

SMART NETWORKING

Attract a Following
in Person and Online

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FOREWORD

Networking has always been a part of my life. My first job out of college was as a radio producer for the *Barry Farber Radio Show*; a job I got through a high school friend who had heard about the opening. Through my work at Farber, I got to know Mike Levine of the public relations firm Planned Television Arts, who called frequently to publicize his clients' books. He ultimately asked me to join him at his firm. I took over at PTA after Mike retired, and now nearly everyone who works here got his or her job through someone I know.

I am also now publisher at Morgan James Publishing in New York—and yes, even that came about because of networking. I met the founder, David Hancock, at an event and now we are partners.

The power of networking for me is not just about the successes I've enjoyed. It's also about finding ways to contribute to the success of others. That's how Liz Lynch and I met.

In 2003, I gave a presentation on publicity at a small business conference in New York City. Liz got my attention by introducing herself after my talk; she had a friendly smile and a confident handshake. I was in the process of writing *Networking Magic* with my coauthor Jill Lublin, and Liz had just published her *102 Secrets to Smarter Networking* tips booklet. We stayed in touch, and later I asked her to present with me at the Learning Annex. Over the years, whenever Liz has asked for my advice, I've never hesitated to help her, and to her credit, she's never hesitated to take action. That's what makes me want to help her even more.

While the basics of effective networking haven't changed since I started doing it, the modes of networking have multiplied. The majority

of connections I've made in more than 30 years in public relations have come through face-to-face interaction, yet increasingly more of us are taking our networking online. New Web sites and communication devices make it easier to connect with interesting people all over the world and to stay connected no matter where we are.

Smart Networking is one of the first books I've seen that gives weight to both in-person and online strategies, showing readers how to find the right blend for their personal and professional objectives. What's also intriguing about *Smart Networking* is how it approaches relationship building from the unique mindset of attracting people into your network and keeping them there. How do you become someone who people want to network with and whom they want to help? Liz will show you. She does it herself every day.

If I were building my network from scratch today, I'd want Liz to teach me this holistic process of combining both in-person and online networking that attracts people and opportunities automatically. Even for someone with networking in his DNA, getting 24/7 results without the 24/7 effort is a highly appealing concept. We're busier than ever, and there are many more things to distract us from our work. By absorbing the insightful yet practical ideas in this book, you'll learn to connect as effectively on a one-to-many basis as you do one-to-one. Now *that's* smart networking.

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INTRODUCTION

A hero is no braver than an ordinary man,
but he is braver five minutes longer.

—*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Read This If You Hate to Network

Being a late bloomer to networking, I understand the reluctance you might feel in getting yourself out there. At the first networking event I ever attended by myself, I lasted five minutes—including the four minutes it took me to check my coat. To this day, I still feel my chest tighten whenever I think back to that moment: standing at the edge of the room at the 21 Club in New York City, watching 200 strangers in business suits converse with seeming ease, willing myself to step over the threshold to join them, but feeling so scared and overwhelmed that I could barely breathe. So what did I do? I raced down the stairs, grabbed my coat, pushed open the front door, and waved frantically for a taxi.

Thankfully, I've come a long way since, building two businesses almost exclusively through networking. But if the thought of facing a room full of strangers evokes a similar flight response in you as it once did in me, realize that it's nothing insurmountable. While everyone in that environment may seem at ease with the process, guess what? Not everyone is. The only difference between them and you is that they're in the room.

Their degree of courageousness, comfort, and confidence may look dramatically higher than yours, but in reality, the difference is tiny. The difference is at the margin. The difference comes down to knowledge.

