



3 Simple Steps to Strategic Networking

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If you want to become a masterful strategic networker, you have to be the one that makes it happen and that means taking a proactive approach to referral marketing. *“Don’t wait for the good luck referral. Good luck if you get one, good luck if the person referred to you will talk to you, and good luck if you close it,”* states Tim R. Green of President of Referral Institute of Michigan.

If you’re not getting referrals from your networking, it is likely you need to change your approach.

Many business owners take a haphazard approach to networking and wonder why they don’t receive a steady stream of referrals. Common missteps include:

- Attending every networking opportunity regardless if you will connect with your ideal clients or if there are referral partners who can connect you with your ideal client.
- Not giving any referrals.
- Gravitating toward the people you know at events.
- Not making yourself clear in describing your ideal referral.

These common missteps lead to major frustration when trying to grow your business. The next time you attend a network event, consider a new approach:

1. Assess the Room

As you enter the room, identify who you know and who you don’t know. While the temptation is to gravitate toward people you already know, approach the individuals you don’t know. Find out about their business and their target market. Connect them with the people you do know. They’ll appreciate that you showed an interest, connected them with others in their target market, and made them feel welcomed especially if they are a newcomer.

2. Ask

Business owners think they need to “sell” their services when they network. But effective networking is not about trying to sell people you meet on your services. The next time you attend a networking meeting, focus on the other person. Ask questions to the person you’re networking with about their target market. Ask them what they do for a living and why they are in business. Ask them to describe their ideal referral.

Then, set up the meeting between them and their ideal referral. What a great way to start creating a relationship. They'll surely remember that you proactively helped them out.

3. **Be Prepared**

When you're asked by your network that age old comment, "If I can ever help you, please let me know" be prepared to answer it! Have an idea on what you need:

- Do you need a referral into a specific company you've been trying connect with for years?
- Do you need a supplier to help you bring a product to market?
- Are you looking for a panel speaker for an upcoming nonprofit event you're planning?

A strategic approach to networking creates long-lasting relationships and helps you identify partnerships by design. These partnerships will help you create a referral system that does the work for you helping you grow your business in a snap.