
- And, finally, this advice from Susan Letourneau: *"Go to as many places as you can and talk to as many people as you can. There's so much information to be learned."*

Next month I'll tell you about some of the places in and around Calgary where you can practice your networking skills and I'll share some further tips from Calgary's other pro-net-workers.

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*Building Your Business Through Leads and Referrals*

Early in 1991 I decided to see if the world of “leads & referrals” groups would be a good way to grow my business.

For those not familiar with this concept, here’s a quick introduction. These groups meet regularly, usually weekly, over breakfast or lunch, with the express purpose of growing members’ businesses. Each member is supposed to bring leads or referrals for others. Typically, only one of each kind of business, e.g. lawyer, accountant, et al, belong to a particular group. Sometimes the groups will invite guest speakers or show videos to expose the group to new ideas for improving their business.

The reality was a bit different from the promise. I found that members often didn’t come with leads for others. And, in my particular case, probably because I had a hard time at the time describing what I did, I got zippo leads!

The group I belonged to was part of a city wide network of groups, called Network Canada Breakfast Clubs. The owner of the overall company, who ‘got’ what I did and what I was capable of, asked me if I could think of a workshop topic I could present for the whole group. We came up with a topic, promoted it to the network, but it had very poor reception. So, I suggested she poll the various clubs and ask them what they needed [there’s an important principle here for you].

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The biggest need?

Members said they most wanted to know: "How do I get more leads? How do I give better leads?"

So, being the resident expert on networking and a super workshop leader I put together a workshop called *Building Your Business Through Leads, Tips, and Referrals*. The workshop explains how to get and give leads – and, the crucial difference between leads and referrals.



We promoted the workshop throughout the Network. And, I did some promotion on my own including doing a radio interview. The results were phenomenal! It was the best attended workshop ever offered by the Network. Even better, for me, I was interviewed by the Business columnist of the local newspaper (circulation 250,000), was written up in it, and had the article picked up by a sister paper. Yippee!

The article reproduced on the next page is a brief synopsis of the workshop I presented.

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## Building Your Business Through Leads and Referrals

- Lyle T. Lachmuth, MSOD

Word of mouth advertising is the best advertising our business can get!

But, word of mouth advertising isn't under our control. Or is it? In fact, it is! There are any number of practical, simple and inexpensive steps we can take to increase promotion of our business through word of mouth advertising (which includes leads and referrals).

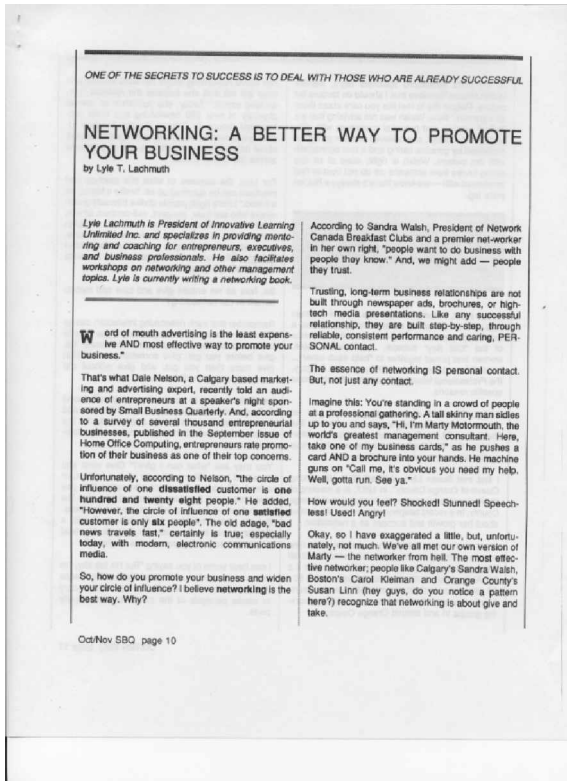
Here are five easy ways to build business –

1. Give every customer your very best service! Marketing studies consistently show the best source of new business is existing customers. Satisfied customers do repeat business and they tell their friends and associates.
2. Ask for referrals! Before your satisfied customer walks out the door, ask "Who else could you recommend that would benefit from my service?" When you get a referral, be sure to follow-up and call the person.
3. Give every satisfied customer two of your business cards. Why two? One for them and one that they can pass on to someone else.
4. Know what kind of leads you want. Business success comes from focusing on your market segment, so get clear on who you want as customers. Develop a customer profile and then ask people for leads that match your profile.
5. Give leads and referrals. An old principle says, "the best way to get something is to give it." It's true! When we help others, help will come our way.

Start using any one of these tips for the next month and watch your business take off. If you would like even more information, call me for a free copy of my article,

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*Networking: A Better Way to Promote Your Business*



I love to write. I love it even more when my writing is published. The best? When I get paid for my writing!

