

HOW EXPERTS BUILD EMPIRE COURSE

Module 4: Your Networking Blueprint – How To Network Like A Pro

Why Network?

In the affairs of men, nothing matters more in building wealth, influence and leverage than the friends you keep. In short, your network!

As Brian Tracy once quipped, “You can’t fly with the eagles if you keep scratching with the turkeys.” The author Chinua Achebe captured it succinctly in his *Things Fall Apart*, where he popularized the African proverb, “If a child washed his hands he could eat with kings.” An English cliché says, “Birds of the same feather flock together”, and another says, “Tell me your friend and I’ll tell you who you are.” Though the last saying is commonly associated with character issues, it can equally be applied to the subject of our discussion, networking, as it relates to net worth.

Dennis P. Kimbro, the co-author of **Think and Grow Rich: A Black Choice**, once asked Don King, the boxing promoter and showman, “What are your goals?”, and King fired back, “To become America’s first black billionaire.” When Kimbro queried, “How are you going to do that?”, King retorted, “I just told you, by hanging around billionaires, learning all they know.”

T. Harv Eker, the author of *Think Rich to Get Rich: Secrets of the Millionaire Mind*,
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describes a simple test he says he administers on attendees of his Million Mind Intensive seminar. He says he asks them to write down the names of the top seven friends they spend most of their time with (excluding spouses and their kids), and says the average income of every attendee always reflects the average income of their top seven friends.

We conducted a similar exercise in our *Dig Your Well Before You Are Thirsty* (title borrowed from Harvey Mackay) seminar and attendees were dumbfounded by what they discovered and all vowed to rethink the friends and network they keep.

Whenever you attend a social function, whether it's a society wedding, a big red-carpet event, or a presidential ball, just watch closely who hangs around with whom. You'll soon discover that after the initial greetings and exchange of pleasantries, the people will imperceptibly drift into the groups they belong: the poor will gather together to moan the bad economy, the middle class will be back slapping their group members and boasting about the next big toy they are planning to acquire, while the rich will be talking in hush tones in their own circle where the next big investment is likely to come from. Generally, you won't see the super rich in these social events. They meet on secretive islands and exclusive clubs to plot the next mega deals.

The Power of Networking

Networking right is so crucial for success in life and in business that you ignore or neglect this discipline at your own peril. If you observe, the poorest people have the shallowest networks or no network at all to talk about. When the poor is in a bind, he has no friend to turn to. The opposite is true of the rich and super rich.

They all have well oiled networks that enable them have advance information about new government policies before they become public knowledge; they are always the first to hear about new high yielding private placements, and they use their networks to literally save their life.

When a close mentor suffered a life threatening brain clot that made him pass out suddenly, it was the network he had built over the years that saved the situation. One, two, three telephone calls, and he was flown to London and within hours a simple but delicate procedure that drained fluid from his skull was carried out and he instantly came back to life.

In her 2008 presentation at the then ASTD (American Society for Training and Development) International Conference, entitled *Mastering Professional Networking: Turning Relationships into Lifelong Assets*, Neusa Hirota, an American of Japanese descent, who was brought up in Brazil, and speaking little English, told the awesome story how she used the power of networks to change jobs four times within six years, and secure jobs in some of the most powerful establishments on earth, including the World Bank.

It was from her presentation that I first learned about the theory of “Six Degrees of Separation.” Six degrees of separation is the theory that anyone on the planet can be connected to any other person on the planet through a chain of acquaintances that has no more than five intermediaries. The theory was first proposed in 1929 by the Hungarian writer Frigyes Karinthy in a short story called "Chains." We will not join the debate whether this theory has been proven or remains unproven; all you

need to know is that you can become insanely successful if you use the power of networks to your advantage.

How to Network Well

Like every other game, networking has its own rules. Don't go about thumping your complimentary card into the hand of every person you meet because I can assure you your card will end up in a dustbin. If you want to join a network, have something to offer, be selfless, and join gracefully, preferably from the bottom. If you do a good home work, you will be able to join the strongest battalions.

