

7 Ways to Easily Network

By Ja-Nae Duane

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Ja-Nae Duane
nae@Ja-Nae.com

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People underestimate how easy it is to network, no matter what field they are in. Along those lines, they also underestimate the importance of networking, even when the business is YOU. I will give you 7 easy ways to make your networking more beneficial to the person to whom it counts the most.....YOU.

I. How can you help others?

You might not realize this, but with every individual you speak to, you have an opportunity to network. But let's face it; mostly everyone is concerned with themselves. Sometimes, we get so caught up in our own needs that we forget that our product needs to benefit the people that are really important to us: our customers. So, why not help them? Listen to what people are saying to you. Get to know them. Try to think of different ways that they might benefit from your expertise. People love to help those they know and trust. By helping others, you are ultimately helping yourself and your business.

I started my monthly newsletter a year and a half ago, just to keep everyone updated on my upcoming gigs. Since then, it has also branched out to focus on free self-promotion ideas and free self-actualizing hints (to see an example, go to <http://www.Ja-Nae.com>). But also during this time, I began freely promoting others. By doing so, it keeps me in the forefront of people's minds when they're promoting things: looking for a singer, actor, writer, or speaker. So, everyone wins.

II. Tools of the Trade

Tools are imperative for any trade..... particularly when you are networking. Take the business card for example. The business card is an easy way to concisely distribute your information. Make sure the card says everything it can about you and what you do...in as few words as possible. State what you do, who you are, and how you can be contacted. Put your logo on the card. This ensures people to associate your name with your brand.

I've gone through various types of business cards. The one I have now has generated a lot of buzz about me. Why? It has my picture on it. There is a face to go with the name. Every time I hand a card to someone, they compliment me on what a great card it is. The person then shows their friend. They make the brand association and they also help generate more exposure for me.....Just by handing out ONE business card!!!!

III. Walk the Walk: The Importance of Image

We are judged all the time. We are judged by our appearance, what we say, and most importantly, what we do. Since that is the case, it would be beneficial for you to think about how you want people to perceive you. Look at your clothes, how you converse with others, and what you do on a daily basis. YOUR business OPPORTUNITIES are everywhere, so everything you do affects your image.

I've done many experiments with this concept. I love to wear black yoga pants and a white tee-shirt. It's my favorite outfit to wear because I find it incredibly comfortable. But I've also found that when you're talking business with someone, they are less likely to take you seriously in that type of garb. So, what did I do? I started to wear things that were considered "business casual." Now, a pair of jeans and a polo top has replaced my everyday wear. Not only do I receive more positive responses from people, I also feel better about myself. Try the experiment yourself. See what type of responses you get.

IV. Where to Meet People

There are a ton of places where you can meet people, whether they are in your field or potential clients. Teach a seminar or workshop at your local library or bookstore. Try joining your Chamber of Commerce, Service Organizations, and Trade Associations. Attend Trade Shows in your field; take people out to lunch. I know that Financial Planners for American Express place fishbowls in restaurants for people to leave their business cards. The Financial Planner then sets a lunch date and invites everyone who has left their card in the fishbowl to come and participate in a lunch seminar. By doing this, The Financial Planner gets his name out, explains his product, and it only cost him the price of everyone's lunch.

We meet people every day, though we don't always see an introduction as a business opportunity. When you first meet people, don't try to sell anything. Get to know them. Ask them questions about their lives. See if there are various angles that could allow you two to work together...at some point. But leave the initial encounter as a "getting to know you."

V. The Art of Networking

The Art of Networking starts with a simple conversation. Some people have problems starting conversations. Here are just a few examples of how:

- Look to see if they have a book or magazine with them
- Comment on the book or magazine
- Notice their attire. Comment on it

If you're at a convention or a trade show, focus your conversation on the event.

These people are here for the same reason you are. Some great icebreakers for these types of situations are:

- The sponsor of the event
- The venue (food, location, entertainment)
- The workshops or guest speakers

No matter with whom you are dealing with, there will always be some common interest that can bind you two. The goal is to establish that bond. The bond will allow the other person to open up and begin to trust you, and people only initiate business with those they trust.

VI. Contact Maintenance

Once you've established a contact, it is as important to maintain it. It is always imperative to check in with people now and again. By doing so, you're ultimately informed of the person's situation and you keep yourself in the forefront of their mind.

People change jobs all the time. Whether you're sending a press release to an editor or a joint

venture letter to a competitor, make sure you know exactly who you are sending the information to. Doing this increases your chances of having information seen by the right people and kept out of the garbage.

VII. Care for your Network

Care for your Network. Send emails, phone calls, and newsletters out to everyone. Also, respond to people in a timely fashion. If you're talking to someone on the phone, don't be interrupted by an incoming call. If someone buys your product, check in with them. Make sure that they are completely satisfied with the product. If not, find out what is wrong and take immediate steps to remedy the situation.

The biggest thing is to be respectful of the other person. Please and thank you can go an extremely long way, and courtesy doesn't cost anything. Also, be respectful of the person's time. Everyone is busy, so keep interactions brief and to the point. Though its clique, this statement holds your key to success: Treat others as you wish to be treated. Do that and you'll go a long way.

Up and Coming Renaissance woman, founder of the National Artistic Effort, social activist, and expert self-promoter, Ja-Naé Duane, is taking the world by storm.....one gig at a time.

Check out: [">http://www.Ja-Nae.com](http://www.Ja-Nae.com)

_ Hear Ja-Naé: http://www.mp3.com/Ja_Na_Duane

Buy Ja-Naé Merchandise: <http://www.cafepress.com/janaeduane>

Join her mailing list!: Ja-Nae@yahoogroups.com

For more information on the National Artistic

Effort, please go to: [">http://www.us.geocities.com/elektra1313/index.html](http://www.us.geocities.com/elektra1313/index.html)

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Ja-Naé Duane's Articles are published by Ja-Naé Duane

E-mail: nae@Ja-Nae.com

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