

Christine Sutherland



Speed Business Networking - The Manual

More Leads!
More Business!
More Fun!

This Manual is an absolute breath of fresh air that will have you wholeheartedly DUMPING the old stuff you've been taught and gleefully learning a whole new approach that is a lot more fun, a lot more courteous, and a lot more SUCCESSFUL!



**Build Your Business Revenue
Network More Effectively
Access Amazing FREE Business Tools
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The Challenge

How many small business people or sales professionals do you know who would like to earn more? How many of your clients would like to be able to sell more products or services? How many would actually be grateful for your help?

We challenge you to identify at least 10 people whom you know could benefit from this book by studying and implementing the material in it, and ask them if they'd like you to email the pdf file.

Please do use your judgement when deciding who is suitable because those people may want to join Speed Business Networking to enhance their networking effectiveness, and it's important to us to maintain the quality of the various working groups, especially the business development forums where members work to build their businesses.

If that person is a grandstander, a user/taker, not a giver, is someone who is simply out for all they can get, then please don't pass this on. The members of our business community are not there to make money out of each other, but to help each other through sharing expertise, so that everyone is able to easily grow and improve their business.

Our whole focus is on building relationships based on trust and respect for principles and values. We hope this is what you're looking for, and that you enjoy being part of our community.

**Speed Business Networking – the Manual
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Also by Christine Sutherland:

Take Your Team to the Top: How to Double Your Sales in 30 Days from Implementation
NLP in 10 Days: A Step-by-step Training Program.
Beat Cravings, Shift Fat! Easy Ways to Let Your Mind Do the Work for You.

Warning

This book can dramatically multiply your income, while at the same time making the business development process easier and more enjoyable than ever before in your life!



About the author: Christine Sutherland is a behavioural counsellor who has a counselling and training background of over 30 years, with a passion for research and development of innovations in training and therapy. She has been responsible for pioneering and developing neuro-linguistic and neuro-somatic therapy applications suitable for clinical and corporate services. Her books have been published throughout the Western world by McGraw-Hill and throughout the Arab world by Jarir. Her academic work has been peer-reviewed and published in the Temple University journal *Frontier Perspectives*.

Christine is the CEO and founding director of The Lifeworks Group, and was responsible for the development of an innovative group treatment program for clinical depression, subjected to experimental trial in December 2000. Christine was also responsible for the "Get a Life" program for schools, subjected to experimental trial in April-May 2000, and a treatment program for unrelieved chronic pain, subjected to experimental trial in October 2001.

In her work as an internationally-recognised NLP trainer, Christine has developed a training program for Practitioner Certification the content of which is in advance of the current world standard and which is also available as an on-line distance learning program.

Christine is also a co-founder of [BMSA International](#), a multi-lingual on-line resource for medical practitioners and other licensed health professionals, dedicated to bringing the best of modern research directly into supervised clinical practice.

This is in line with her commitment to bring new developments in health, well-being, communication techniques and human performance within the reach of as many people as possible.

Early in 2003, Christine founded Speed Business Networking as a result of many years' investigation into the strategies of high-performing companies. To her frustration, she could not find a single business organisation which assisted SME's to network using proven strategies. Combined with her desire to invest the small business community with higher level management skills, this frustration led to a concept which would integrate better networking practices with practical business development support the like of which had never been seen before in Australia.

Just recently Christine added another business to The Lifeworks Group portfolio, RecruitmentHeaven.Com, an innovative on-line jobsearch facility which provides business development services to recruitment agencies.

Her range of expertise includes:

- QA & TQM (including audit)
- Financial Control
- Master Trainer
- Clinical Supervision (reg ACA)
- Small Business Development
- Marketing and Sales Methodologies

Christine edits the small business ezine "Business Strategies for Success!", and provides consulting and networking services to small to medium-sized enterprises.

She may be contacted on 61 8 9246 1977 (Australia) or by email info@speedbusinessnetworking.com.

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to the millions of business people who absolutely hate networking. Read on, because shortly you'll discover that you and I have a lot in common, and I'm about to give you some really good news.

However all the good news, all the knowledge and information that I'm passing on right here, will do you absolutely no good if you don't act on it! Over 90% of businesses fail, and one of the key reasons is that over 90% of owners/managers refuse to take the actions they know they should!

Why else would BNI (Business Networking International) actually have to FORCE members to turn up to networking events by threatening to "open their category" if they miss too many meetings?! Why else would I also have to bully and nag people to actually show up to Speed Business Networking meetings, even though each and every time people will take away solid information they can use to build or improve their businesses, for just seventeen lousy dollars?!

Let me share with you this quote by Michael Schrage, Teamwork Consultant with Knowledge Inc

"I think 'knowledge management' is a bullshit issue. Let me tell you why. I can give you perfect information, I can give you perfect knowledge and it won't change your behavior one iota. Knowledge is not the power. Power is power. The **ability to act on knowledge** is power. Most people in most organizations do not have the ability to act on the knowledge they possess. End of story."

So, my fellow friend in business, listen, learn, and DO, and not only will your business thrive, but your very life will change as a result!

Sincerely



Could You Bring Speed Business Networking to Your Area?

We're currently looking for business leaders (including leaders of existing networking groups) in all capital cities to help spread the Speed Business Networking philosophy, which is that authentic business friendships/alliances/advocacies are the one and only way that any business can succeed, or even sustain itself. The quality of those friendships determines absolutely the level of success any business or business professional can achieve.

Most networking organisations make fundamental errors in the way they bring members together, and also in the structures set up to serve members. SBN provides both the structure and the training/information for members to network in such a way that authentic friendships/alliances/advocacies do develop, provided that members actually utilise them of course.

We frown on the pressure placed on members of other networking organisations to bring referrals to meetings. To us this is the wrong focus and results in quantity over quality. Insisting that members refer only to each other, and not to those outside the membership is an insular and narrow view that is counter-productive to quality networking. Streams of warm and hot qualified referrals, which result in superb outcomes, are the natural product of solid, authentic relationships. This is where our focus is.

We give a high level of support to founders, who retain 100% of event profits, and 95% of membership fees. Founders set their own fee level, but this must be a minimum of \$150 per year.

Our view is that founders should be a role model to members, demonstrating the exponential business growth that is possible when the correct philosophies and methodologies are followed. That's why we also specifically work with founders to help to grow their own businesses. We do not charge for consulting to founders – our reward is watching their success!

We welcome existing networking groups who would like to join Speed Business Networking and gain all of the expertise and other advantages that membership offers.

Please contact me personally if you believe you have the ability to undertake the role of chapter founder - I look forward to discussing that possibility. I can be reached by telephone on 61 8 9246 1977 during business hours, or by email at info@speedbusinessnetworking.com.

Sincerely



Christine Sutherland
Founder – Speed Business Networking

Speed Business Networking – the Manual

More Leads!
More Business!
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Speed Business Networking – the Manual

Chapter 1

Why You Absolutely Must Network, and Why Most People Have Learned to Hate Networking!

“Networking is making links from people we know to people they know, in an organized way, for a specific purpose, while remaining committed to doing our part, expecting nothing in return.”

Donna Fisher, author, “Power Networking”

Networking – The Number 1 Lead Generator

Well over 70% of business is won not through advertising, but through word of mouth, via people who know us, like us, and trust us. In other words, over 70% of business comes via *relationships*. And not just *any* relationships, but *quality* relationships.

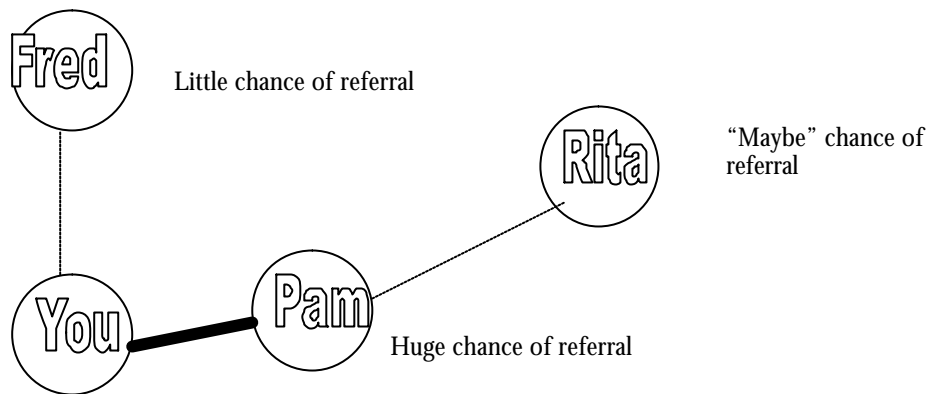
Each of us knows, on average, about 250 people. And each of those knows another 250 people, and so on. In only 4 degrees of separation (links or steps) we have potential access to over *3 billion people*. That's the power of networking.

