

How Do You Network?

By Paul Gibson



Today's business climate is changing at lightening speed. Everywhere you look, there is a new range of possibilities that technology currently offers. The question is, how are you using that technology and do you use it effectively?

Nowadays, people have almost become obsessed with social media networks such as Facebook, Tweeter and others. They use these sites to post information about themselves, about their daily activities or maybe even to chat with other online users. The surprising fact is that most professionals also are using this medium to network and to expand their business contacts.

The uncertain future of the job market has most members of the workforce scrambling to put together new and interesting CVs, cover letters and maybe even videos that will help them land that new position or new job at the company of their choice.

Businesses are also abreast of the situation and are looking for the new opportunities that an uncertain market provides.

But how can you know if the time you spend on cover letters, CV writing, and even printing out business cards for future potential new business has been spent wisely?

Companies these days rely heavily on email and mobile telecommunications. Chances are, if you are not communicating or contacting a company via this medium, you are not letting technology work to your advantage - you might even be severely impairing your ability to network.

Secondly, be careful about TMI - too much information. Companies are not interested in your life story, but rather how that life story relates to the position you are applying for and if you are going to fit the profile they are seeking. Whether you are an employee looking for a career change or a professional looking for new business, always remember to stick to the topic as it relates to your goals.

Never send a video response to a company unless required. Not too many years ago, a fresh out of the university student tried to impress some Wall Street gurus by sending his "video resume." Not only was the video posted as an example of what not to do, but his name and reputation were permanently marked and blacklisted by the

financial services industry. The company that received the video not only rejected the application, but sent news around to other firms to reject that person's candidacy. A bit extreme reaction, but you get the picture!

Follow-up is always a shaky business. Salespeople are never aware when it is a good time to follow through on an initial contact and interviewees have trouble when it comes to getting a response to their job applications. Always remember to make a second contact. This means, after an interview, do not be afraid to ask when a decision will be made or to fix a date and time with your potential client or employer to discuss the outcome of your visit / interview.

As always, in your endeavours, always show interest and respect for the other party. If you need to cancel an interview or a meeting, remember to immediately offer a recovery date and time or say goodbye to that new client or promotion... Happy networking!