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You may not be sure what works and what doesn't, and you're afraid of making mistakes. That's fair. And you may have certain misperceptions about what it takes to network successfully that have been holding you back. Here are some of the questions I had about networking when I started, and the answers I discovered along the way:

- *Do I need an outgoing personality?* Not at all. I'm an introvert, and I'm surprised every day to learn of successful people who are as well. Marti Olsen Laney lists a number of famous ones in *The Introvert Advantage: How to Thrive in an Extrovert World*. Michael Jordan, Diane Sawyer, Bill Gates, and Steve Martin all made the list. Both introverts and extroverts have their networking strengths and weaknesses. While we introverts may hold back from the crowd a bit, we tend to be good listeners. While extroverts might find it easier to start conversations, they may shine the spotlight too long on themselves. What's important about your personality is not how you come across on the outside, but the kind of person you are on the inside that gets others to react to you in a favorable way.
- *Do I need to manipulate others to get what I want?* I hope not. I hope you're the kind of person who people help because they want to, not because they're forced to. Most people like to help when they can, but you need to be clear about what you need, make sure it's appropriate to the depth of relationship you have with them, and ask in a way that applies as little pressure as possible. That's not manipulation; it's simple respect.
- *Do I have to network all the time?* Not with these strategies. The goal of this book is to help you get to the point where you're highly effective at developing productive relationships quickly so that you don't have to go to five networking events a month if you don't want to. Smart networking is about putting a plan in place to automatically attract people into your world who want to network with you and making it easier and faster for you to help others in return.
- *Do I have to be a "schmooze"?* Actually, it's better just to be yourself. I'm not even sure how many of us came to associate this benign Yiddish word, which means "to chat idly or make small talk," with someone who tries to ingratiate himself or herself to others with insincere flattery and attention in order to get what he or she wants. That's not what networking is about. The difference between true

appreciation (good) and “sucking up” (bad) is authenticity. If you feel you have to fake your way through conversations, then networking will be hard for you. But if you can shift your mindset and develop a genuine curiosity to learn about other people’s stories, not only will you see their value in the world, but they’ll be better able to see yours.

There may be other reasons you’ve resisted networking in the past. Whatever they are, I hope this book gives you new ways to think and demystifies the process to help change your mindset, raise your comfort level, and inspire you to achieve your own success.

If it helps, keep in mind that I was in the same boat myself only a few years ago. In my early talks after writing my *102 Secrets to Smarter Networking* tips booklet, I never revealed to anyone my utter failure at that first networking event. I could never tell them about that! I was the expert! How was anyone ever going to learn from me if I didn’t show that I had come out of the womb with this knowledge?

But I eventually learned that being real was more helpful than being perfect. The first time I opened up to an audience about that experience, I got a very positive response. Participants approached me after my talk and wrote me e-mails later to say, “Thank you for sharing that story, I can totally relate to that.” And, “You’ve inspired me because I know I don’t have to fit a certain mold to network effectively.”

Many seemed to appreciate that I had learned to network from the ground up. It gave them confidence and comfort to learn from me because I could give step-by-step advice from my own experience, alerting them to pitfalls that someone with a more natural-born ability might not recognize or appreciate. It also made them believe that if I could do it, so could they.

How many of your own mind games are keeping you hidden from the world? Ask yourself:

- Are you tired of seeing great opportunities consistently go to others?
- Do you want more for your career, your business, or your life than what you have right now?
- Are you ready to build and leverage your network the right way once and for all?

All that’s standing in your way is knowledge. Now open your mind, and let’s begin the journey together.

Reluctant Networker Gets Religion without the Raging Rolodex

You hold in your hands a tangible result of the principles I cover in this book. Smart networking is my approach to building and maintaining relationships over the long term. It makes networking easier, generates opportunities automatically, and helps achieve higher goals effortlessly. In all honesty, writing a book for a major publisher hadn't really been a goal I seriously considered, but when a contact in Europe made the suggestion and I decided that it was what I wanted to do next, I had the contract within months. All as a result of two different sets of relationships I had built over time but never knew would someday interconnect to make this opportunity happen.