Recently, in a research project in Brisbane, it was discovered that every single person in that entire city's population was linked by a group of just 15 people. In other words, if you put this group of people in a room, and at random asked to be given a warm introduction to any human being in Brisbane, one or more of those 15 people would be able to do that. IF they knew you and trusted you enough to do so. That's the power of networking.

However whether or not we get *access* to someone's “group” depends upon one thing and one thing only: the *quality* of the relationship with have with that “someone”.

Have a look at the diagram overleaf.

A Network Scenario



The thickness of the line denotes the quality of the relationship in the diagram above. Whether or not we get access to someone's "circle of influence", (approximately 250 possible warm referrals) depends utterly upon the quality of relationship we have with them. A strong relationship, based on mutual liking, respect and trust, **automatically** produces referrals. No relationship – no referrals!

If we don't network, we have no hope of building the quality relationships that so effortlessly lead to warm, quality referrals. In addition, if we don't network with the right spirit, we will not meet people who want to refer to us anyway!

Why We've Learned to Hate Networking!

Informal networking is both easy and fun for most people – we do it all the time when we spend time with family or friends. We're "networking" even when we're sitting on the couch watching television with our beloved, because "networking", after all, is just a fancy word for spending time with and relating to people.

Formal networking has become another kettle of fish altogether because most people get it so very, very wrong. In fact most people think networking is standing around with a drink being bored to death by a series of 15-second elevator pitches and pretending to be interested in people just so you can give out as many cards as possible in the course of a couple of hours.

That's not networking – that's torture!

The fact is, we've been taught a whole lot of networking "rules" that are not only rude (no wonder we feel so uncomfortable about it!) that are not only ineffective, but which actually do our reputation, and our business, HARM!

Good News, You Don't Have to Do THESE Rude Things Any More!

Sorry folks, this is going to be **brutally honest!** We've all been told to do this stuff but **IT IS PLAIN WRONG!!!!**

- Stuffing your card in someone's hand the moment you've met.

Not only a waste of a card, but this is like greeting a blind date with a big sloppy kiss. Yuck! By the way, your card is NOT your 24/7 salesperson. It is far more likely to get filed in the "circular file"!

- "Working the room", 15-second "elevator pitches", or "selling at people".

Rest assured, there's not anyone in that room who wants to be "worked over"! Neither does anyone actually enjoy your slick elevator pitch, or the fact that you're so enthusiastically telling them why they should do business with you. Ever stopped long enough to see their eyes glaze over? This is the one I have the biggest trouble stopping people from doing because they've been so indoctrinated with the concept of "selling" themselves. Bragging is ugly, especially to a stranger, so don't do it.

- Only being bothered with people who look like potential business for you.

You will never know if someone can help you or not. There's just no way to tell. Fact is, whoever they are, they know at least 250 people who could help you in ways you can't even imagine. Be interested in EVERYONE and don't make crass judgements before you've even come to know someone.

- Thinking you have to make yourself "memorable" (and whether your name tag is on the left or the right side of your jacket is a total red herring. It's not even about their remembering your **name!**)

Wearing a big hat, or a colourful shirt, or some other gimmick to make you stand out, sure does make you stand out, as an **idiot!** Only wear these things if they are your normal business attire, and they truly express your style. Be YOU! Putting on a style that is not yours simply announces "I am a fake."

- Having an attitude of "what's in it for me?"

You do this one and you may as well turn up wearing a neon sign across your head that says "I am an egocentric, selfish pig, and I am interested in me, not you!" Some 90% of your communication is non-verbal, and trust me, **attitude** comes over loud and clear! And no, you can't fake it!

- Thinking that you must make an "impression" and keeping your "business mask" firmly in place.

This is almost the opposite of the "make yourself memorable" concept. Rather than being honky, we're trying to be "businesslike" whatever that means. If we refuse to relax and show our personality, to be seen to be human, then we actually refuse to fully engage. People want to get to know YOU. Let them know who that is.

- Thinking that if you didn't meet whom you wanted to it was a waste of time.

If you met 15 people, who in turn know 250 people each, you just had contact with 3750 potential clients. And remember it's not about the number of new faces you meet! The best groups have lots of familiar faces (so you can continue to consolidate good relationships) and fresh faces, so that your network continues to grow! In meeting people, there is just no way it can ever be a waste of time!

- Thinking if you didn't get a referral, make a sale, or arrange an appointment, it was a waste of time.

The point is not to get a referral, or to make a sale, or to arrange a selling appointment! If that's what you're expecting to happen you are not only way off the mark, but you are also thinking way too small! Referrals, sales, have one thing in common: they are a **PRODUCT OF A GOOD RELATIONSHIP!** Your focus should not be on referrals but on **RELATIONSHIPS!**

- Thinking that the "wrong people" were there!

They are only ever the wrong people if they are not "your kind of people". For example if you are the sort of person who loves to talk about football, and they are a group who detests football and would rather talk about saving the whale, then obviously you have a mismatch. If you're thinking that they're wrong because they're not "big players" and it's only "big players" you want to meet, that is missing the whole point of building networks that work!

- Going into high-pressure sales mode because you believe you perceive a need for your product or service.

This is one of the ugliest behaviours that can happen at a networking event. Some poor chump mentions that he has a certain problem and his networking "buddy" smells blood, going in for the kill like a ravenous mountain lion.

A networking event is **NOT** the place to actively sell yourself because there is no way you can take the time to ask the amount of questions you need before you can determine whether or not this person has a need and also properly qualify them.

A networking event is **NOT** the place to actively sell yourself because networking is not about selling: it is about relationship building. You are not there to seek short-term personal benefit: you are there to build solid relationships.

If you actively sell to your networking colleagues, trust me, they will freeze you out, and you'll deserve it.

Every one of these behaviours, attitudes, or beliefs has in common the fact that they are plain self-interested and rude. In fact, if we attend networking with any of this operating we may as well turn up wearing a neon sign above our heads that says "I am rude and self-interested" - that's how obvious it is.

And you know who will want to deal with us? Other rude and self-interested people! Do we want to deal with them? The other type of person who may deal with us is a naïve or vulnerable person who hasn't seen our type coming before. Inevitably, that will lead to problems anyway. So there must be a better way. Thankfully, there is! So breathe a sigh of relief with me, and read on!

A New and Better Way to Network

When people remember that business is part of life, and life is about relationships, they automatically behave in life-enhancing ways, humanizing and enriching the process of networking.

This results in gestalts of people working together for each others' success, creatively looking for ways to refer or to assist. The outcomes are little short of amazing. And it's easier and a lot more fun than the old, stupid, predatory style that is most commonly taught and practised today.

Read on to Chapter 2 for the new rules of networking. They're a whole lot easier, a whole lot more enjoyable, and they'll bring you results you could never have imagined!

Speed Business Networking – the Manual

Chapter 2

The New Rules of Networking - Easier and a Lot More Fun!

“The investment in time and energy creating a network will only be worthwhile if you are genuinely interested in the people in it - sustaining it for purely selfish reasons won't work.”
Angela Abell

The New Rules of Networking

Profitable and enduring business relationships cannot be achieved on the basis of a “deal”. As in our personal lives, success depends on liaisons built on trust and on shared principles and values.

In building business relationships, we should not be looking for obvious or direct benefit, because real benefits are a *product* of the *quality of the relationship!* Without an authentic business friendship, there is no real deal! Without an authentic business friendship, any deal made is likely to be one you'll regret, because you don't really know who you're dealing with, and you have no clue whether they'll let you down or not!

