

## The Power of Networking for Trainers and Speakers

Why is it that training budgets are one of the first things that are cut when company overheads need to be reduced? Is there a way that you can ensure you stay connected to the training decision makers, without stalking them, without being pushy and most of all by being remembered positively?

In today's tight market, networking is the answer to help you as a trainer/presenter or learning and development consultant to stay connected and keep busy whilst building your profile and your workload.

Let's define networking which is based on three universal laws

**1. Law of reciprocity** – what you give out comes back tenfold. If you give out referrals, you get back referrals, give out help, you will get back help. Yet if you give out nothing, you will get back nothing. If you have not received any referrals for some time, ask yourself, how long since you have given any referrals?

**2. Law of abundance** – the belief that there are plenty of training and speaking opportunities out there – they are just not currently in your diary. Today, these abundant opportunities may require you to be more flexible than you have been in the past. Whether that means more regional travel, flexibility with fees and inclusions or flexibility with presentation formats. There are opportunities out there – even in a tight market

**3. Law of giving without expectations.** Some trainers/speakers might call it going the extra mile. Basically, it means adding value or being helpful. Today information is the currency we are dealing in. Not just the subject matter that we are expert in, but the abundance of trivia that we collect along the way e.g. useful websites, a fair supplier, special deals with accommodation, do's and don'ts when travelling to certain areas. Knowledge that we have collected along the way and mentally or physically filed away and can access when we come across someone whom that piece of trivia would be useful to. Importantly, we are prepared to share that information without attaching an invoice. We give the information away without an expectation of receiving anything back.

Most importantly we also do not keep tabs on the giving or sharing of ideas. We give because we can and wish to. These three universal laws become the foundation beliefs of good networkers. These are the values that smart networkers, trainers and professional speakers live by.

**The missing link to networking.** In addition, smart networkers make heart to heart connections – that means that when they communicate with others, they are present and in the moment. They are not looking over the other person's shoulder for someone better to talk to. They are totally focussed on the individual or group of people they are speaking to and are not distracted during their conversation. Wherever your feet are planted is where your focus needs to be - in the moment, focussing on and listening to the person in front of you. Who knows what you may learn and vice versa?

Think about some of the recent conversations you have had with strangers. Were they distracted when they spoke to you or were you engaged? Often as presenters, participants want to chat to us at the morning or afternoon tea breaks or when we are setting up or packing up and it stands to reason that we may be distracted. Smart trainers ask the participant if they can "hold that thought. I just have to sort the modules for the next session. It will only take me 2-3 minutes and then I can give you my undivided attention." Both parties are then happy with the outcome and you will always be remembered positively by those participants.

Finally, if you are booked to speak at a one- or two-day event, avoid just showing up before your presentation and leaving immediately after. Smart networking is staying for the day, chatting to the participants, talking to them about their needs and challenges. Often you will be able to create at least 5%-10% of your presentation from those conversations or draw attention to one of the people you have been speaking to, e.g. "I was speaking to Tom from accounts at the morning tea break and he told me about the problem you have been having with supply of those new models. What a pain, that must be - but the great news is....." Being an industry expert is why you were invited to speak at the event. Customising your presentation and networking with the delegates is how you go beyond the client's expectations and how you get invited back to that organisation. Plus, networking is how you generate referrals to other organisations.

Not convinced? Just try it - your clients will be ecstatic that you are hanging out with the delegates and getting to know more about their organisation. Who knows those referrals might just start to flow to you - but only if you network with integrity and ethics?

Happy networking until next time.

For more article by Robyn Henderson visit [www.networkingtowin.com.au](http://www.networkingtowin.com.au) or check out her LinkedIn profile.