



# Advanced Networking

- *Leveraging Someone Else's Rolodex*

The typical approach to networking is to spend significant time building our networks one person at a time. This can be highly effective, but I would like to share with you another complementary approach to networking that focuses on building relationships with individuals who have rolodexes that match the profile of people you want to connect with. There is a lot of leverage in this approach if done correctly. For that reason I call it leverage networking.

*How it works:*

Rather than connecting with the CEO of IBM, for example, you would try to connect with someone whose clients are CEO's of Fortune 500 companies. This approach can work when you are looking for business or a job. If you are doing a marketing job search in the entertainment space find someone who works with marketing executives in that space.

*Building the relationship-- It takes time & trust:*

Unlike traditional networking, where you often have one objective in mind with the individual you are pursuing, leverage networking is much more involved. It is much more relationship oriented since you are asking someone to open up his or her Rolodex to you. Remember when you spend a lifetime building strong relationships you are not going to just turn them over to just anyone. Therefore, leverage networking takes more than a call asking someone to give you a name. It takes time, face-to-face contact and gradual building of trust. Given the time it takes to build these relationships, don't focus on more than five or six network partners. If you can connect with this many relationships you will have built a tremendously powerful network.

*Identify the right type of person to leverage:*

Leverage networking takes time, trust and a good amount of work on your part. Therefore, it is crucial you target people who can really help. There are people out there who have a lot of contacts, but they may not be at the right level, in the right industry or function to help you. Leverage networking only works well if you can target people with:

- 1) Common target clients or strong relationships with your target audience. Industry alone is not enough.
- 2) Common target clients or strong relationships that also work in the same functional group you are targeting or at a high enough level that functional groups do not matter. The level of relationship is just as important as the relationship itself.
- 3) Interest that does not compete with yours. If you are looking for a job in entertainment marketing, do not target someone else who is doing the same even if they have a great Rolodex.

*Who are these people?*

Great! You know what you want, but where do you find these networking partners? Typically, partner level individuals in the professional services space such as consultants, lawyers, accountants, recruiters and bankers who can be very specialized and build their business on relationships are great prospects. Likewise, senior sales professionals and national accounts managers are great if they are selling to your audience and level.

*Your Approach – Making it work in practice:*

In practice, where do you find networking partners? Networking events, conferences and industry functions are great. Another source is through a professional services person you know, but who does not fit your target profile. Ask your lawyer or accountant if they know lawyers or accountants in your space. They will. Ask someone from a target company for names of good sales and account people they work with. They will have some.

Once you find a potential networking partner, confirm you have a good match. Make sure you are direct and identify whom they can connect you with. Just ask them what type of companies they work with and at what level.

All long term relationship go both ways so once you have identified a prospect start the relationship on a positive note by helping them in some way. Then follow up with them on a regular basis. Before long you will see the results of your work.



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