

Executive Network Group

of Greater Chicago, Inc.

The Gray Hair Management Laws of Networking

Presented at ENG on October 26, 2006
by **Scott Kane**

Summarized by Jim Todd

When Scott was in transition, a career coach told him "You're not going to get a job. You're going to have to make a job. Go network."

Why network?

There is an 85% probability that your next job will come from someone you know. 7% of job placements come from postings. 7% come from recruiters. 72% of people who are hired are known to the company before the interview. Your next job will last 1.8 - 3 years. An average CEO term is 2.2 years (Crain's). So, **Network! Network! Network!**

Business Cards

Never go anywhere without them. Your card should present your branding statement, which is a quick statement of your core competency that begs the question "What is that?" That leads to the conversation you want, which is your elevator speech. Your card should contain all your contact information. A personal website is useful to post your resume, handbill, picture(?), and other information, and also serves to show you are computer-literate. Use both sides of the business card. Print a few, test reactions, improve it, and repeat.

Elevator speech / Handbill

These should state three things. The first point is who you are, which establishes your core competencies / branding statement. The second point is what you do, which should reinforce the same skills. The third message point is targeted to the person you're with: if you're talking to a prospective employer, it should be how you can solve the problems he's facing. If you're networking, the third point should be how the person can help you.

Narrow vs. broad focus

Find your niche. Don't try to be all things to all people. You can be a policeman for one person and a fireman for someone else, but don't try to be both a policeman and fireman for

anyone.

Network in the right circles

Attend business meetings like trade associations and chambers of commerce. Attend pure networking events and meetings with both working and transitioning people. Go to community events at churches, synagogues, or non-profit venues. Be active online, for example, check out sites like techvenue.com for your function or industry. Go often. Optimize your cost per contact. Arrive early and monitor arrivals. Meet the event organizer and follow up 1-1 with the him/her before the next event. Buddy-up and share contacts and referrals afterward.

Networking rules

Always give more than you take. Ask "How can I help you?" and then follow up. You will become known and respected. The rule of thumb is you give five times more often than you get, but what you get will be worth five times more than what you give.

When someone offers a name for you to contact, ask him how he knows that person. If appropriate, ask him to contact him on your behalf.

Keep all your promises; contact all referrals and follow up if you say you will. Find ways to be useful and keep in touch. Follow up every meeting with a thank-you note - it doesn't have to be handwritten, e-mail is OK.

Have fun. Don't take yourself too seriously. Set reasonable expectations. Enjoy the surroundings at meetings.

Get in front of the bus

Be proactive. Paul was stuck in traffic next to a limousine. He motioned for the limo driver to roll down his window. Paul handed the driver his business card and told him to ask the guy in the back if he needed a good employee. At the next light, the limo driver motioned for Paul to roll down his window, and then handed him his passenger's card and told him to call him Monday. Paul ended up as president of the passenger's company. Success can come from anywhere, at any time.