



You, Too, Can Know “Everybody”

By Dana Burke

“Wow,” people often say. “It seems like you know everyone!” Of course I don’t, but it sure doesn’t hurt business to create that impression. Wouldn’t we all like to be seen as a resource to our customers?

Discuss Among Yourselves (or The Value of Networking)

I read somewhere that one of the most common fears is the fear of being at an event filled with strangers. I don’t know; but it seems a party filled with relatives could be almost as bad!! Actually, strangers at a business function provide one of the best networking opportunities available. Here’s a whole group of people just waiting to know you and they already have something in common — they’re all at the same meeting. These aren’t strangers, they’re colleagues!

So how do you get to know your newly found colleagues? Noted networking guru Susan RoAne makes these suggestions (our comments are included):

- Attitude — Be positive and upbeat. It’s contagious!
- Cards — Bring enough, pass them out to people who seem intriguing.
- Circulate — Meet as many people as you can. The caveat to this is that you want to be sure to focus on each person

you meet. Don’t give the impression of just passing through on your way to a more important contact.

- Follow-up — If you meet someone especially interesting (even if there’s no logical business or personal connection), call them after the event and plan a lunch date. These one-on-one meetings build your network the most.

Remember that networking is not a numbers game. Instead, it’s about building relationships.

Share & Play Well With Others

The key to creating a network is the sharing of information — from business referrals, to newspaper articles, to enjoyable experiences. Remember, it’s not about what’s in it for you. It’s about what you can give someone else. Once you start giving, you get back exponentially.

Networking, however, takes patience. You must attend events, participate in volunteer opportunities and nurture the budding relationships that you make. Over the months, you will start to see these connections come back to benefit you.

Make sure you maintain contact (this is where a newsletter is an unparalleled tool). Treat a person’s time and efforts as valuably as you would their money. Then one day, someone in your network will call you looking for help because “it just seems like you know everyone!”