When you go networking:

- Go with an attitude of giving
- Look at the person in front of you, not the potential deal
- Don't give your card until asked
- Never make a presentation unless asked
- Know that every single person in that room could probably help you in some way, even that newbie business person who seems to be floundering
- Take off your business mask and just be you – if you're clinging to an ego people can tell
- Realise that it's about the quality of the relationships you are forming, not the direct deals you do
- Ask for other people's cards and be genuinely interested in them, not just in what they “do”
- Follow up promptly after the meeting with a short personal note (and a small amount of marketing material *only if requested!*)
- Know what your own principles and values are
- Do deals only with people who share them!
- Notice whom you “click” with (NOT only because of their potential “fit” with your business) and make time to meet up with for a coffee or whatever in between now and the next event.

Good networking is not about doing deals. It's about sharing goodwill and expertise with people you like and respect. If you do that, you'll be shocked and amazed at the referrals and creative assistance you can give each other, because these flow naturally out of the quality of the relationship. **Referrals** are a **product** of the **quality of the relationship**.

The old way of networking is anathema to relationship quality and offends and devalues us as human beings. And now that you know that it is not the potential deal, but the potential relationship that you

should be looking for, you also know that anyone who'd go networking looking for deals or instant referrals would have to have rocks in their head! Don't let that rock-head be you!

If you want to quickly form authentic, enduring business relationships that flow quantum referrals to you whether you're awake or asleep, at work or on holidays, then Speed Business Networking is the answer to your dreams, because on that on-line community, and at live events around the world that abide by our principles and methodology, everyone is playing by the same rules. (In the next chapter, I'll describe how to run events "our way" so you can do this yourself! We'll even help you set up a chapter of Speed Business Networking in your own region, or help you incorporate our methods and practices into your existing group, giving all the support necessary and of course still letting you keep 100% of the event profits.)

Just ask the people at Speed Business Networking who've done exactly what we've suggested, and have doubled and quadrupled their revenue as a direct result. Take a look at Appendix A if you'd like to know more!

The Problem of the Introduction

When we meet someone new at one of these gatherings, we're usually curious about what the other "does". Some "technical" networkers practically take out their garlic and crosses when people say "And what do you do, John?" I just think, "Oh for god's sake leave people alone to ask their little ice-breaker questions!" There's nothing innately offensive about asking what someone "does", especially at a business meeting, and the silly proposition that we should instead say "And what is it that you do, John" is just playing semantics.

However I do think we can answer the question a lot better than we have. In the past, people have been taught to answer the question with their "15-second elevator pitch".

It goes something like this:

Q ***"And what do you do, John?"***

A ***"Well Fred (looking carefully at the other stranger's name badge) I offer a range of accounting solutions that will save your company squillions in operating costs every year, as well as maximising profits through better cash flow management."***

Oh my god! It's like someone pushed his little robot button and off he went. I ask a simple, appropriate question for the sole purpose of striking up a conversation and I get a sales pitch coming at me! A half dozen of these and I'll feel like I'm walking down a market street in Bali, assailed from every side! Am I going to be glad to get out of that room! Or maybe I'll just find a nice person with a cheeky smile and hole up in a corner with them until the whole awful thing is over!

Can you tell that I absolutely hate elevator pitches? Not only are they rude, because you're making a sales pitch without being invited to do so, but they're ineffective because almost invariably the listener tightens up, shifts their weight backwards, and comes over all glazed-like around the eyes!

If you want to engage people with your answer to that question, you can do far, far better than that. You can come up with an answer that is not only non-threatening, but is maybe even humorous, and best of all, it gets the interest of the listener so strongly that they feel *compelled* to engage with you and ask a question to find out more!

Here are some examples:

Q ***"And what do you do, John?"***

A ***"I specialise in underground accommodation." (John is an undertaker.)***

Q “And what do you do, John?”

A “I have the connections to get you just about any drug you want.” (John is a pharmacist.)

Q “And what do you do, John?”

A “I’m a jewellery freak.” (John makes exclusive jewellery as corporate giftware.)

Q “And what do you do, John?”

A “I’m a virgin who keeps his promises.” (John works for Virgin Blue and organises corporate bookings.)

Q “And what do you do, John?”

A “I try not to eat myself out of business.” (John is a restaurateur.)

You get the idea? It’s pretty hard to come back merely with a “How interesting” when someone’s given you an answer like that. Most people are going to smile and/or look curious and ask us more questions. And we’re going to very happily answer them. Instead of putting someone on the back foot with an elevator pitch, we’ve helped them feel at ease and have related to each other on a very human level rather than like a couple of selling machines.

What to Say after the Introduction

Once you’ve figured out what each other does and asked any questions that you might have you’ll want to move on to more useful topics, rather than discuss the weather, or the paté, won’t you?

I tell people to use this opportunity to pick the brains of their networking buddies and be generous about having one’s own brain picked. In an average networking room, you’re going to find there’s an absolute minimum of some 250 years of shared experience, knowledge, and expertise. As well, some of these people, being outside your business, can give you the sort of bird’s eye view into your business that you would never otherwise benefit from.

So some good topics of conversation are:

- What’s been your biggest business challenge and how did you solve it?
- What single marketing mistake would you never make again?
- What’s the best marketing strategy you ever used?
- Would you mind telling me, out of this list (produce list of ad headlines or slogans) which you think is the most eye-catching?
- Who do you know who could put me in front of Ms A from the XYZ company?
- Would you have the name of a good plumber, masseuse, hairdresser (fill in the blank)?
- What do you think is the secret of maintaining a harmonious, productive team?
- What’s your favourite type of customer?
- How would I recognise that someone would be a good customer for you?
- Where’s your favourite coffee shop for meeting clients?
- What do you think is the biggest mistake businesses make?
- How would you solve this business challenge that I have?

Obviously, not all these questions are appropriate all of the time, particularly the “Who do you know who could put me in front of Ms A”. That’s the sort of question you ask a close business or social friend and certainly not a total stranger. Why? Because if you track down Ms A **through your relationships** you can be assured of being introduced to Ms A in a quality way. If you take “pot

luck” you have no idea of the type of person your referrer is. **Who** introduces you matters, because **it tells Ms A a lot about the type of person you are.**

Additionally, it is rude to ask such a favour of a stranger because there’s no relationship. Why would they refer you when they don’t even know you? You could turn out to be a complete idiot and cause them untold embarrassment. So there has to be a relationship based on trust and respect before you can ask such a question.

Take Time to Get to Know People

When you’ve met people you’ve taken a shine to at these types of events, do follow up appropriately. It might be appropriate to simply pop a personal note in the mail or email (don’t send marketing material unless you’ve been asked). Or if you really seemed to get on, or have mutually identified a business need, call and make an appointment to meet or even to have coffee or a drink.

Whatever you do, don’t kid yourself that you’ve identified a business’s need for your product or service and proceed on that basis. If you start trying to set up selling appointments with your fellow networkers, they will shut you out! And you’ll deserve it! Mind your manners and wait till you’re invited, or at least be *subtle*. Your fellow networkers have **far more value as referrers** than they do as potential clients!

It is often in these informal gatherings outside the formal network environment that the real friendships form, and the creative support or mutual brainstorming occurs, so be on the lookout for both new and familiar networkers whom you can suggest having coffee with in the time before the next networking meeting.

When you’ve established real business friendships, your quality of life will improve exponentially, both financially and in other even more important ways.

We found that people were very shy about making these types of informal appointments outside of meetings, even after we’d explained the value, even after they’d observed the rare few doing it and reaping the most incredible benefits!

So we introduced the structured “pick your potential advocates” section of the meeting, and now each person leaves with 1 or 2 (mostly 2) people that they must meet with over the following month. Members take this responsibility very seriously. And why not, it’s the number one most important thing people can do after the meeting – FOLLOW UP!

You’ve got to build strategic alliances

Referrals are the lifeblood of any business, and this section of the book is designed to take your referral numbers through the roof!

However don’t just ask absolutely everyone for referrals. Don’t even think about it unless you’ve established a solid relationship. Why? There are 2 very good reasons:

1 People tend to know people very much like themselves. The crass way of putting this is “good people know good people, and idiots know idiots”. If you don’t really know the person you’re asking for a referral, you have no idea what you’re setting yourself up for. Trust me, if you follow my strategies you’ll have more referrals than you can cope with. You can afford to be picky!

