

Top 10 Tips – How to make the most of business networking

Supplied by: *Beyond Theory*



Three words sum up being successful in business; networking, networking and networking. Yet so many entrepreneurs and business managers seem to struggle with it or even avoid networking altogether.

Here are our top tips for you to get the most from your business networking.

1. Treat networking as taking your business to the gym. You'll be amazed at the similarities.
2. Yes, you can work out on your own, but going to the gym means you'll be with like-minded people, it's less lonely and you can also get expert advice and tips. It's just the same with networking groups.
3. Choose a networking group that suits you and your business. Just like gyms, networking groups do vary on price and commitment. Some gyms offer lots of facilities – but you need to ask yourself if you will use them all.
4. Choose who you want to work out with. So think carefully about which networking group to use – is it about meeting consumers, influencers or decision makers.
5. Personal trainers are a feature of many gyms. It's the same with networking – very often you can link up with a coach or mentor who can help. The formality of the relationship will be for you to choose and manage.
6. Get involved. Once you decide to join a networking group it's no good just turning up. Watching others on the treadmill, cross trainer or rowing machine at the gym won't get you any fitter and this applies to networking too.
7. Learn how to use the equipment for maximum effect. Rather like gym equipment, you'll need someone to explain how the networking group works – to literally show you the ropes. Although learning by trial and error is an option this will mean your membership fee will take much longer to show any return on investment.
8. Working out often means leaving your comfort zone. Having that stretch is essential – if it's not hurting then it's unlikely to be doing any good. Presenting at networking groups can be just the same. Get some coaching from your personal trainer or trusted friend.
9. People often want to improve on the same things. Some gyms offer classes. So do some networking groups. Join these, learn together and benchmark your own self-improvement against others.
10. Finally, remember to create goals to achieve. As with improving fitness, incremental steps are recommended – i.e. they are reasonable to achieve and motivational when reached. Set these for your networking activities too.

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