For these reasons, I'm always looking for venues for my writing. Being published is one of the best ways to give you and your business instant credibility. People figure, "Hey! This guy must know something." Also, you build a relationship with prospective clients. Finally, you can use your

published articles as a promotional vehicle – like this e-book.

At the networking workshop I taught I met a member of the network who was just starting a new business magazine, Small Business Quarterly. He wanted to know if I would be interested in writing for him. Of course, I said yes! So, my second career as a freelance journalist was off and running.

I wrote several articles on small business for him, including ones on visioning and marketing planning.

The following article focuses on using networking to promote your business.

## USE THE POWER OF NETWORKING TO FIND CLIENTS AND PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS

NETWORKING: A BETTER WAY TO PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS  
by: Lyle T. Lachmuth

“Word of mouth advertising is the least expensive AND most effective way to promote your business.”

That’s what Dale Nelson, a Calgary based marketing and advertising expert, recently told an audience of entrepreneurs at a speaker’s night sponsored by Small Business Quarterly. And, according to a survey of several thousand entrepreneurial businesses, published in the September issue of Home Office Computing, entrepreneurs rate promotion of their business as one of their top concerns.

Unfortunately, according to Nelson, “the circle of influence of one dissatisfied customer is one hundred and twenty-eight people.” He added, “However, the circle of influence of one satisfied customer is only six people.” The old adage, “bad news travels fast,” certainly is true: especially today, with modern, electronic communications media.

So, how do you promote your business and widen your circle of influence? I believe networking is the best way. Why?

According to Sandra Walsh, President of Network Canada Breakfast Clubs and premier net-worker in her own right, “people want to do business with people they know.” And, we might add – people they trust.

Trusting, long-term business relationships are not built through newspaper ads, brochures, or high-tech media presentations. Like any successful relationship, they are built step-by-step, through reliable, consistent performance and caring. PERSONAL contact.

The essence of networking IS personal contact. But, not just any contact.

Imagine this: You’re standing in a crowd of people at a professional gathering. A tall skinny man sidles up to you and says, “Hi, I’m Marty Motor mouth,

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the world's greatest management consultant. Here, take one of my business cards," as he pushes a card AND brochure into your hands. He machine guns on "Call me, it's obvious you need my help. Well, gotta run. See ya."

How would you feel? Shocked! Stunned! Speechless! Used! Angry!

Okay, so I have exaggerated a little, but, unfortunately, not much. We've all met our own version of Marty – the networker from hell. The most effective networker: people like Calgary's Sandra Walsh, Boston's Carol Kleiman and Orange County's Susan Linn (hey guys, do you notice a pattern here?) recognize that networking is about give and take.

At the SBO sponsored speakers night, Sandra Walsh told us, "I believe that I should do favors for people. People like to feel like you care about them as a person." Now, Walsh was not advising that we "bribe" existing and potential customers with gifts and favors. Rather, she believes that our giving be motivated by genuine caring and a real connection with the person. Walsh is right: none of us like taking favors from someone we do not trust or feel connected with – we know there's always a hidden price tag.

"Word of mouth advertising is the least expensive way and most effective way to promote your business." – Dale Nelson

In her book, "Women's Networks," Carol Kleiman tells us that networking started among women as a way to compensate for the overpowering influence of the "Old Boy" network. As Kleiman notes, women first joined together to "help each other...to get things done...to build influence." In Calgary, the Professional Women's Network exists for those specific reasons.

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Today, this kind of networking is not just for women. Men are banding together in networks, like the Calgary M.E.N.S. Network, in ways very different from the “Old Boy” network. Later in this article I will talk about those critical differences.

I first met Susan Linn, dubbed “The Networking Queen of Orange County”, in 1987, at a meeting of the Professional Consultant’s Association of Orange County. In a recent telephone interview, she told us about her growth and success as a networker.

“I got tired of cold calls and was looking for a new way to promote my services. I’d heard about all these professional groups so I decided to give it a try. At the peak of my networking, I was visiting 50-60 different associations a month!” Over the years, Linn has personally visited more than 500 networking groups in and around Orange County.

Her active networking taught her what worked and what did not and she became the resident “networking expert.” Today, she publishes an annual directory of over 600 networking and other professional groups in Orange County: teaches biweekly classes on networking: and regularly speaks about networking to associations and corporations across the United States.

For Linn, the essence of what she teaches and practices can be summed up as: “make a friend, be a friend.” Linn’s right: people dislike interacting with others who are rude, arrogant, self-centered, or who don’t listen (remember Marty). As Walsh and Linn demonstrate in their own business interactions, networking is about give and take and about balance. Effective networking interactions are ones that benefit BOTH parties.

So, how do we ensure give and take and mutual benefit in our networking?

