

The power of connecting

© Ute Wiczorek-King, 2007

About 5 years ago I was invited to attend a meeting at a local business networking group for women. Feeling a little clueless about the whole networking thing, my friend assured me, as she was sure I would really like it! And so I did! I not only learnt a lot, I socialised too and *my previous assumption that networking had to be hard work was proved completely wrong!*



Another lady also new to the group, happened to sit next me at my first meeting. As we chatted we quickly discovered we had a lot in common. Little did I know at the time that a few months later, this person and I would be working on our first project together.

Several shared projects later we had not only forged a great working relationship, but had also become friends. And then, in the autumn of 2005 Mary Fraser and I launched our very own networking group for women. Based on our collective experiences and learning from many different networking groups we had attended ourselves, we wanted to offer more of the ingredients that we thought made networking more powerful for women in business.



Personally I happen to be a very 'slow' networker, I do not 'work a room'. I may only connect with a couple of people, never more than a handful during an evening. I don't like rushing, which is partly due to the fact that in my culture this can be perceived to be a bit superficial.

Building relationships at very structured breakfast meetings with an expectation of referrals thrown in, just doesn't work for me either. For a start, I'm not at my best early in the mornings. I can be a little shy too, and although those who've met me may find that hard to believe, I'm like many people who don't find it easy to walk into a room full of strangers.

However over the years I did learn that **it was OK for me to be myself**. I also learnt that my **lack of expectations** about the results of networking were a real bonus! I never saw it as a foolproof way which would lead me to lots of future business. But as it turned out it has given me some of my most valuable business.

I now know that my networking 'success' was down to having built real connections with people, resulting in **interesting and meaningful work relationships**, some of which even led to some very good friendships.

Whilst everyone networks differently of course, for me **the art of real connecting** does not include selling (not even yourself), and I think of the selling process as completely separate.



So, it is not the thrusting of business cards in someone's face, or sneaking in a quick sales or elevator pitch. Nor is it asking the rather clichéd question I so often hear on an online networking platform - 'How can I help You?' Well, how can you help someone if you don't know them, their needs, what makes their business unique, or what their service or product is? It helps to stick around to get to know people a bit better first.

Ute Wiczorek-King | www.uwk.biz | ute@uwk.biz | +44 (0)7729 212299 |
Business Coach & Trainer

Tailored development programmes are available in the following areas: *Personal/ Business growth or Career Progression/ Communication/ Time / Balance / Stress Resilience / Goal setting with Vision & Purpose/*

For me the key issue in creating good business connections is the knowledge that we not only know, but **trust** each other. In other words, if we haven't connected well, and I don't trust you, you may find it jolly hard to try and sell me anything...

One networking organisation I am particularly fond of uses the tagline 'Winning by Sharing'. However it may help to know that 'sharing' isn't necessarily a foolproof recipe for 'winning'. When sharing or giving some of your expertise or time, you may not be getting anything back, or perhaps not for some time.

That's quite OK when you find that help or advice will 'appear' when you need it, and ... surprise ... it may even come from completely unexpected sources.



So sharing and connecting is not like a recreational ball game played with another person.

It's more like throwing a powerful boomerang that somehow comes back to you.

The energy you use to throw it is the energy that brings it back.

Networking and connecting beyond a superficial level means there is a far greater and invisible exchange of energy at play.

When real connections happen, you'll find that what goes around really does come around!

Best Wishes

Ute Wieczorek-King

www.successnetwork.org.uk

© Ute Wieczorek-King, 2007