

## Networking As A Safety Net

### The Secrets Of Effective Networking

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A very small percentage of the population can perform a circus high wire act without need of a safety net; even a smaller percentage of the workforce can afford to walk the high wire of employment without the safety net of networking.

With the pink blood of lay-offs, downsizing, and restructurings staining the corporate hallways, you would do well to amass a network of associates, acquaintances, and associations to assist you if the tide abruptly turns against you. It's good counsel to begin building your network long before you may actually have a need.

Job security is, for sure, a thing of the past. But employment security is alive and well. Even in the midst of significant upheaval, companies like Enron and World Crossings were advertising openings. Having a safety net can ease an unexpected misstep or upset.

Networking has long been a tool of savvy sales and marketing types. These groups have long understood that the power of familiarity can't be overstated - advertising has taught us this very well. Neither can the power of familiarity be overstated in how positions are filled in the workforce. It is commonly purported in human resources circles, that nearly 80% of all openings are unadvertised. Even if this estimate is grossly misstated by 30%, that would still mean that 50% or more of the opportunities are "under the radar" of want ads, job postings, and employment journals. Knowing others, and being known by others, is vital to survival in the erratic environment of today's employment market.

A common mistake of the networking novice is to believe the exchange of a business card or an email address is all that is needed. Not so, this is far from effective networking. While these actions may serve as an introduction, they are, at best, just that, an introduction. Effective networking will include the sharing of business information, target markets, regional/territorial boundaries, and other pertinent information. This level of sharing allows each party to make quality referrals in the future.

As you establish and maintain relationships with the individuals in your network, strive to consistently share information that might be beneficial **to them** –without obligation. Avoid simply over loading your contacts with your dissatisfaction regarding your current circumstances.

Of equal importance is to learn to position your "success commercials" in a way that highlights your impact on the business "measurables" – efficiency, effectiveness, and profitability. This is a little known strategy that can create a backdrop of results-orientation for your services or products. It is still true; success attracts success.

Professional fishermen categorize their nets by the number of mesh per square foot and the test poundage of the filament. This same system can be applied in the evaluation of your networking safety net. As you increase the number of contacts you have with the members of your network, you escalate your safety net's mesh per square foot quotient. The test poundage of your safety net will increase exponentially as you share relevant, timely, and efficacious information. By following these tips, you will demonstrate to your network that you are a giver – this is very important - people don't like to feel used.

Here are three additional points to ensure your networking serves as a safety net:

- Remember, everyone is important, hence you never know who might be a special contact.
- It's better to have their card than for them to have yours. This allows you to ensure contact is made and to proactively manage the relationship.
- Follow up puts your front of mind. The most recent contact is often the person who gets the call. Stay Connected!

Networking is an engaging way to build relationships, gain market information, and to safeguard against an unexpected spill from the high wire act of employment.

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Kendall C. Wright, "The Actualizer," CEO of Entelechy T&D, Inc., helps business leaders -at all levels- fulfill the hard parts of their job descriptions. He is the author of *Affirming and Confirming SuccessFUL Living* and most recently released *Conversations On Success*, featuring insights from Les Brown, James Kouzes and other top tier international speakers. Find free resources at [www.EntelechyCan.com](http://www.EntelechyCan.com). Contact us at [Kendall@EntelechyCan.com](mailto:Kendall@EntelechyCan.com) or 513.860.4934.