Remember that each networking interaction can be likened to a transaction with your bank: you have to make deposits before you make withdrawals. So, give

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before you get: give something worthwhile: give more than you get: and give without the expectation of immediate return.

Yes, I know that to some of you this will sound Polly-Annish and impractical. It's not! It works and it works well. It works for me and it works for the people who have attended our networking workshops.

You may ask "what can I give?" Give what you have and know. Share a tip, an idea, a contact, or a lead. Of course, I am not advocating that you give away your business secrets. If you give too much free advice, you will not have a business. But, do give something. As Dr. Wendy Ovaris, a Calgary-based family counselor, told me: "the best way to get something you want is to give it."

I can hear some of you saying "But I'm too shy. I'm too nervous. I'm too..." It's true. Networking means you have to be out there. But it need not be scary or cause paralysis of the mouth or other bodily parts.

Start your networking with people you know. If you belong to a professional association, a club or some other group: start there. If you don't, join one! There are dozens of tips and leads clubs in Calgary: ones like Network Canada. Or, join the Chamber of Commerce. But, don't just join: go out to meetings: participate in events: help out: and NETWORK! Networking is active, not passive.

Networking will only work if you make it your own. As Dr. Trude Diamond, a Florida-based CBT expert, recently told me, "*make your network work for you.*" So, get out there folks! Build a network, use it and put one of the networking strategies I suggested into practice immediately.

Here's some other ideas you can put into practice:

1. Have business cards made up, always carry them with you.
2. Be able to describe the type of business you are looking for in 25 words or less.

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3. Have a few key questions prepared in advance for starting conversations with.
4. Always give people two business cards. That way they can keep one and pass the other on.
5. Do not spend your time drinking. Listen to what others are saying and look for possible opportunities to help others or contacts.
6. Ensure you get a card from each person you contact and jot down relevant information on the back of it.
7. Ask friends, relatives and associates for names of prospective contacts. Then you can say "so and so suggested I call you."
8. Brainstorm your own list of networking tips.
9. Use the networking plan daily!

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WANT TO LEARN MORE SECRETS OF BEING A MASTER NETWORKER?

We can help! We offer a range of practical, skill-based workbooks, learning materials, and skillshops on networking, including:

*Building Your Business Through Leads, Tips & Referrals-- Workbook*

This workbook from the winning workshop of the same name can be used on it's own to help you understand and apply networking strategies to grow your business.

*Building Your Business Through Leads, Tips & Referrals—Audio Tape/CD*

An unabridged recording of the workshop of the same name. It gives you more ideas and inspiration not contained in the workbook.

*Building Your Business Through Leads, Tips & Referrals—Combo Pack*

Get both. Learn more! All for a reduced price.

*Taking The Frost Off Cold Calls™*

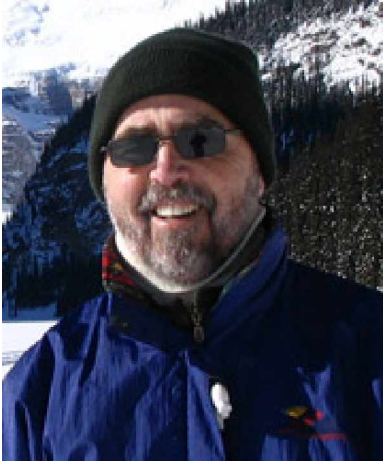
This 4-hour workshop takes you step-by-step through the process proven to get you more clients and more sales. You'll create a powerful '30-second infomercial', determine the ideal places to network, create a plan customized to your personality and practice, and much more. Comes complete with 24 page workbook and 3 months of ongoing e-mail support coaching – at no extra charge!

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Lyle T. Lachmuth MSOD, CDP, CRT  
Lyle is a sought after speaker and workshop leader who teaches practical, immediately usable techniques and strategies. A life, career, and practice development coach, he specializes in coaching successful, creative, multitalented professionals and helps them uncover their unique gifts, bust barriers to expressing those gifts, and helps them package and promote their talents so they can create and live the life of their dreams!

Lyle is the author of more than four dozen workshops, and hundreds of workbooks and published articles on leadership, entrepreneurship, networking, consulting, and the application of personality style to communication, selling, and marketing.

Lyle has coached CEO's, managers, entrepreneurs, and solo-professionals since 1986 and has assisted business owners and independent professionals to refocus their talents, develop winning personal and corporate strategies, grow their businesses, and balance their lives.

He is an active member of the Association of Humanistic Psychology, the Pepperdine MSOD Alumni forum, the Calgary Career Practitioners Development Network, Southern Alberta Association for Psychological Type and past president of several professional associations.

When not busy working at what he loves, Lyle is busy loving what he can do in the outdoors: hiking, traveling, biking, and cross country skiing. He is an avid learner and actively and continually pursues a path of personal, spiritual, and professional growth.

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