I don't have the biggest, baddest Rolodex, nor do I have Michael Eisner on speed dial. I've never aspired to either one. No disrespect to Mr. Eisner, of course. I once met Billy Crystal in an elevator in Chicago, a few months after the release of *When Harry Met Sally* (one of my all-time favorite movies), and completely blanked out. I had absolutely nothing clever to say. And I didn't have the wherewithal to ask for his card or give him mine.

I'm a relative newcomer to networking. I'm neither an extrovert nor a compulsive business card collector. But that's precisely why I wanted to write this book, to show you that you don't need those things to be successful with networking. When I left corporate America in 2000 to start my solo consulting business, it became glaringly obvious to me after my experience at the 21 Club that I didn't know how to network. What I had learned in my career up to that point was how to work hard and get along with folks so they enjoyed working with me. I even got a few promotions and new job opportunities out of it along the way. But go to networking events and work a room? Never considered it; never wanted to do it. Once I was on my own, however, I quickly realized that I couldn't focus on doing good work unless I actually *had* work. I knew I needed to get clients.

I also knew that I needed networking leverage. Every solo practitioner struggles with balancing service delivery with marketing and selling activities. When you're doing one, you're not doing the other. I knew that if I were networking 24/7, no one would be around to do the revenue-generating work. Yet if I focused too much on doing the work

itself, my project pipeline would go dry. I had to find a way to keep my pipeline flowing with the least amount of manual intervention.

So while I focused on improving my networking skills and strengthening my base of contacts—through a mix of experimentation, learning from others, and lots of reading—I also invested in activities that helped people learn about my business and encouraged them to want to work with me. In other words, I learned to network smart so that I didn't have to network hard.

Dorothy Leeds, author of *The 7 Powers of Questions*, believes that questions can change your life. “Better questions provide better answers, and better answers provide better solutions.” When I started networking, I asked a fairly traditional question, “How can I become a more effective networker?” From that came fairly traditional answers that always seemed to involve chasing down connections one way or another, from approaching people at events, to asking for referrals, to following up after an initial contact.

I soon learned that this type of “push” strategy with networking, although necessary to some extent, was too time-consuming for me, and I began to ask a different question: “What could I do to also *pull* people in and make networking easier overall?” That's the path this book uncovers.

Imagine. What if you could draw people into your network who were already predisposed to networking with you? What if they did all the work to track you down for new business opportunities? What if you never had to knock on doors again? What if people chased *you*? Not only would networking be a whole lot easier, but it would also be a whole lot more fun.

Sounds great, but how do you get there?

How to Network Smart So You Don't Have to Network Hard

For several years, I've helped demystify networking for many people who've struggled, and I've also helped many who enjoy networking but are always looking for faster results with less effort. The answer isn't about doing more; it's about doing the right things—about being strategic. Let's work backwards, and as Stephen Covey would say, begin with the end in mind.

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At the end of the day, why do we network? We network so that we have the relationships in place to help us whenever we need help. What do we need in order to get there? Two things: the skills to build relationships and the skills to tap into them. Everything we do with networking is in service of those two things and how we can do them effectively and efficiently.

A great deal has been written about the first part, building relationships, and I have a lot to say about that myself. But I want to focus just as much on the second part, tapping into relationships effectively. If you know a lot of people but can't get their help, it's a waste of time to keep increasing your number of contacts. On the other hand, if you're highly skilled at getting members of your network to respond to you when you need them, you don't need a huge Rolodex. When both work in combination, there's virtually nothing you can't accomplish.

But you can't network around the clock, so how do you strike a balance? Here's a sneak peek at the smart networking system.

First, Develop a Winning Mindset

Your interest and desire for sustained growth in your business or career have to be strong enough to break the inertia of keeping yourself to yourself. Having a better understanding of what networking is, what it can help you achieve, and what's important to focus on in building relationships so that you can tap into them later if you need to will make it easier to succeed.