The best place to start is through seminars, workshops, and conferences. Join clubs, and associations like Lions, Toastmasters, Rotary, Optimists, ATD, CIPM, ICAN, NIM, CIBN, LDNI, and SHRM, to mention but a few. Don't forget your old school alumni association, your community association and PTA (Parents and Teachers Association).

What of your family? It forms part of your network. Remember, the devil you know is better than the angel you do not know. Seek out people with similar passion or interest as you locally, nationally, and internationally. Jennifer Openshaw, the author of *The Millionaire Zone*, shows how you can build what she calls your LifeNet, from local to global as shown in Appendix I.

Share your thoughts, ideas, and the portfolio of what you're currently working on with peers, friends and well wishers. Go out of your way to be generous because it all starts with generosity. Share helpful advice, considered opinion, and be generous

with praise. Be authentic and let people see the real you. Introverts have a real challenge speaking out but you must practice. Speaking out and being sociable can be learned so learned them if you're introverted.

Keith Ferrazzi's Intimacy and Generosity Pyramids are shown in Appendices II and III to guide you further. Indeed, take advantage of every networking opportunity that suits your passion and temperament. Some friends will prove unworthy of your friendship. Discard them. Building a network is a marathon and not a hundred meters dash, so be prepared to toil for years and you'll be glad you did.

What You Need to Do Starting Now

Some people say they are shy and like to keep to themselves. Networking does not mean that you should change who you are. It simply means that you should change the way you relate with people – friends, colleagues, peers and even utter strangers. Remember a stranger is a friend you've not yet met. Starting today learn to do the following:

1. Start developing interest in whoever you meet at events, be they conferences, seminars or even your church. Always be the first to greet and stretch your hand to shake. Then introduce yourself and follow up with a simple question along the lines: I'm meeting you for the first time in this [course, conference, event, church, etc.], I'm Paul, what's your name, and what do you do for a living?
2. When you collect someone's complimentary card scan the details into your

smartphone and write a small background information where you met that person. Needless to say always call back the person (or send a text message) within 24 hours and thank him or her for their friendship.

3. Get the “Mackay 66” (available free online and in his book (*Dig Your Well Before You’re Thirsty*) and start gathering as much information on people you care about as possible, such as birthdays, what they like most, their passions and see what you can do to add more to what they already know.

Like any other discipline in life, learn to understand the concept of networking. What I mean is, education is important. Be a guru in your little field. Who would like to do business with you if you have nothing to offer?

Read the best books on networking. Keith Ferazzi, the author of two best-selling books on networking, *Who’s Got Your Back*, and *Never Eat Alone*, has taken the discipline of networking to a whole new level. Get those books and read. From your network, you may find people who could turn out to be your mentor or mentors.

Never underrate what the right mentor can do for you. Remember, Isaac Newton once said, “If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants”, and Napoleon Bonaparte said, “God is always on the side of the strongest battalions.” Your mentor, you and your network can form the strongest battalion and you can see far into the horizon when you take networking seriously.

Remember, for instance, Rich Schefren had Jay Abraham as his mentor, Bob Dylan was mentored by Woody Guthrie, Richard Branson had Freddie Laker, Jeff Bezos had David Shaw, and Warren Buffett was mentored by the economist, Benjamin Graham. And Bill Gates? Paul Allen mentored him, and in recent times, Warren

Buffet. And not to forget, Steve Jobs had mentors at various times, including Mike Markkula, Nolan Bushnell (Atari's founder), and Bill Campbell. So, do not be so shy, proud, or self contented, to get a mentor. One of my mentor's once told me, Paul, "It's not about who you know, it's about who knows you." Your mentor will expose you to a world you never knew existed.

Personally, my network has opened doors for me. From zero client when I started my first company about ten years ago, today we have over 40 clients, including two Fortune 500 companies. Those Fortune 500 companies came through networking.

Charlie "Tremendous" Jones counseled, "Of all the things in this world, only two will have the greatest impact on your life, the books you read, and the people you meet."

ACTION YOU MUST TAKE RIGHT NOW: SEE EXERCISE ONE FOR YOUR NETWORKING WORKSHEET AND COMPLETE THE ASSIGNMENT.