2 If you ask strangers or casual acquaintances for referrals you’ll come across as pushy or desperate. There’s a big bold line between letting people know that you’d love more business, and coming across

as a beggar. People don't warm to that kind of behaviour, especially in Australia, and you'll simply build a barrier between you, losing the chance to build instead a solid and rewarding relationship. Also, it's rude because you put someone in the position of having to say "no" to you.

When directly seeking referrals for yourself, aim for at least 2 referrals from **appropriate** people you get the chance to talk to. In seeking referrals, do not say "I'm in the X business. Can you refer anyone to me?" or "Can you give me some referrals?" or "Do you know anyone in the market for a new car?" Those are "closed" questions and easily draw a "no".

The right way to ask is with an "open" question, where rather than a "yes" or "no" the person must actually go mentally searching for potential referrals before they can even answer. For example "Who do you know who is aged 25-55, has young children and the house is a bit small for them?" or "Who do you know who is married with dependent children and has just got a promotion or who is doing very well in their career?" or "Who do you know who is in business or sales and would like to get more customers through the door?" That type of question generally works well.

When you get names and contact numbers via this method, always ask your referee to call first. (Jo, when will you be calling your friend Mary so she'll be expecting me and I won't just be a stranger imposing on her?) That may not always be appropriate and it's important to respect your referee's privacy if they don't want their name used. Sometimes you may have to commit to only sending a brochure and not calling your prospect. Always keep your word. And ALWAYS FOLLOW UP by letting your referrer know what happened, and repeating your thanks whether it worked out or not!

These types of referrals could be called "cold" referrals, because they don't always come with the referee's personal endorsement, but they are nevertheless an important source of new prospects.

"Warm" referrals are even better, and this is why:

Networking for Solid Outcomes

The single most important activity any business person (and certainly any sales person) can undertake is intelligent networking and building and maintaining strategic alliances. Why?

Imagine these two scenarios:

Scenario 1 You are talking to a potential client whom you've never met before. You have got to the point where you're telling them about the product or services you have to offer and of course you are doing your best to get the message across that this is a truly wonderful service or product that they simply must have.

Scenario 2 Your good business friend Mark is talking to one of his valued and trusted friends whom he has identified as a potential client for you. He is telling them about the product or service you have to offer and is quite excitedly getting the message across that your product or service is so wonderful that they simply **must have it**.

Which of those scenarios would be more likely to lead to a sale? How many "Marks" do you know who like you, trust you, admire you, and would enjoy letting their many friends, family, colleagues and customers know all about you?

Makes sense, doesn't it? And how enjoyable for you, in turn, to be actively recommending business friends whom you like, trust and admire. How enjoyable to watch those people who so deserve to succeed, going from success to success and knowing that you played some part!

That's what intelligent networking and strategic alliances are all about. And the attitude that makes it work is one of giving. In the words of Zig Ziglar "Help enough people to get what they want and they'll help you to get what you want."

In order to help your strategic alliance partners (your "centres of influence") in turn help you more effectively, give them a supply of business card sized "referral cards". These will have an introduction to you on the front (and preferably your photo), and a list of identifying "triggers" on the back.

<p>To: <i>Referee handwrites referral here</i></p> <p>Introducing Christine Sutherland CEO, Speed Business Networking (08) 9246 1977</p> <p><i>Referee signs here</i></p>	<p>Want to Increase Sales? (In less time and with far less stress?) Call Christine!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Want 150 extra contacts every month?<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Want far, far more referrals?<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Want to learn what's been turning off your clients, and now how to turn them on?<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Want a cast-iron, guaranteed, money-back CONTRACT that this training will increase your sales by at least double?
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You can give out these cards to strategic alliance partners for them to fill in and give to people to then contact you. If you give someone a stack of referral cards, they're more likely to use them.

A second way you can use these cards is to have a referee fill it out in front of you, also writing the phone number of the referral for you. Have them handwrite the name of their friend/colleague at the top, and sign their own name at the bottom. This is a powerful introduction! After use, this card should be stapled to the prospect's index card (or used to enter information on your database) and every time you make progress (or not) with that prospect, always let your referee know how you did, and send a thank you card or note afterwards.

Canny salespeople would have a spreadsheet or database software which enabled them to track referrals by referee. Referees who are looked after will refer again and again! The more great feedback they get, the more they'll refer you.

As an extra tip, always say to your referee "And when will you be giving them a call to let them know I'll be in touch, so that they're expecting me?"

Ways and Ways to Gather Referrals

We have found two particularly great ways to ask for referrals. The first is not really asking at all and is simply a matter of saying "Remember, I LOVE referrals" to whomever feels appropriate. That's sort of asking without asking.

The second is more direct and is often great to use when bedding in a product or service that has already been sold. It goes like this "Fred, remember how we met? Yes, that's right, your good friend Shirl recommended we meet up and chat about (fill in the blank). And that's exactly the way we like to run the business, because if we enjoyed working with Shirl, then there's a high chance we'd enjoy having you on board as a client as well. With that in mind, Fred, who do you know who (fill in the blanks here, outlining the *type of problem or need* that person might have, now or in the future)."

Never say “who can you refer me to” because they won’t be able to think of anyone. Always *paint the picture* for them of the kind of person or the kind of problem that might need your services.

When you get referrals, always, always let your referee know how you did, and continue to give feedback over time. The more you follow up, the more they’ll remember to keep referring. Believe it or not people have their own lives to live that don’t generally include us, so it’s unlikely that they’ll have you in mind 24 hours a day. This type of courteous communication serves to help them remember that they do actually want to refer you!

A third way to get referrals is more indirect than these, and certainly works, although it can be difficult to quantify or even track. In this case tracking and quantification will rely on your conscientiously asking callers how they came to be contacting you!

This third way involves using information products, either self distributed (viral marketing) or together with a strategic alliance, co-branding in such a way that the strategic alliance will benefit from distributing it to his or her customer base, and yet inquiries will also be directed to you. The most common medium is the “white paper”, fast becoming the most powerful marketing tool ever known, provided it is done correctly. See a whole collection of these under “Articles” on our website.

A good example of co-branding is a white paper which one of our clients wrote and utilised. Mailbarrow (www.mailbarrow.com.au is a specialist Excel consulting firm which provides high-level systems development to a range of large corporations) developed a white paper which described the life cycle of accounting software and the timeline milestones which companies could use to identify action needs in order to maximise the utility of their existing accounting software, and replace it when necessary in the most timely and efficient manner. They offered co-branding with various accounting firms, a move that promoted all parties, and dramatically increased the distribution of the white paper.

Get Referrals for Others!

Always be on the lookout for quality referrals for your fellow networkers. They will appreciate that you have genuinely sought to help them, and will wish to help you in return.

Make sure you:

- Gather quality referrals for other sales professionals and let them know the type of client you’re looking for as well. *Educate* each other about your preferred client types.
- Wherever possible, when you are referring to others, deliver those referrals **warm**. This means that you will telephone or write first, introducing the person you’re referring and expressing confidence in his/her ability to be of service. Of course, you will not do that unless you do have utmost confidence because that would not only be an affront to your own integrity, but would rebound on you if the person did not do the right thing.

Warning: Select your strategic alliances, or centres of influence, very, very carefully. Do this for at least two very good reasons:

- 1 These people are more than just business colleagues or associates. You’re entering into a long-term relationship with them and therefore you’d better be sure you share common principles and values and that you have a genuine liking and respect for each other. You should be comfortable enough with such a person that you’d feel quite at home inviting them to, for example, dinner with friends and family. To behave otherwise would not only be

disrespectful, but in time will be downright uncomfortable. Like a bad marriage, it just won't work!

- 2 Good people tend to know good people, and idiots tend to know idiots. What sort of referrals do you want? Choose carefully or you could find yourself referred to a whole bunch of hassles!

