



Follow up for success

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Like a great golf swing, a brilliant idea, or a promise to your boss, how you follow through on your networking activities will make the difference between failure and success. One of the critical steps, and main challenges, in building relationships is how to progress past the first encounter. Use these simple follow up techniques, and you'll become a sophisticated networking leader.

1. Collect individual information. Write down relevant information from your conversations at each event. Label every business card you collect with the date, name of event and association, and the person who introduced you. Add details to help you remember someone's expertise, connections, professional and personal information. Notes such as: soccer coach, on program committee with Lisa's boss, knows marketing director, and more, will help reinforce the relationship at your next meeting.

2. Create an organization system. Organize the cards into groups that are most relevant to your business such as consulting prospect, referral source, NYU professor, national media, and holiday party 2012. Binder clips, envelopes and card boxes are easy ways to initially organize and label your groups. Then enter all the information into your spreadsheet or database, and use it.

3. Prioritize and take action. Set aside dedicated time after every event to strategize and plan. Review your short and long-term business needs to prioritize your contacts. Create a ranking system with time frames for each contact and category. Then make a list of specific, timed action items such as: call next week, schedule monthly lunch, invite to annual seminar, stalk daily. Now do it.

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