

How to Network: With Articles

(((Increase your Realm of Influence)))

There are many effective ways to network and increase your level of influence. First, let's point out the obvious: Networking should be a daily habit – which means you must practice it daily in order to be any good at it. Second, I believe absolutely no one is a “natural networker.” We all become proficient at things through education, training and practice. If you are learning, conditioning yourself and practicing you will improve.

There is one secret technique I use every week that consistently nets me better results than any other activity I do: A personal note. Perhaps this exercise may have slipped your mind lately due to the fact hand writing notes is considered “old school” when compared to all the technology we have so readily available to us. After all, when was the last time you hand wrote 5 letters or cards in a week? Exactly! Been awhile, right?

Ok, so here is the deal, as I read an article, I identify topics and themes by circling or underlining them; these are things that are truly of interest to me personally. Additionally, I make a mental list or accounting of what is being said. Now, just so you know, this is a very short evaluation and identification process – it only takes a few minutes. Let me give you a real-life example. Here are some interesting facts that I pulled out of one particular article that caught my eye in a trade magazine. This article was only a quarter of a page in length:

1. Entrepreneurs' Stats: Norb Garrett, 45 years old, Southern California, works for Miller Publishing.
2. The Problem: Newspaper circulation is down at most large daily newspapers.
3. Historical Data provided: Since 1950...
 - The number of daily papers has shrunk by 200
 - The number of non-daily papers has increased to 8,000
4. Challenge: How to make papers fun/interesting while maintaining quality and a sound read.
5. Opportunity: The community newspaper niche offers profitability for creative entrepreneurs.
6. Motivation #1: Community Papers have profit margins above 20% (i.e. Fat Profits!).
7. Motivation #2: Only 40% of community Papers are part of a larger newspaper chain.
8. His idea: Launch a weekly paper (San Clemente Times – in 2006).
9. The cost: Sustained by advertising revenue (the papers are all free to locals).
10. His Spin: Change the format (mix in-depth reports & lifestyle features with local popular topics).
11. Phase II: Buy an additional paper, reformat it and re-launch it (San Juan Capistrano).
12. Phase III: Launch an additional paper from scratch (Dana Point Times).
13. Result: The circulation of all three papers is 41,000.
14. Bottom Line: Revenues of over \$2,000,000 for the year.

Here is my Game Plan or “Plan of Attack” – these are the steps I am going to follow:

1. Write a hand written letter/card to Norb.
2. Identify similarities between the two of us (Honest)
3. Congratulate him
4. Note a few points of reference that inspired and motivated me (Honestly)
5. Suggest a connection be made
6. Ask specifically for a phone call – on a specific day – at a specific time
7. Mail letter/card
8. Continue the process of finding and networking (i.e. Repeat – Repeat – Repeat)

Here is what my hand written letter/card may look like:

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Dear Norb,

I was just reading through Entrepreneur Magazine. Funny thing is that as I was flipping from article to article your story caught my eye. Hello, it's nice to meet you. My name is Adam and, like you, I'm a 40 something entrepreneur that loves what California has to offer; what a great place!

Congratulations to you on the recognition you received in Entrepreneur Magazine. I read the article that features your creative solutions to revamp community newspapers; such a great idea, by the way.

I have to tell you that I was completely motivated by your actions. Quite honestly you inspired me. I like how you found a profit center for so many investors. I've tried to read daily newspapers but they are so boring to me. Local papers carry the vibe of the area and keeping in touch with that local pulse is always more interesting to me.

I'm an executive in an international chocolate company. I'm always networking and I'd like to get your opinion on my business. We have a chocolate franchise with a unique spin – it's the world's first truly healthy chocolate. It tastes good too – no cardboard flavors.

I'd really like to pick your brain for 7 minutes, how open are you to that possibility?

~Let's connect via a phone call.

~How about the day-after-tomorrow at 1PM EST?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adam". The letters are cursive and fluid, with a prominent capital 'A'.

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