A Failsafe Approach to Locating Potential Strategic Alliances

Rules of the Game

- Attend networking functions - favour those who have some fresh faces as well as the "usual suspects" whom you are in the process of building or strengthening relationships with. (See "How to Select Your Networking Organisations" in the next chapter.)
- Have an attitude of giving. You are not there to sell yourself – you're there to learn to help sell others. Resist, resist, resist, the temptation to rattle on about your business!
- Build alliances only with people who are on your wavelength, who share your principles, values and visions. For this to work well for all concerned, the integrity of the relationship must be rock-solid.
- When you have an opportunity to network, always take along someone you've identified as a good strategic alliance. That doesn't mean they are successful right now. It could just mean that you really like what they do and you want to see them do well. In addition, we have noticed that those who bring along the most guests are the very people who get the most referrals. There are many reasons for that, but in any case, those who refer and those who build membership of the network, are those that get the most referrals – and they deserve them! We have a policy of refusing membership to people who cannot commit to bringing guests – that's how important this activity is.
- Have an agenda of introducing your guest to at least 6 other people who are there and whom you already know. A good event will not leave this up to you, but will have a structure in place so that it happens effortlessly.
- Break off conversations politely so that you can move your guest around to other people whom you already know. Don't confuse this with "working the room"!
- Make sure that you and your guest get a business card – every time! It's polite to ask and shows interest.
- You and your guest should send thank you notes (along with a *very* small amount of marketing material, only if asked) to each person you've collected a card from and whom you "clicked" with. If someone really was not "your kind of person", don't at this stage make personal contact. Maybe if you meet them again you'll feel differently. Time will tell.
- Always be on the lookout, not for deals, but for people you "take a shine" to. Take your diary to networking and arrange times to have coffee, a drink or a meal in order to get to know them better. Don't try to fake interest. Only arrange these kinds of meetings when you genuinely feel that you "click" and it's *mutual*. Don't push yourself on people. They may see you, but they'll resent it, and that's not a good start to a relationship.

The most important questions you can ask in order to help people are “What does your typical client look like” (so you know who to look out for on their behalf) and “What are two of the biggest frustrations you face in your business” (so you know what their needs are).

For our member profiles, we ask members to give information on the client type they most want in their business, and two frustrations which they currently face. With their permission, this information is made available to others who can then:

- Refer clients whom the business owner or sales person is most likely to be happy with
- Identify sources/strategies for solutions to the business owner’s or sales person’s biggest frustrations

Golden Rule: Keep in close touch with your referees and nurture them like the precious “gold” that they are. Literally, they are your business!

Networking On-Line

Whilst there is nothing that can take the place of personal, face-to-face networking, with the advent of **My Speed Business Network** (<http://www.betterbusiness.speedbusinessnetworking.com>), on-line networking is now a useful support and adjunct in your networking activities.

Here are some ways that you can use your **My Speed Business Network** to network very effectively on-line.

1 Directly search for referrals, advocates, mentors, or alliances. This facility allows you to search by name, position, company, or occupation, and you will be linked to that person only via another member. If no such relationship chain exists, then you will get a nil result. You will never be given a “shonky” referral pathway using this method. This means that your introduction to that person will always be via a trusted source. Privacy is 100% protected!

2 Demonstrate and showcase your expertise by sharing white papers you have written, or other quality informational products that fellow members might benefit from. If you’ve got a quality article that genuinely shares expertise or information, we’re happy to feature it on the site for you.

3 Build trust by taking part in on-line discussions around topics you have expertise in. This doesn’t mean sneaky “under the radar” advertising “attacks” (we delete those and ban the authors). It means genuinely contributing to discussion in order to help people move toward solutions for business problems. You can do this as you involve yourself in the BrainBiz Incubator, or any of the other incredible business forums that are there for your benefit.

4 Offer to be a mentor, advocate, alliance, or referee by listing in those sections of the My Speed Business Network Member Forum.

5 Use the member database facility to teach fellow members how to recognise potential clients to refer to you. Use the same database to share your 2 biggest business frustrations so fellow members can help you resolve them.

6 Routinely look through the member database for people you might like to “meet” in cyberspace or in the real world. That database is quite comprehensive and you can often get an idea of whether or not you might be compatible as business associates. In many cases, it will even link you to their company web site, giving you even more insight into who they are and what they do.

7 Establish working relationships through keeping in close touch with the Sales/Marketing Support/Troubleshooting Forum, and also the BrainBiz Incubator. When people work closely together for mutual benefit, they get to know each other very well and a lovely team spirit develops, with the members becoming highly motivated to help one another in any way they can.

8 Encourage compatible business associates to join you on-line. The more quality contact you have with these people, the stronger the relationship that develops as they get to know and trust you in yet another context.

So you can see that while nothing will ever replace face-to-face networking, nevertheless on-line networking has sensational benefits to offer, especially when you consider that you log on in your own time and space so that it's 100% convenient, and that it's FREE! In addition, you can easily set and achieve contact goals with fellow members because your contact time is totally up to you. It's easy to make appointments or to send or receive files or other information, because it can all happen at the click of a button.

Gosh, for introverts like me, that's all pretty darned seductive!

Speed Business Networking – the Manual

Chapter 3

How Networking Events Should be Structured, to Do the Hard Bits FOR You!

“Without structure, nothing happens.”
Christine Sutherland

Your Outcomes

Even though your networking focus is on helping other people, and building relationships with others, you know exactly WHY you decided to include networking in your business activities, don't you!

The fact is, you expect that networking will result in

- ☑ Making more contacts
- ☑ Building solid relationships with some of those contacts
- ☑ In order that those contacts will flow streams of warm referrals your way
- ☑ And in order that you can access the incredible range of shared expertise and experience in your business community!

If you just walk into a room and stand about aimlessly, none of this will happen. Without a structure, you end up meeting very few people. If you have taken control, yourself, in order to move around and meet more people, invariably you've looked rude because you've had to push yourself on strangers who may or may not have been interested in talking to you, and this almost always means interrupting other people's conversations.

How many times have you been to these networking events and walked away feeling that nothing happened? It's almost always the case. But by imposing some simple structure, as we do in live Speed Business Networking events, the results are very, very different.

Our Structure

Our structure didn't just “arise out of nowhere”. It's a result of over 4 years' constant feedback and refinement, a true “quality process”: act, measure, evaluate, refine, act, and so on, all in the service of obtaining the exact outcomes I listed above!

So what I write below works. And it will work for just about any networking organisation, provided they follow our principles and philosophies. I've already seen quite a lot of copycatting, and disappointingly, I'm yet to see anyone get it right. If only they'd applied to become official Speed Business Networking hubs, which doesn't cost a cent, we would support them to get it right!

In the famous “Speed” session, for example, they think they know better than us and start trying to get people to give referrals or make appointments. That's plain stupid. I get people to ask seemingly irrelevant questions of each other for a darned good reason!

You might be surprised at how many networking organisations are trying to copy our format. They may as well pop the old neon sign on the forehead, only this time it would inform everyone of the fact that they're looking at an unprincipled thief who is so brain-dead and inept that they can't think of anything else to offer their members.

Anyway, rather than just copycatting us, why not start your own authentic Speed Business Networking hub and get the "real deal" and all the support, and financial reward, that comes with it? As well as still keeping 100% of the profits.

Here is how a typical Speed Business Networking event is structured, and what happens as a result:

What Happens at Speed Events?

Speed Business Networking doesn't just provide state-of-the art structured networking events, it also provides the expertise for you to make the very most of your networking time, building solid business friendships that can eliminate cold calling forever, and dramatically add to the quality of your business life.

Because members are required to attend at least 9 events each year, and are absolutely required to bring guests, you'll meet a good mixture of familiar and new faces at each event.

Although the format of meetings does vary depending upon size, the following is what you can expect to experience:



Informal networking on arrival while everyone collects their name tags and tracking cards. Because everyone has paid in advance, there is NO time wasted on trivial administrative activities.



List referrals you are seeking on the whiteboard or using the envelope system. Other members will add their name to your desired referrals, letting you know that they can give you a warm introduction.



Formal welcome by your host, refreshing everyone's mind about the philosophies and methodologies of Speed Business Networking which have been proven to work!

You might not have realised that as a networker, by the time you've formed solid business relationships with just 15 people, you have access to a potential client pool of over 1,000,000! (This figure proven in a recent research study in Brisbane!)



Showcase yourself and your business. You'll be given opportunity not only to announce the products/services you provide, but also to teach fellow attendees how to recognise the best possible potential clients for you.