Part I delves into the foundational mindset shifts necessary for any technique to be effective. Your mindset is your guidance system, helping you navigate through different situations that might come up in your networking. It will help you understand why the techniques covered in the rest of this book work so well, and it will allow you to operate more on intuition rather than memorization of a strict set of rules.

Second, Maximize Your One-to-One Interaction Skills

With all that we can do online and over the phone, connecting one-to-one in person these days is expensive and time consuming by comparison. Yet in many cases it's still highly valuable because sometimes the best place to connect with someone who's hard to reach

is at an event. Therefore, you want to make sure that every time you have a face-to-face interaction, you have the skills to take full advantage of the opportunity. This means being able to introduce yourself with impact to automatically attract the people you're looking for, knowing how to start relationships off on the right foot, and understanding how to nurture those relationships over the long term.

Part II offers a strong starting point for handling these critical networking activities and includes many step-by-step explanations. With the relationship mindset you've developed, you can easily mold and adapt these suggestions into a structure that fits your specific needs.

Third, Leverage Platforms That Expand Your Reach One-to-Many

You can turbocharge your networking by supplementing or transitioning some of your one-to-one connection strategies with those that get you in front of more people on a one-to-many basis. Build some visibility and build an online presence to get known more broadly and deeply. Your network can grow strands in multiple directions in both the real and virtual worlds to connect with more like-minded people across geographies and time zones and bring more opportunities to your doorstep automatically 24/7.

Part III describes high-impact activities you can integrate into your networking schedule to boost your name recognition and attract more people and more possibilities into your life more easily. The focus of these chapters is to let you know how these personal marketing techniques can help with networking and to give you an overview of how to get started. If you're interested in exploring any of them in detail, I've included a number of recommended resources at www.smartnetworking.com.

Fourth, Choose the Right Mix of Activities for *You*

I'm going to tell you right now that you don't have to use all the connection strategies I describe in this book. You don't. Although each concept is important and has a purpose, you know what your strengths are, and there are certain activities you'll enjoy doing more because they're a better fit for you. You also know what your goals are, what you're trying to achieve. Certain activities you'll have to do whether you enjoy

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them or not, because they'll get you to your goals faster. I want to help you find the right mix.

Rather than leave you at the end of the book asking yourself, "Now what?" or saying to yourself, "I don't have 36 hours in a day to do all of these things, so I'm not going to do any of them," in Chapter 13 I'm going to help you put together a one-page smart networking plan. You'll clarify your goals, identify where networking can help you, determine how to integrate networking into your business activities and schedule, and recognize where you might need additional assistance.

I want nothing standing in your way of getting out there and achieving your dreams as quickly as possible. I know that networking can help make that happen for you. You just need someone to guide you through the process.

Overall, smart networking is for anyone interested in generating networking leverage and increasing results without increasing time and effort. Whether you love to network and are looking for ways to improve or if you don't enjoy networking at all and want to make your efforts count, you'll learn how to build relationships both one-to-one and one-to-many that can help you attract the people and opportunities that can change your life.

Smart Networking: Attract a Following In Person and Online is available on Amazon.com, BN.com and wherever books are sold.

About the Author



As a top business development expert, networking strategist, speaker and coach, **Liz Lynch** has taught tens of thousands of professionals worldwide – introverts and extroverts alike – how to get 24/7 networking results WITHOUT the 24/7 effort. Prior to starting her business in 2000, Liz worked at prominent firms such as Goldman Sachs, Booz & Company, Time Warner, and Disney. She received an engineering degree from University of California, Berkeley, and an MBA from Stanford University.

Because of her background, Liz brings a practical and insightful perspective to networking that has connected with a global audience. She's been invited to speak at conferences around the world, has presented at companies as diverse as Boeing, 3M, KPMG and Google, and has appeared on CNN, ABC News, Fox Business News, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Forbes.com, CNBC.com and BusinessWeek.com.

Please visit www.NetworkingExcellence.com for more tips, tools, insight and information.