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# KnighLine

March 2003

A Publication of KnightWorks

Volume 1, Number 8

KnighWorks

20 Deer Run

Miami Springs, FL

33166

Office: 305. 888.1905

Cell: 305. 989.4815

E-mail:

raygknight@hotmail.com

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[www.rayknight.com](http://www.rayknight.com)

*Networking strategies at events and trade shows can be like "shooting fish in a barrel" and generate the greatest "bang for your buck".*

## The Three Golden Rules of Networking

By: Ray Gordon Knight C.E.O.- Chief Envisioneer Officer

This is the eighth in the series of articles designed to help small and medium-sized businesses improve their marketing and sales by **cost-effectively** increasing awareness, protecting their customer base and attracting new business. Prior articles are available at [www.rayknight.com](http://www.rayknight.com)

This article presents strategies, tactics, insights and tips on Networking that can be applied at events, meetings and shows that are both business and social in nature. "The Three Golden Rules of Networking" are introduced which can be followed whether your goal is a new job, new clients or new friends.

### Businesses Return to Basics

The economy continues to place obstacles in the road to progress for businesses of all sizes. Forced to drive improved returns on available resources, companies must make some fundamental decisions about how they allocate their three most scarce resources-*talent, time and money*. As entrepreneurs and companies alike explore these issues through individual, team and department soul-searching discussions, many conclude that the sound strategy is to "return to the basics" and execute with greater focus. In the realm of marketing, sales and business development, one of the most important basics is effective Networking.

### Networking Generates Results

The old adage that it is not what you know, but who you know that makes all the difference is ever so true today. Marketing is a numbers game. In general, the more leads you have, the more potential business you can acquire. Imagine a funnel with a large number of leads coming in the top which are gradually sifted through. Some programs take more time to produce results and others may be more cost effective.

What are the results you can expect from a successful, ongoing Networking campaign?

<input type="checkbox"/> Find new prospects	<input type="checkbox"/> Find new contacts
<input type="checkbox"/> Find new agents	<input type="checkbox"/> Find new friends
<input type="checkbox"/> Find new ideas, techniques and resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Find new employees
<input type="checkbox"/> Find new competitors	<input type="checkbox"/> Find new or additional vendors/suppliers
<input type="checkbox"/> Build rapport with existing contacts & clients	<input type="checkbox"/> Keep an ear to the ground-what's going on/what's working
<input type="checkbox"/> Build long-lasting relationships	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate your communications and networking abilities

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*"The Three Golden  
Rules of Networking*

- 1. Ask And You  
Will Receive.*
- 2. Do For Others  
As You Would  
Like Them To  
Do For You.*
- 3. It Is Better To  
Give In Order  
To Receive.*

And lastly, through your active and continued presence, show your individual and your company's commitment and staying power in the marketplace.

From the earliest days of my career, against overwhelming odds, I learned how properly executed, Networking strategies at events and trade shows can be like "shooting fish in a barrel" and generate the greatest "bang for your buck". In many businesses, Networking can save you time and money in comparison to advertising, telemarketing, direct mail and email efforts. Here are a few lessons I've learned along the way.

#### Networking Is A Numbers Game

- The more you do-- the better.
- The more you do--- the better you get at it.
- The more you do it—the more you realize it must be a prioritized part of your ongoing business development strategy.
- The more you succeed at it-by developing worthwhile contacts, prospects, vendors and clients—the more you will see that it is one of the best types of no cost and low-cost marketing.

All things being equal (*and they are not*) people more often will choose to do business with people that they know, like and trust. That being the case, how can you get more people to know you and your business and trust you? The first part comes easy through Networking, the second part takes the right philosophy/strategy, time, diligent effort, patience and sometimes a bit of luck.

Some old-fashioned assumptions about Networking I've heard or read include the following.

- Call up a bunch of friends and relatives and ask them for a favor or a list of contacts
- Call up a list of people that you may or may not know and ask them for some advice
- Show up at a meeting and ask people you may have never met before for their business or for a business referral to one of their friends, clients or contacts.

From my experience and many other professionals I know, you can get lucky and find that these approaches may generate some results in the short term. While certain personality types may excel at this approach, I know many professionals who are just not comfortable with these techniques. Some don't like reaching out to strangers or acquaintances while others don't feel comfortable asking for advice or favors. Absent of another strategy, these individuals (and sometimes companies led by those individuals) tend to overlook and miss out on the power of Networking as a corporate business development strategy.

In each of these cases, a different philosophy and longer-term view based on time proven, sound principles can be just what the business doctor ordered. Moreover, it can be significantly more effective. Through continual trial and error, I have developed some strategies along the way which I'll share with you here.

