

Harvey Mackay's The Ten Biggest Networking Mistakes

1. Don't assume the credentials are the power. Every outfit is different. No organizational chart can tell you who the real decision maker is. You need a network to find out where the power is.
2. Don't confuse visibility with credibility. Don't join any organization to advance your own interest. Your motives will be as painfully obvious as a deathbed conversion.
3. Don't be a *schnorrer*. That's Yiddish for people who constantly take a little bit more than they're entitled to. Save your big favor requests for the big issues.
4. Don't say no for the other guy. Don't presume that someone within reach of your network would automatically say no.
5. Dance with the one that brung you. When someone in your network comes through, don't be a stiff. Dinner, flowers, a box of candy, or even just a phone call is a must.
6. Don't mistake the company's network for your network. If you're going to keep your job, your network has to be as good or better than your own company's network.
7. Don't be slow to answer the call. Don't stall. Even if you never expect to have your effort repaid. Remember that your network will be as fast broadcasting your failures as it is in broadcasting your successes.
8. It probably isn't just your network that's aging; it's you. Make a genuine effort to modernize your skills and knowledge. Catch the *zeitgeist*.
9. Don't underestimate the value of the personal touch. Small businesses must know how to network with their customers and prospects by emphasizing a level of personal service and attention that the big businesses can't.
10. If you don't know, ask. Even if you do know, ask. To compete, draft a questionnaire and put it where your customers can pick it up.