

The Importance of Networking

By Kathy Jo Pollack

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Our current economic state presents us with many opportunities – it's all about how you choose to look at it. My focus has always been on the basics; taking a moment to look at your foundation with an emphasis on finances. Regardless of where you look, it is all about relationships – your relationship with your money, bank, employer, family, and friends.

This brings me to the importance of networking, and the value of forming and maintaining a strong circle of contacts. There is no better time than now to strengthen or build your network. A solid network will serve you well for years to come and will be an additional tool in your toolbox especially during these times of economic uncertainty.

Networking includes both internal and external. Internally, be visible at your current job – don't hide in your office or cubicle. Volunteer for projects and make yourself available. Expand your lunch partners. Meet and talk with new coworkers and continue to communicate with them on a regular basis. Be informed; know where your company is going. You may want to consider brushing-up your skills or broadening your knowledge which leads me to external networking. This can also enhance your current situation. An easy way to do this is by joining a professional organization within your field. Network by regularly attending the meetings, meeting new people, and benefiting from the information and knowledge presented through seminars and speakers.

Keep in mind that networking is not easy for most and can even be painful. **Tip:** To help ease your apprehension, consider arriving early at a meeting when there are fewer people or invite a colleague to attend with you. Then, take your membership to the next level by becoming a board member or chairing a committee. This opens many new doors and looks good on your resume.

Also, consider joining an online professional network such as LinkedIn. You can add your professional memberships/organizations to your profile for added visibility. Invite your contacts to join and continue expanding your network with updated information.

Final tips: always exchange contact information or business cards and follow-up. Start and maintain a database of the contacts in your network that includes their name, email address, phone number, as well as *how*, *when*, and *where* you met with any additional pertinent notes to help jar both your memory as well as your contact's memory. Continue adding to this database and make it a point to keep in touch with any appropriate news or possibly pass along an article of interest.

It is all about relationships. Build them and keep them strong. Working together is much easier than going it alone.

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Author's Bio

Kathy Jo Pollack is a certified life coach, trainer, and speaker with a focus on finance and relationships. She has worked with thousands of people from all walks of life as the training specialist for Consumer Credit Counseling Service and has taken her passion and expertise to a new level as a coach and writer. She also offers various teleclasses and seminars. Please visit her at: kathyjopollack.com. You may also contact her directly at 1-724-224-6619 or mycoach@kathyjopollack.com.