

# extend your network

Networking is a tried and tested method of business success, but what's the best way to go about it? **Laura Stead** gets the answers.

**NETWORKING** can have the connotation of a really long four-letter word if you've had a bad experience with it.

You know the kind we mean – someone approaches you at a business function, best cheesy smile and puffed-up chest showing, thrusts their business card into your hand and proceeds to ramble on with their sales pitch for an intolerable amount of time.

Done properly though, networking can be the key to business development.

Hamilton's Lisa Butler, an organisational psychologist and author of new book *Networking Exposed*, says networking as a business practice has really taken hold in recent years.

"It's grown in the past five years in terms of people asking us to help them with their networking," Lisa says.

"It's about developing and maintaining relationships with people. You shouldn't be selling when you're networking. I often say to people the key to networking is to find a way to help others."

Lisa says rather than charge into a conversation with the intention of securing a new client or partnership, you'll discover more success in finding out how it is you can help the person you're talking to.

"That might be connecting them to other people in your network, it could be non-work related," she says.

"As long as your focus is about them, it makes it easier to get the courage to do that sort of thing."



**NETWORK NEWS** Lisa Butler, left, has written an insider's guide to the world of networking.

Once you meet someone new, learn about their business and a bit about them personally, and exchange details, Lisa says it's important to individualise the way you stay in touch.

"Some people would love to be invited to things, some people would love you to ring up and invite them for coffee, some people would love you to send them an email," she says. "It does take a lot of thought."

"The key is to take a cue from the other person."

*Networking Exposed* is available by heading online to [www.networkingexposed.com.au](http://www.networkingexposed.com.au) ▽