As you're describing these, you'll see members taking notes of possible referrals they can provide you once they get to know and trust you.



Learn something new! There is almost always a guest speaker whose job it is to BRIEFLY convey new knowledge or skill that you can take back to your workplace and benefit from immediately.

They must be brief, succinct, and NEVER BORING!

This is in line with our philosophy of providing the structure to access shared expertise. In any one group there will be between 250 and 500 years of combined business expertise/experience. This is how we start tap into it, but of course the FREE ON-LINE FORUMS provide opportunity to do that in much more depth!



The famous Speed Session! Here you get a mere 120 seconds with each of around 15-20 people, usually to discover important information, but often to discuss something **seemingly** irrelevant!

During this session you'll be swapping cards and making a note of people you found of particular interest.

You'll also be paired with a "potential advocate"!



Informal networking like you wouldn't believe! With the "ice" irretrievably broken, the conversation now reaches a brand new level. It's not the usual small talk chit chat, but instead vitally interesting discussion about you, your business, and how you may be able to work with others for mutual benefit.

In this part of the meeting, which goes through till close, people make a bee-line for those they've listed on their contact cards, as well as their "potential advocate" in order to arrange informal "catch-ups" through the week.

These informal meetings are not to be used as sales presentations (unless requested) but have a much bigger picture in mind, as you will see!

In all networking organisations, it's these informal meetings where the real deals occur. We don't leave it to chance, we **MAKE IT HAPPEN FOR YOU!**

So you see, people don't have to "work the room" or break into other people's conversations, because we

- ☑ Make the contacts happen
- ☑ Set up referral streams for you
- ☑ Set up meetings with potential advocates for you

In our on-line forums, we'll even brainstorm business challenges for you!

And we achieve all of this by using methodologies that are principle-centred, based on an attitude of giving, and an authentic desire to build quality relationships. No wonder it works so easily!

How to Choose Your Networking Organisations

I firmly believe that everyone should belong to at least 1 off-line networking organisations, and should attend every single networking meeting. If you are away, you should send a sub on your behalf. Simply not attending is not only doing yourself a disservice, but is letting down your fellow members.

In choosing your networking organisation, the following are good points to keep in mind:

- ☑ Networking is a crucial business activity and therefore should be held in business hours. It is just not on to have regular networking events in family time or leisure time. Let's make sure we give both our business responsibilities and our private responsibilities proper time and respect!
- ☑ There should be a firm expectation that members will attend meetings. If it is "turn up if you feel like it" you know there is little commitment, if any, to your success. This is one I very much learned the hard way, and now enforce, as does BNI. If our members miss

meetings, or even worse miss meetings without notice, they risk being banned. Membership might be fun, and it might be highly profitable it's also a very serious responsibility.

- ☑ There should be actual structures in place for meetings/appointments to be made in between networking events. These should not be forced, because you cannot microwave relationships!
- ☑ There should be actual structures in place for the giving and receiving of referrals, on-line or off.
- ☑ There should **not** be an expectation of a referral being given when the parties do not know, trust and respect one another! It's not the **number** of referrals, it's the **quality**! If an organisation boasts about the number of referrals, avoid them like the plague. Go for organisations whose members can demonstrate solid business growth as a direct consequence of their networking.
- ☑ As a member of the organisation, is there also a good range of real, nuts and bolts business support available to you? Can you actually use the organisation's facilities to grow or develop your business? In my experience, I have not seen one single networking organisation that provides this, and perhaps it's too much to expect because this is a very expensive resource to offer. However it is to be found **FREE OF CHARGE** at My Speed Business Network (<http://www.betterbusiness.speedbusinessnetworking.com>) and this is a powerful adjunct to any networking organisation.
- ☑ Do you genuinely like the kind of people in that particular group? I'm not talking about whether they represent your customer groups. I am talking about whether you click with them, whether they seem like people you'd like to get to know. Keep in mind, that any 15 or so will be able to give you a warm introduction to just about any other person **in your city**!
- ☑ Are group members genuinely interested in you and your business, or are they obviously out for themselves (or scarcely hiding that fact!)
- ☑ Do the organisers make an effort to get business information, or business skills to you? Or are they just interested in taking your money for events?
- ☑ Do they make it easy for members to check each other out and keep in touch outside of meetings? Is there an on-line facility that makes that easy?

If you can answer all of these questions satisfactorily, then the chances are that your experience with this group will be a good one!

If there's not an authorised Speed Business Networking group in your area, call us on 61 8 9246 1977 (Western Australia) or email info@speedbusinessnetworking.com and we'll help you to get one going.

Speed Business Networking – the Manual

Chapter 4

Strategic Management of Your Networking Activities (If You Don't Track it, it Won't Happen!)

☺ *You won't hit 'em if you can't see 'em!* ☺

Frank Bettger, world's first scientific salesperson

Your Networking Performance

The only way you'll really benefit to the most amazing, full potential of what networking can do for you is if you treat it like any other critical task performance issue. And that means putting into a "quality cycle": Act, Measure, Analyse, Refine, Act, etc.

And that means DOCUMENTATION. Consistently, persistently and conscientiously keep records that demonstrate you have properly executed these activities!

You Must Track Your Activity

The moment you stop keeping your statistics is the moment you will fail. You absolutely must keep your stats. If you are the business owner and want to have absolute confidence in reaching any sales target you set, you must track these statistics for every one of your sales people. You should be tracking every one of the sales activities of every one of your people on a daily basis anyway – just make sure you incorporate networking too!

We have developed a reporting/tracking system so simple that you can effectively manage your sales team even while on holiday. Every one of your sales people should be filling this sheet out on a daily basis and faxing or emailing it through to their line manager. In this way you can see at a glance whether anyone is failing to do their job professionally, whether that is due to procrastination or lack of organisation, or whether they may need assistance or further training.

You can respond quickly, even that very day, to get the team to make up these stats so that you can absolutely count on hitting the sales goal you've set, regardless!

When you have a system like this in place, you will *always* get your sales goal because you don't have to wait until after the fact to notice sales are down. You can predict a slump the very day you see the statistics falter and *insist* on activity being made up for the very next business day, so the slump never happens.

Open Access

Our members have free access to a pro forma of such a tracking sheet, which should be modified according to the sales equation which has been identified for your company. You may, for example, need to incorporate "drop in" visits, regular mailers, and other activities that are a crucial part of your marketing strategy.

Your Most Important Networking Tool – Your Diary!

You must firstly, a year in advance, diarise your networking responsibilities. It is plain stupid to get a reminder from your networking organisation and then realise that you've made a client appointment over the top of it. If you don't diarise it, you're behind the eight ball before you even start.

So step one is to firstly mark out your diary. You know it's the 3rd Tuesday of every month, or the 1st Friday, or whatever. Take firm action and actually **mark it out**. Schedule this into your activities in such a way that NOTHING interferes with it, excepting some dire emergency.

If you're really serious, pay your organisation a year in advance for networking events (see if you can get a good discount) so that you give yourself even more motivation to actually go (or send that sub if you're out of town). We actually bill members quarterly in advance for their event attendance for this purpose.

Always take your diary to networking meetings with the intention of making at least one "coffee" appointment with someone there, whether an old friend you want to catch up with, or a new face you just seemed to "click" with. At Speed Business Networking, we'll be making at least one of these for you, so you will definitely need your diary!

Track Results and Understand Their Impact

The next thing you must do is analyse your current networking activities and determine what level of networking you need to achieve the sales goals you have in mind. You will be considering both formal and informal networking.

Formal networking is:

Business social meetings, both with organised groups, and with people you arrange to meet in order to get to know them better or see if there's any way you can assist each other.

Informal networking is:

Spending time with friends or family, catching up with work associates at your "local", playing in a sporting team, singing with a choir group, etc.

So What is Your Current Networking Performance and What Do You Need to Do to Achieve Your New Income Goal?

Fill in this form now to represent what you're currently doing to achieve prospects, and your resulting sales and commissions (if you are a business owner, put the totals for your sales team):

I personally spend this many hours formal networking each week	
I personally spend this many hours informal networking each week	
I personally get this many referrals each week	
I personally turn over this much in sales each week	
I personally earn this much commission/turnover each week	

Now what commission/turnover do you want to earn? How big an increase is that in percentage terms? Fill out the following form with the same increase to your networking activities. That is what you will need to plan, organise, schedule and document in order to achieve your new income goal!

