

Power Networking Strategies

AN ETC WORKSHOP FOR THE CSU ALUMNI SPEAKER SERIES

Seven Simple Strategies For Power Networkers

Network with a Strategic Plan

- * **Know Your Purpose** - failing to plan is planning to fail. Why are you networking? What are your objectives? What do you want to find out? What types of people do you want to meet?
- * **Choose Wisely** - you only have so much time, so choose your networking events base on who is likely to be there.
- * **Get There Early & Stay Late** - **maximize** your networking potential. Most networking happens before or after the program or event. Make it the most important thing you'll do today.
- * **Work The Room** - try to meet lots of strangers. Don't spend a lot of time talking with co-workers or people you already know.
- * **Sit Smart** - don't sit early. Avoid the front or back row or aisles. Sit surrounded by strangers. It's Net-**work**, not Net-sit.

Network With A User-Friendly Name Tag

- * **Make It Big** - if the print is small, make a new one. Include your name and company.
- * **Wear It Right** - put the nametag high on your right lapel or right side. If you take your jacket off, move your nametag. The nametag says "Look here!" so don't put it where you don't want people to look.

Network With A Winning Smile

- * **Look Friendly** - a good smile says "I'm someone you'd like to meet."
- * **Look Sincere** - avoid a fake or "painted-on" smile.

Network With A Comfortable Handshake

- * **Be Firm** - avoid a limp, lifeless handshake.
- * **Be Gentle** - don't squeeze too hard or shake too long.

Network With Business Card Finesse

- * **Not Up Front** - avoid passing cards around casually or giving it to a stranger at the beginning of a conversation.
- * **Ask First** - ask strangers if you can give them your card and ask for theirs if you want them.

Network With A Focused Script

- * **Ask Questions** - your goal in meeting strangers is to find out enough details to decide if you'd like to get to know them better.
- * **Don't Dominate** - ask more than you tell and listen more than you talk. Don't sell during the first conversation.
- * **30 Second Commercial** - your 'Elevator Speech'. Describe what you do in 30 seconds: focused, succinct, listener-centric and value-based.
- * **KISS** - spend 2 - 3 minutes getting to know each other. If you're interested, ask for a follow-up conversation.

Network With Timely Follow-up

- * **Call First** - give those people you're interested in a brief follow-up call within a few days. Be courteous and respect their time. Ask and tell more.
- * **Send A Note** – or send a note, a post card or an e-mail first, then call.
- * **Then Meet** - when you feel the interest is mutual, then suggest a brief get-together or plan to see them at the next meeting.
- * **Maintain** - now you're at the relationship-maintenance level. Stay in touch. Help each other be successful.

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Elevate Your Elevator Speech

Elevator Speeches ... 30 Second Commercials ... Shameless Self-Promotions, they're our typical response to the often asked 'What do you do?'. We all do them. But, most of us don't do them with enough focus and finesse, so here are some simple and easy strategies to elevate your Elevator Speech (ES).

1. **Less Is Definitely More**

Elevator speeches are supposed to begin a dialogue – not be a monologue. They should provide enough focused information to engage your listeners in conversation. Think billboard, not full page add. With every word or fact you might mention, ask yourself 'Who cares – really?'

2. **It's Not About You!**

It's about the people listening to it. It's about why they should want to ask you more questions to get to know you better. A good ES should generate four or five more specific questions if they're interested in you. If not, you've just saved them and you some valuable networking time.

3. **Let Go The Ego**

Who really cares about your title? It's probably on your business card anyway. Write out your typical ES and count the 'I statements'. The more you have, the more ego you can let go.

4. **Become Buyer-Driven**

Typical ES content includes a 'seller-driven' menu of our products, services or features. Stand out in a crowd by becoming more buyer-driven. Focus on what THEY want or get when they work with you ... the benefits and value.

5. **WII-FM?**

Everyone is listening to the same virtual radio station all the time – 'What's in it for me?' If you focus on a buyer-driven ES, they will clearly hear what could be in it for them. And they might also see something in it for someone they know – the mission-critical referral.

6. **Practice Doesn't Make Perfect!**

No, practice only makes permanent. Only perfect practice makes perfect. So, practice your succinct, buyer-driven ES so it's articulate and enthusiastic. Prepare similar focused responses to the obvious follow up question interested people might ask.

'Before'...

Maybe your typical seller-driven ES goes something like ...

"I'm founder, president and managing partner of Schmoozer Creative Services Incorporated. I write copy. I design campaigns. I place media buys. I handle collateral and point of purchase ... I even coordinate web designs and e-commerce. I work with small, medium and large clients in NE OH, around the state and in other major markets.

I work in all major industry segments. I've been in business for six years."

Not all that bad for a seller-driven message ... but it's too long, rambling, egocentric and feature-laden. The listener is likely to get off at the next floor.

And 'After'

With a little work and effort, your new buyer-driven message could go like this...

"I run Schmoozer Creative Services and work with business people who want to maximize their advertising results and with agencies and ad departments who want creative, efficient and effective outside support. They value my help in copywriting, campaign design, media buying and collateral and POP coordination."

What a Difference!

- **Shorter** – from 71 words down to 47.
- **Focused** – some facts didn't pass the 'Who cares?' test, like bland references to markets, industry segments and tenure.
- **Unpretentious** – from eight 'I' statements down to one and no reference to founder and title. "I run ..." suggests ownership without the ego.
- **Benefits-rich** – instead of the usual laundry list of features, it suggests who benefits from partnering and how. It stresses value.
- **Buyer-driven** – it's easy for listeners to determine if there's enough interest to ask more specific questions or consider a referral.

Simple ... And Easy

If you want to easily take your elevator speech to a higher floor, write out what you typically say in response to "... so what do you do?". Then, edit it in the context of the comments above. Then, polish and practice it until it flows smoothly with enthusiasm and sounds just like you. Then ... enjoy the ride up to the top floor.

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About Your Presenter

Phil Stella runs Effective Training & Communication, Inc. in Mayfield Village (440.449.0356) is a resource for business people who want help taking the pain out of workplace communication. Stella helps them become more competent, credible and comfortable when they network, present, write, lead meetings, deliver training or interact with colleagues and customers.

A veteran of over 25 years as a communications and training practitioner in the corporate arena, Stella works with clients as a trainer, speaker, consultant and coach. He also produces corporate videos and has written over 300 articles for business, industry and association publications.

He has delivered hundreds of workshops for client and professional group events around the country. Stella also teaches communication courses at DeVry University and at the University of Phoenix, Cleveland Campuses.

Prior to starting ETC in 1990, Stella managed corporate communications and management training at Progressive Insurance in Cleveland for 10 years. His other credentials include management and production expertise in both instructional and commercial television and teaching assignments at the college and high school levels. He earned both an MS and BS (cum laude) in Communications from the University of Illinois.

He is an active member of COSE, Sales & Marketing Executives, and American Society for Training & Development, the Cleveland Coach Federation and the Heights Regional Chamber of Commerce. Stella is a veteran volunteer with E-CITY, the Mayfield Schools and five area non-profit outplacement groups.

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Keepers

Whenever you hear a good idea worth remembering and using, list it here. Regularly review this list and check off those ideas you've put to work.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

