



How to make sure that you don't waste your MONEY and more importantly your TIME in a networking club!

Ten lessons to maximise the hidden potential ...

*'Discover how to avoid the mistakes
that so many people make when they join a
Networking club like ours'*



Hello,

As you know my name is John Vinson, and I'm currently filling the role of Chairman here at Thanet Business Network. Along with my colleagues we've created this guide to help you become even more successful at networking. We've combined our knowledge and would like to share with you in the '**Spirit of Partnership**,' some of our thoughts on how to get the most from your Networking club.

Thanet Business Network was established back in 2001, and during that time we've seen so many people get '**it**' wrong, and of course these people often give up when they don't get the returns they were hoping for. We've also seen so many people get '**it**' right, and seen their businesses grow. Let's explore the '**it**' - that can make such a difference to the success we achieve.

I'm sure that you will have heard some or even all of these ideas before, even so it will be a useful reminder to run through again – it was for me pulling the lessons together. I would suggest that you read them with an open mind and the thought 'how can I use this to make me even more successful'

If you have any thoughts, or would like to share what has worked for you, please contact me at JV@beyondexcellence.co.uk

With warmest regards

John Vinson

Chairman

Thanet Business Network

PS. Feel free to share this with anyone you would like, however I would ask you not to change the text without permission – Thank you

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The Ten Most Important Networking Lessons!

1. No matter what the return, the cost is the same!

This is straight from the Beyond Excellence manual, let me explain...

Whether you get two 'leads' or ten, your investment of time and money is exactly the same. With this in mind it makes sense to prepare, practice, and 'hone' our techniques to make the most of the opportunity that we get each week to represent our business.

It's a fact that some people get more introductions than others, it's not always because of the type of business they are in, and so it must be how they use the opportunity.

You've taken the trouble to attend so let's make the most of it. Some thoughts:

- Think about members you could talk to – do you sit with the same people each week?
- Do some preparation – have a look at members websites, and publicity material
- Arrange 'One to Ones' – they cost nothing, and it's where the real business is generated
- Look for opportunities to give recommendations and testimonials
- Prepare your one minute presentation
- Learn better networking and presentation skills
- Use the time before and after the meeting – it's free

Because after all, no matter what the return; the cost remains the same.



2. We don't get up early every week to be sold to!

It's a cold wet morning, pitch black outside, and your car needed the windows clearing before you could even leave home, and now (once again) someone is 'in your face' selling their product. You're being patient and smiling politely but how are you feeling really? Maybe it's just me (but I know that that's not the case), the barriers are being constructed and you're looking for a means of escape.

It sounds obvious to those a little more experienced in networking, or those a little more aware, but it's a mistake that is repeated week in and week out. So... **DON'T SELL TO YOUR NETWORK!!!**

The secret and why we are all here is to 'equip our fellow members to become your salesmen to **their** networks'. This means educate, share news, share stories, explain details of special offers or new products and services. Tell us, and we'll tell others.

3. If we are not referable – then no matter how good we are, we won't get recommended.

This is a 'biggie' and unfortunately something we may not like to admit to is our failings. This is where the truth could really hurt. This is where the people closest to you may not tell you the truth because they won't want to hurt your feelings.

There's an old expression that says something like 'someone else's mess always looks worse than our own,' and this is also true when we are talking about the unwritten rules of recommendation.

When we recommend someone they are not only representing themselves, but us and our club as well. Often we expect more from the person we referred than we actually usually give ourselves. Now I know that this seems unfair, but it's true.



We expect faster responses, better results and standards and we are less forgiving if the process doesn't go as we would expect.

Referability is about personal standards, hygiene, appearance, and professionalism. It's about marketing material, websites and having systems and processes in place to be able to provide a consistently high standard of service over and over again. It's also about regular attendance and being an active participant. It's about sharing testimonials and follow-up communication.

Becoming even more referable starts with a self-assessment, listening to clues that other people may be leaving, and possibly a confidential questionnaire if you are not getting the introductions you feel you should be getting.

'It's' also about a continual raising of standards, being better tomorrow than we were yesterday

Here's my some of my favourite tips:

- Turn up on time
- Do what you said you would do
- Work for the best interests of the client
- Say please and thank you

And follow up introductions quickly, then let the person who passed it to you know how it progresses.

