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# LAS VEGAS BUSINESS PRESS

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## Push yourself to establish vital networking contacts

Many people believe if they work hard and produce results, they will advance in their business or careers. Often, the most important aspect is missed -- building relationships.

Relationship building is crucial. How many people do you know who are hard-working, intelligent, and reliable who remain the unsung heroes and never advance to the level of others with the same and sometimes less-stellar attributes? Working hard at your job alone will not advance your career or build your business.

We've all heard the saying, "it's not about who you know, but who knows you." While that phrase holds a certain amount of truth, building relationships is a give-and-take proposition. Too often people begin networking with only themselves in mind, looking for immediate gains. If this is your primary purpose, your networking efforts will fall short in the long run. Building relationships is not about immediate gratification. It takes more than one contact or meeting. Relate it to a personal relationship. If you remember, it took longer than one or two contacts to develop that relationship.

It's important to look at relationships not only for what someone can do for you, but what you can do for someone else. How many times have you met a person at a networking event and quickly found the exchange to be one-sided? Always ask what you can do to help the person you've met; you'll be likelier to develop a relationship when it's mutually beneficial.

How does someone build mutually advantageous

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relationships? Attending events that offer networking opportunities is the best way to reach out to a number of contacts. Before you attend though, know what you want the outcomes to be. Network effectively so you don't waste your time or the time of others. Remember it is not the quantity of the contacts you make, but the quality that will build the relationships that will advance your visibility in your company, the community, or both.

However you approach building your network, be prepared to sell yourself. Create your 30-second elevator speech -- the one you'd use when you stand up at a networking event and introduce yourself. Most times we only have one chance to make that important first impression that can make or break future dealings.

Have multiple networks, work-related, social, or some combination of both. In today's society, our work and social networks tend to blend. However, make sure that you have contacts who can speak to you on a strictly professional level as well as those who can be brutally honest with you when needed.

Whether you're looking to promote yourself or increase your company's visibility, it is all about building relationships. In this new year, make it your goal to reach out and touch at least two people each week. By the end of the year, if done correctly, you'll have established a reliable and beneficial network.


The North Las Vegas Chamber assists with this important aspect of doing business with several events and programs each month that lend themselves to networking. Coming in the immediate future will be yet another chance to gain and give business through targeted referrals. CONNECTION\$, a member-driven, referral-based group within the chamber, will be coming to a location near you.

With only one business category per CONNECTION\$ group permitted, participants will be able to promote themselves and their businesses to others seeking the same. With a membership that reaches outside North Las Vegas, CONNECTION\$ groups will be held in every part of the valley. It's just one more way the North Las Vegas Chamber connects businesses north and beyond.

Sharon Powers is president and CEO of the North Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce.

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