#### **The " Three Golden Rules of Networking"**

- 1. Ask And You Will Receive*
- 2. Do For Others As You Would Like Them To Do For You*

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*" Let your sincere interest in helping others be the bedrock of your business karma. You'll be amazed how this philosophy pays off in the short time with others' appreciation and in the long term by them remembering your kindness."*

### 3. *It Is Better To Give In Order To Receive*

#### 1. *Ask and You Will Receive*

Some clients have indicated that they hate to network or "schmooze" . To help them conquer this self-limiting and business damaging attitude, we remind them to remember this simple phrase, "Ask and You Will Receive". Eliminate the fear of talking to strangers by *listening to them*. All you have to do to start becoming an adept Networker is to have a few simple questions, a sincere interest to learn and be a good listener.

Remember **ALL- Ask-Listen-Learn**

As Dale Carnegie pointed out, most people love to talk about themselves, their business and their accomplishments. Inevitably, even the most outspoken people will stop to catch their breath and ask about you and your company. When they do ask.....make sure you can explain what they can do to help you to initiate a win-win relationship from day 1.

#### 2. *Do For Others As You Would Like Them To Do For You*

To get someone's attention, you must first give them yours. By cultivating a sincere interest in others situation, needs and wants, you have made the best investment of your time and energy Like my mother often reminded me, "*You have two ears and one mouth—let the majority rule*".

Make sure to jot down some notes on the business cards .Those few notes can jog your memory and give you the needed content for your post-meeting follow-up call, email or letter.

Ask about the challenges and opportunities they are facing in order to really appreciate their situation. **Let your sincere interest in helping others be the bedrock of your business karma.** You'll be amazed how this philosophy pays off in the short time with others' appreciation and in the long term by them remembering your kindness.

### 3. *It Is Better To Give In Order To Receive*

By using Networking to help others, you'll help yourself. Remember to have realistic expectations and exhibit a certain degree of etiquette to insure you are an effective Networker. You must stand out from the crowd and you can do this by going out of your way to help others. If you choose to use Networking as a way to generate business, you and your company should be prepared to allocate time and effort to help other individuals and businesses obtain qualified leads and potential clients. Embrace a philosophy of what goes around comes around and you set an example for others to follow. You'll cultivate relationships that will last the test of time regardless of up or down business cycles. Test the Golden Rules of Networking and you'll see how this back to basics, no cost and low cost business development strategy can become an important part of your business development arsenal.

TIPS: Here are a few techniques I have employed over time.

1. *Catch As Catch Can-* the shotgun approach to working a crowd with the key measurement criteria being the number of contacts made and cards gathered. I focus on what I am looking for and let that energy draw me to new contacts and learn about the composition of the group.

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*"there truly is strength in numbers and it is especially the case when you seek out and find someone in a meeting that knows the "lay of the land". They can save you time and energy understanding the complexion of the group and the centers of influence."*

2. Right To The Top- go to the key players or organizers of that group and present your needs and ask for their advice, guidance or suggestions. In most cases, they may lead you right by the hand to the key contacts you need. If you can't get access, try the people responsible for attracting members to the group or visitors to the event.
3. The Buddy System- there truly is strength in numbers and it is especially the case when you seek out and find someone in a meeting that knows the "lay of the land". They can save you time and energy understanding the complexion of the group and the centers of influence. How to find the centers of influence? Ask someone you meet if they attend that meeting regularly and ask who is the most effective or active Networker and follow that lead. Another strategy is to canvass the crowd with the "buddy" and have them introduce you to some of their existing contacts in the group.
4. Inside Out- the tried and true networking strategy is to get involved in the development and promotion of the group/event/cause. Harness the power of your natural energy and enthusiasm and let your talents speak for themselves. In time, the people who make things happen will seek you out to learn what makes you tick and what they might do to help you overcome your challenge or realize an opportunity.
5. Know Your Limitations- once you find what you are looking for through Networking, back off--set a follow-up strategy—and let the other person get on with what they are at the meeting/event for: to make worthwhile contacts, identify others' opportunities, needs and challenges and plan their follow-up actions.

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Prior *KnightLine* articles include:

- ❖ Web Works Wonders for Small Business
- ❖ Use PR: Create Awareness and Generate Leads
- ❖ Newsletters- Do-It-Yourself Marketing Tool
- ❖ Brainstorming Can Build Your Business
- ❖ Referral Sales Make Dollars and Sense
- ❖ Marketing Research Drives Results
- ❖ Marketing-Reward Your Customers First

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*KnightLine* is a publication of *KnightWorks*. Ray Gordon Knight, author is the C.E.O., Chief Envisioneer Officer of *KnightWorks*. Our entire focus is on *Passionately, Building Your Business and Brands*. We work with business owners and executives to implement practical, **no-cost and low cost proven business building and business improvement techniques and strategies**. We've developed our systems and processes over a 25- year domestic and international career as both a corporate senior executive and entrepreneur active in various industries. Much of the content included in *KnightLine* incorporates strategies and tactics we have personally applied to growing our clients' and our own businesses. KnightWorks is headquartered in Miami, Florida. We can be reached at 305-888-1905 or by email at raygknight@hotmail.com Read past articles & learn more practical techniques at [www.rayknight.com](http://www.rayknight.com) .