

## So you **think** you can **network**...

You may have recently seen Brisbane networking queen Lisa Butler's columns in the Courier Mail, REIQ magazine, Brisbane Lawyer, Brisbane News or in Voyeur. As a client of Red PR's we asked Lisa to share her tips on how you can network successfully.



**N**etworking is a key strategy for growing your business. If you're successful at that you can create opportunities to build relationships and identify potential business avenues for yourself and others.

Successful networkers know that the true nature of networking is developing and maintaining genuinely helpful relationships with others. There are many who avoid or dislike networking as they have formed inaccurate views about it.

There is so much more to networking than participating in a range of networking events. Networking is more strategic and long term, with continual consideration of the members of your network and how you maintain contact with them. The key to building an effective network of contacts is to focus on what you can do for them, rather than what they can do for you.

The skills and characteristics of good networkers can be learned. There are eight important techniques for effective networking. These techniques are:

- **Creating a networking plan.** You need to ensure you are networking with the right people, in the right places and in the right way. Set realistic objectives and accept that networking is a long term proposition.
- **Preparing to network.** Interestingly, many people don't prepare to network. Most of us would not deliver a presentation without preparation – networking is no different.
- **Creating the right impression.** People form impressions very quickly, and the impression you make will impact significantly on your chances of success.
- **Developing the relationship.** Start by building rapport, finding a connection, and displaying a genuine interest in others and in helping them.



- **Managing interaction.** The ability to ask good questions and genuinely listen and be interested makes you a good conversationalist. Also be prepared to offer your own insights, experiences and ideas to make it interesting.

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- **Observing networking etiquette.** Good networkers know how to introduce people effectively and they are able to move gracefully and politely between people. They find ways to connect people in their network and create opportunities for the people they meet.
- **Keeping in touch.** You need to be on the lookout for the opportunity to keep in touch with the people you meet, when relevant and appropriate. Make sure you follow up if you say you will.
- **Managing your network.** Access in-house tools, or create your own, to record details about the people in your network. Create systems to help you to maintain regular contact with people.

Lisa Butler's book *Networking Exposed* is available online at [www.networkingexposed.com.au](http://www.networkingexposed.com.au)



If you'd like to see yourself in Read contact Laura Stead on 3252 5735.