4. The Law Of Reciprocatey!

Every action has an equal and opposite re-action, and it's a fact that (as the BNI state) that 'givers-gain' they are right – very right!



Time after time evidence points to the fact that those who give the most leads, who help other members, that support the club are the best rewarded. It has to happen it's a law!

It's the Law Of Reciprocatey!

When you make an introduction, your customer values you more highly and remembers you. The person you passed the introduction to also will be obliged to work harder at helping you by return, even if they don't realise it. It's a law and just happens!

With this law in mind, it makes sense that the better referrals we pass the better the ones we receive in return – it's an equal and opposite reaction!

So pass on referrals - not leads (the difference is that referrals are warmed up and not just a name and phone number. They're someone who wants to know about your product or service and is expecting a call)

'You can get everything in life you want, if you'll just help other people get what they want'

– Zig Ziglar

5. Make it easy to buy from!

You've gone to all of the trouble to generate a referral, it happens and someone takes the trouble to pass one your way, and then you don't follow it up promptly. How will the referrer feel, will they be likely to repeat the same mistake again?

Are you easily contactable, and do you pick up your messages?

Have you explained what it is you do, and how you do it? I've noticed that some members avoid their chance to do an extended presentation about their business, which



is a shame because this is a great opportunity to explain who you are, and the benefits that you bring to your customers.

6. Your marketing funnel should begin with free

Following on from Lesson Five, this may be a great launch-pad for your business.

If the aim of your networking is to 'equip the members so that they can sell your services' and I believe it is, then maybe offering the members a free sample or discounted taster of your business makes sense.

When the members have sampled what you do – they can tell others from first hand experience.

7. Tell people why?

It has been said that the key to business success is to 'offer value to our clients', therefore the more value we bring, the more successful we will be.

It's also been said that the bigger the problems we can solve for our clients the more money we will make.

We all provide value, and we all solve our customers problems in whatever industry we are in – so we need to tell our members why we do what we do. Share real stories about the difference we have made, show photos, testimonials and letters.

On the same theme explain why you have discounted a product or service. Why you charge a fee for what you do. Why you use a supplier or system. Why? Because potential customers will want to know.



8. Tell people who?

If you don't ask, you don't get. The quickest route to meeting the clients you would like, is to tell people specifically who you would like to meet.

Remember it's who the members know, and also who their networks know that's the key.

The figures are incredible regarding the power of networks.

For instance, if the club membership is at thirty members, and each member knows fifty people that's fifteen hundred people, and if they each know another fifty people, then the 'reach' is already an incredible seventy-five thousand people.

Actual figures say we all know approx two hundred and fifty, so the figures are even bigger than that!

With the quickest route between two points a straight line, just tell people who you want to meet, or if you don't know specifically who, then the type of introduction you would like
- Someone will oblige.

9. People buy from people they like

I like people who provide me with quality introductions, I can't help it, I just do. Call me shallow if you like, but I expect there's many people like me out there.

The more I like people, the more I want to help them grow their business. It makes sense therefore to get to know each other better, and each others businesses as well. That's where 'One to Ones' can make such a difference.



Members are always pleased to be asked to meet outside of the club, to get to know their business better (don't forget Lesson Two though).

The obvious point here is also to smile and be enthusiastic, it's contagious and of course a smile is nature's way of getting people to like you. Particularly effective early in the morning I would suggest.

And Finally Lesson Ten

10. Hunters don't make the best farmers

Hunters are great at going in and making the kill, for them it's job done, and they can feed their families. They then move on looking for the next kill.

Farmers plant their seeds, nurture them, and then reap the harvest ensuring that the land remains fertile to plant more seeds.

The analogy here is beautiful, and really captures the spirit of networking organisations like ours. I probably don't need to expand on it any more than that.



So there you have it **The Ten Networking Lessons** that can make such a difference to our success.

The best method of marketing your business is 'undoubtedly' face to face, and having a team of people out there telling interested people about your business is such a valuable resource.

I believe in the power of recommendation, and for me time after time I've proved to myself that it's worth making **every effort** to explore the potential hidden within our club.

After all, no matter what the outcome, the cost remains the same.

I wish you every success with **your** plans.