My new income goal is \$ _____ each week, and to do that I recognise that I must:

Personally spend this many hours formal networking each week	
Personally spend this many hours informally networking each week	
Personally get this many referrals each week	

You will speed these referrals to you much faster by regularly, consistently, persistently and personally keeping in touch with your networking companions. You do that not just by attending meetings, but also by telephone, email, mail, and of course arranging to visit them and get a better understanding of their company and how you can best gather referrals on their behalf.

There are many great programs for building up and tracking your networking data base. Your company may already have one in place. However if you are to excel, you also need to have your own, for your own contacts, and that may consist of an ever-growing box of file cards, diarised, for keeping your contacts “warm” by contacting them in a planned, timely manner.

There are a number of excellent software packages for doing all of this incredibly well and efficiently. ACT! is currently our preferred package, and it allows us to schedule calls and correspondence, as well as to send personalised HTML emails to individuals or groups in our database.

If you will do all of this, you are not only carrying out your profession *professionally*, you are well on your way to being a sales person who, in the words of Walter La Mer Talbot, “just can’t help making good”!

In fact you just can’t help making good, even in a depression! When you understand exactly how to get streams of warm referrals flowing to you, YOU control your income, not people or conditions.

You Don’t Have to Call Millions of People!

Believe it or not, you can easily and comfortably manage a network of 500 business associates with just 30 minutes of phone calls, emails, or mails each day (accounting for weekends, public holidays and annual leave, where you make no calls). A handful of these people will be so close to you and so beneficial to you that you’ll maybe even want to meet with them weekly. (Think Friday drinks after work, regular quick lunch or coffee!) A slightly larger number will need monthly contact, and the overriding majority will need contact only every couple of months.

Do the math. This is around 560 “brief contacts” (phone, mail, etc) every 2 months. Taking out weekends, public holidays, and annual leave, and planning these contacts to spread them out evenly, that’s about 16 “brief contacts” each day. It takes roughly 20 minutes to make 16 telephone calls because these people already know you and the call is merely a courtesy call to say hi before the next networking event, or let them know something new, or tell them there’s an informational brochure or email coming, or whatever. Half the time they won’t even be there and you’ll just pop something in the mail, fax or email instead.

And if you’re saying “Are you crazy!? I don’t have an extra 20 minutes a day! How the heck am I going to do that?!!!!” My answer to you is that if you don’t have time for this, you don’t have time for

your business. This activity **IS** your business because **THIS** activity is **where your business comes from**. Delegate something else, but don't delegate this!

The point is, by managing your network data base in this way, you are in this person's face, in a nice way, regularly enough that if the need arises it is YOU that they think of first. You don't have to "sell" to this network (and in fact you **MUSTN'T**), you just need to communicate regularly, consistently, and personally. You need to *build relationships*.

The statistics on appointment "hits" from such a network are very interesting indeed:

1 st call	2-3% will see us
2 nd call	About 7% will see us
3 rd call onward	More than 60% will see us!

Now when you do get that appointment, don't make a sales presentation unless you're asked! Go along to get a better understanding of their business, to better understand what type of client you can refer them. Take notes. Sure, talk about what you do, leave some material behind, but your overriding purpose is to discover how you can help them!

You will be amazed at the referrals and straight out business deals that occur as a result of this respectful, relationship-based approach.

You see, what happens as you get around the place, understanding people and their businesses quite intimately, is that you soon find that you can be a particularly effective conduit between people. You'll be referring hand over foot! By the time you get to that stage, you are everybody's hero and they'll be doing their utmost to help you in return. Most people are not parasites. Most people are very genuine and very decent, and very much like to give back.

Can you imagine what it's like to be part of a networking organisation where everyone is out there doing this for each other? It seems wrong to call it "work"!

By the way, if you're wondering how to make your telephone script a call that everyone welcomes, make sure to check out our business podcast series, where we discuss exactly that. And for even more help, check into the forum for personal assistance from fellow members to develop the most effective script possible!

Different "Messages" for Different Relationships! Swans, Kookaburras and Ducks

How do you work out how often to communicate with people, and what to say? Most marketing experts agree that databases can be divided into 3 distinct groups:

- The people who have an intimate knowledge of what you provide and who adore you so much that they send referrals to you hand over foot without your even having to ask.
- The people who understand what you provide, and do like you, but they don't often think to refer unless you ask them. They need gentle prodding.
- The people who are not yet "on board", who may not even have bought from you yet, and who probably wouldn't refer you because they just don't know you well enough.

You could call these database segments A, B, and C, but we find that a bit boring and impersonal. We called ours Swans, Kookaburras, and Ducks, but it's the same thing.

Why I Picked the Bird Theme

Before anyone thinks I am belittling my clients by referring to them as birds, let me explain the story behind this! In 2003, when I first developed the concept of strategic alliance networking (which I called Speed Business Networking), based firmly on relationship building rather than deal building, it looked very much more like people standing around having a very good time. Rather than looking like a networking session, it looked like what it was, authentic business friends engaging with each other with mutual respect, in a nurturing and fun environment.

During one of these my husband arrived toward the end, to find me, glass in hand at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, laughing and chatting and having just the best time with a group of business buddies. He said to me, "What are you doing here swanning about?"

I thought to myself "**swanning about** – what a delightful way to describe networking when it's done the right way" and from there the idea of "Swans" was born.

So Who are "Swans" and When and How Do I Communicate with Them?

Swans had to describe my very best friends in business, the people that I just love to pieces, and whom I feel loved by in return. They're the people I have coffee and meals with, and invite to my home, and share my life with. They're the people I will go to the ends of the earth to refer business to and who do the same for me. In fact recently, when one was ill, I offered to go in and help with her business. That's what friends do for each other.

We didn't pick each other because of any deal we could see. We didn't pick each other because of perceived "usefulness". None of those things are a valid basis for friendship. We picked each other simply out of mutual admiration and recognition of shared values, principles and philosophies. When we eventually grow old and retire, it's likely that we'll still be friends.

The deals, referrals, and other support that have flowed from these relationships are a natural function of what happens when people who like each other spend time together. And it can't be faked.

Swans are precious, and there aren't many of them. We treasure each other and we take every opportunity for a quick phone call or coffee, or even write off a whole afternoon for a terrific lunch and chat. Invariably we discuss the businesses we're so passionate about, and have enormous fun working and creatively brainstorming together to help each other.

Something like 80% of referrals comes from our Swans. It's only natural that we'll spend at least 80% of our networking time with them – and it sure doesn't feel like networking in the conventional sense of the word. When I've spent time with one of these wonderful people I come away thinking "It's people like these I went into business for" and feeling inspired and motivated to do even more.

Kookaburras

Kookaburras are people whom I like, and whom I'm pretty sure like me too. They might not have bought from me, but they could in the future. They're happy to recommend me, but I do have to remind them.

How do I remind them? Simply by keeping in touch. 2 months is the maximum I will go before getting back in touch. More typically I'm sending little tidbits of news, announcing events, or sending

our monthly ezine “Business Strategies for Success”. About once a month we call them for a quick chat if they’re around, and we might suggest meeting either in their office or for coffee.

Importantly, we’re never in any way pushy. We’re friendly, we’re warm, we’re informative, we’re caring. All we’re saying is “this is us, and we’re here if and when you want us”.

And as we’re getting to know these people better, we’re looking for the Swans amongst them: more business friends to welcome into our inner circle.

We spend about 15% of our networking time with our Kookaburras.

Ducks

Ducks don’t know me very well, and I barely know them. Maybe we just don’t “click” or maybe we just need more time to get to know each other. I can’t get inside their heads and force them to like me – all I can do is to stay in touch, keep letting them know I’m here if they need me, and wait.

Often Ducks turn into Kookaburras and sometimes even Swans, but in any case we would be very silly to spend a significant portion of time with a group which represents almost zero business and zero referrals.

