



BUSINESS NETWORKING: HOW TO MAXIMISE THE BENEFITS

Business networking is about:

- ✓ Meeting other business people face-to-face or online
- ✓ Developing relationships
- ✓ Communicating - Sharing ideas, knowledge, experience

Networking is an activity everyone can benefit from. Evidence of the value of business networks to small businesses has seen the rise in organised business networking events.



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?



Good networking delivers:

- ✓ **A source of information and support, mentors and friends.**
“You don’t have to know everything yourself as long as you know the people who do” – Harvey Mackay
- ✓ **A source of brand advocates**
People prefer to associate with, and do business with, those they have established a rapport, and who they trust.
- ✓ **A source of new revenues**
Within business networks you can exchange information, leads and referrals, provide or receive support and encouragement if needed. It can flow onto new business or job opportunities, and reduce sense of isolation for small business owners.

HOW TO MAXIMISE THE BENEFITS OF NETWORKING



Maximum benefits are achieved when you:

- ✓ **Make yourself memorable for the right reasons**
Develop your brand - your professional image
This starts with your business name, premises, your promotional material (including your business card) and you. Your look, attire and your communication style all convey an image to prospective clients
- ✓ **Keep track of your contacts and follow-up**
A quick call or email after meetings helps establish communications
- ✓ **Be proactive and develop wide networks**
Regularly attend a range of industry networks, local networks, social and possibly special interest network. Evaluate the worth of each network group. If it isn’t a source of contacts, opportunities, information, and enjoyment, find another
- ✓ **Participate in the organisation of the group**
When you do something for someone else, such as support other members with information or ideas, or helping organise the group - you can feel good and you are valued.
- ✓ **Don’t give up when you don’t win business first time**
Networking is not a short term activity, beneficial relationships are established over time

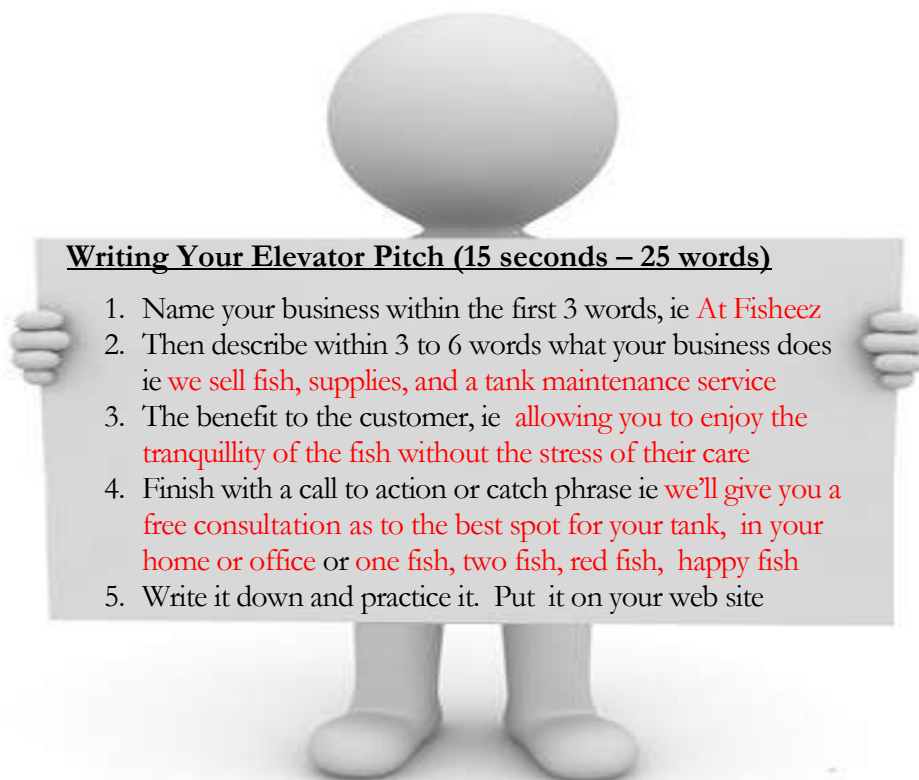
TIPS FOR MAXIMISING THE NETWORKING EXPERIENCE



Good networkers:

- ✓ **Set a realistic goal**
Aim to meet and make 2 to 3 good contacts each event
 - good contacts are those that,
 - you need now or in the future, or who need you now or will in the future
 - networking is not a contest to hand out the most card
- ✓ **Listen to your new contact – find out about them**
Show an interest in them and their business
- ✓ **Be memorable for the right reason**
 - dress and communicate appropriately.
 - assist your contacts with useful information or ideas.
 - you'll be seen as being genuine and sincere, and positively remembered
 - follow through with your commitments or trust will be lost
 - **always offer a business card and have a great elevator pitch**
- ✓ **Move on**
Remember your aim to make 2 to 3 good contacts
- ✓ **Keep a record of contacts and follow up with a call or email**

HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH



Within business networks you can exchange information, leads and referrals, provide or receive support and encouragement if needed. It can flow onto new business or job opportunities, more direct and effective communication, and reduce sense of isolation for small business owners.