I am not going to communicate with the same warmth to the Ducks because that would be presumptuous of me. You know what it’s like when someone you hardly know greets you like a long lost friend? That awful stomach churning feeling that you get when someone is pretending to like you? Don’t gush over your Ducks – you’ll send them quacking to another pond altogether! Simply stay in touch and they’ll come to you if and when they’re ready.

The Importance of Debriefing and Other Feedback

Whether you wish to improve personal performance, or the performance of a system, there is only one way to do it, and that is to gather feedback and respond appropriately. Professional sales people debrief themselves after every meeting and there are 3 things they ask themselves:

What did I do well?

What did I do not so well?

What will I change, and how?

Any sales professional who does this consistently will *shock* themselves with their improvement over a very short time indeed! If you are a sales manager, give each of your team a debrief pro forma and insist on it being used. Include the results in team meetings so that the whole team can improve in quantum leaps.

Out of everything in this book, believe it or not, this is possibly the most important change you could ever make. The heart and soul of TQM (Total Quality Management) is contained within this, and TQM was responsible for taking Japanese manufacturing from almost total destruction, into world dominance after World War II.

If you’re a member of Speed Business Networking, you’ll find a debriefing pro forma in the closed Member Section of our web site.

A Strategy to Use Within Your Network Group

A very new marketing strategy has arrived, called “viral marketing”. This is the dissemination of a marketing message by self proliferation. Your network passes it on because they appreciate the value of it, and want qualified friends or colleagues to have it.

A good **white paper** has a very high “pass-on” rate, meaning that it becomes a “viral marketing” mechanism. The best white papers are written when we change our mindset and think in terms of drawing potential clients to us, instead of chasing after them. What valuable information do you have that you can offer in order to demonstrate your value to such a degree that the potential client has absolute confidence in your ability to solve their problem?

The Power of the White Paper

The White Paper is the new buzz word in savvy marketing circles. Formerly the province of government departments and big business, it is now being widely embraced as a powerful marketing tool.

The term "White Paper" comes from the term "white book", which is what governments call an official publication. In business, we typically use a white paper to showcase expertise, or provide a definitive description, position or solution.

A white paper should not be merely a long-winded sales brochure and should be written from the client's point of view, not our own. If a white paper appears to be self-serving, it has little or no relevance or credibility in the eyes of readers, will not be read, will not be passed (ie, it fails as a viral marketing mechanism) and people will certainly not respond to it.

Speed Business has several white papers available free of charge on our website www.speedbusinessnetworking.com. There's even a report there called “White Paper Power” that fills you in on the characteristics of a good white paper. Take a look at these to determine whether you could do something similar for your business. "Products" like these really showcase your expertise and help build trust and respect, dramatically increasing the likelihood of the potential customer picking up the phone and calling YOU!

These are great “products” to offer free to your networking partners. If you're a member of Speed Business Networking and your white paper is high quality and relevant to our members, we'll even promote it for free on the Speed Business Networking web site.

Alternatively, if one or more of our white papers is relevant to your business and you'd like to pass it on, let us know and we'll produce a special copy co-branded with your logo and business name so that it showcases you too!

Not everyone can write an effective white paper, one that is so relevant, interesting and compelling that people just can't help not only passing it on, but getting in touch with you! If you're thinking of getting someone to write one up for you, keep in mind that a good, non-technical white paper costs in the vicinity of \$3500 to \$12000. A highly-technical white paper, requiring a great deal of study and research, could easily cost 3 times that range. However compared to any other advertising campaign, that's really quite inexpensive, especially when you consider that a well-written paper continues to replicate itself all over the internet, directly to qualified targets, via personal recommendation.

Speed Business Networking – the Manual

Chapter 5

How to Set Up Your Own Speed Business Networking Group and Get Fabulous Results!

Starting a Speed Business Networking Hub in Your Area

In order to ensure the quality of live Speed Business Networking Hubs, it's essential that we select the right people as group founders. So we are always seeking experienced business people who have the drive and the ability to build hubs which we can be proud of, and which continue to get great results for our members.

It's essential that these leaders share our values and principles, and have a real commitment to bringing better networking practices to their group.

Hubs

- May be established only by people authorised by Speed Business Networking to do so, and only in the regions nominated.
- Must have a minimum of 15 financial members before being declared “Established” and being promoted on the Speed Business Networking site.

Founders of hubs retain 100% of profits from events they hold, and once their hub is declared established, no-one else may commence a hub in that region. We also promote our hub founders on the main web site.

In addition, Founders are expected to set an annual membership fee which may not be less than \$150 per annum. Founders retain 90% of the membership fee.

Founders are given full training and support in the setting up and running of their hubs, including all the “inside secrets”! We also actively work with founders to **build their own existing businesses**.

A further very important advantage of being a founder is the opportunity to showcase yourself and your business in your local business community. Experience has shown that people who are leaders within these groups (founders, major referrers, and those who actively recruit new members) are those whom themselves receive the most referrals, simply because members gain familiarity and trust. It makes sense, doesn't it?

In order to be considered as a founder, naturally you must first be a member. Once you have completed your membership, please email us directly (info@speedbusinessnetworking.com) to begin the application process to become a founder.

Members

The principles and structure of Speed Business Networking events have been refined over several years and result in spectacular outcomes for members. If members do not attend events, and do not introduce visitors, they let down their business associates and themselves. Members have a

responsibility to themselves as well as to fellow members and to that end we have incorporated the following rules into our code:

Members must strictly abide by the following rules, or else be subject to suspension from live meetings (meaning that they may have on-line access only):

- ☑ Attend a minimum of 9 events per annum in person, provided there is a hub within a 40-minute travel distance (one way)
- ☑ Send a sub on their behalf if they are not able to attend
- ☑ Introduce a minimum of 6 visitors each year
- ☑ Refrain from sending unsolicited marketing material to fellow members or visitors

In return, members are given a **level of business support unknown anywhere else in the world.** This support is given both through the meetings, which always have a practical, educational purpose in addition to the structured and unstructured networking, and also through the web site, which literally provides free business consulting, as well as making provision for private “mastermind” groups of business people who wish to work together on-line to build each other’s businesses.

It is only fair that members take responsibility for the growth and health of their own hubs, by attending events, utilising the on-line resources, and acting conscientiously to support and promote one another.

It is the founder’s job to promote and support these very important principles, as these are the features which allow us to virtually guarantee the value of the networking opportunities we provide, and the benefits that naturally flow from those.

Appendix A – About My Speed Business Network

My Speed Business Network is an on-line, member-based professional organisation, founded in 2003 to assist professional and business people grow their businesses quickly and sustainably. Although it also offers a range of consultancy and training services, it provides unique networking opportunities and an array of powerful resources which all members have **free access** to.

Some of the benefits of being a member of My Speed Business Network are:

- ☑ Personal and professional development, live and on-line
- ☑ Business building articles
- ☑ Business podcast library
- ☑ Downloads
- ☑ Bona fide business classified ads
- ☑ Event notification (link to your booking page or give telephone number)
- ☑ Form your own common interest clubs
- ☑ Your own profile page which you can customise as you wish
- ☑ Your own personal or business blog
- ☑ Announce or hold seminars
- ☑ Announce company (or personal) news
- ☑ Search for clients or colleagues
- ☑ On-line sales/business mentoring/troubleshooting
- ☑ The famous BrainBiz Incubator
- ☑ Showcase and/or promote your business – free!
- ☑ Tell your fellow members what your preferred client type is so they can refer you
- ☑ Quality articles and white papers
- ☑ Monthly ezine “Business Strategies for Success!”
- ☑ Learn to network much more easily and with far better results!
- ☑ And so much more!
- ☑ Membership is **FREE!**

Visit www.speedbusinessnetworking.com today and check it out for yourself. We look forward to meeting you, and working with you to achieve your greatest success!

Any questions, please write to me personally on Christine@speedbusinessnetworking.com – I do get a lot of emails (and a heap of spam like everyone else) but I promise I’ll do my best to respond as quickly as humanly possible!

PS: If you’ve enjoyed this ebook, you’ll find literally **MASSES** of even more information and step-by-step strategies to develop your business in the groundbreaking book “Take Your Team to the Top: How to Double Your Sales in 30 Days!”. Just visit www.speedbusinessnetworking.com and go to the products page for easy purchase and download.