



## TIPS FOR MOM ENTREPRENEURS: HOW TO STAY CONNECTED TO YOUR NETWORK

As a working mom, you may already feel overwhelmed, juggling dual responsibilities of work and family. When it comes to networking – yet another task – you may feel that “the time I’ve spent at networking has never really paid off.”

Creating a personal and professional network is essential for your work + life success. That’s why working moms need to approach networking with a different paradigm, explained below as a three-part process.

### Relationship Building

Networking isn’t just about collecting business cards from people you think may help you. It’s about planting seeds and nurturing long-term relationships that mature over time.

As a mom, you may understand this process well because it calls upon the same nurturing skills you already use with your family.

### Empowering Actions

How many times have you attended networking events and seen others jabber on about themselves and frantically hand out dozens, if not hundreds, of their cards? This frenetic approach only makes them look weak. As a working mom, draw on that “Mommy” authority to engage in empowering, networking actions.

They include:

- \* **Give** – Adopt a giving attitude. When you meet someone ask, “How can I help you?” Always think, “Who could I connect them with to help them meet their goals?” It’s a natural principle: The more you help others, the more others will help you.
- \* **Ask** – Be bold. Always think, “you never know what will happen” and “it’s worth a try.” If you meet a new contact and find you have an instant connection, don’t be afraid to ask for help.
- \* **Follow up** - Getting introduced to the “right” people is important, but it’s what you do after the introduction that really counts. If you’ve felt a connection with a new contact, phone, email or send a thank-you note within one or two days. Then, keep in touch periodically, even if just to say, “Hi, it’s been awhile...”

### Efficient Use of Time

You may be thinking, “I’d like to stay connected with people, but I just don’t have the time.” Here are three ways to efficiently find time to network:

- \* **Lunch Hours** – I’ve historically used my lunch hour, a coveted ME time, to run errands, walk a mile or two or get my hair or nails done. Yet, many associations and groups schedule networking meetings during this time. So, I began to add networking lunches. It’s a great way to preserve early-morning and evening family hours by substituting networking lunches for breakfast meetings or evening mixers!
- \* **“Coffee/lunch over the phone”** – My business partner, Jo Della Penna, introduced me to the idea of networking by scheduling “coffee over the phone”. What a great idea! This is a more efficient way to meet. Plus, neither party has to invest in driving time. When you want to spend time with a colleague, try a relaxing “lunch over the phone” by scheduling a lunch appointment, packing a lunch that day and calling at the appointed time.
- \* **Schedule in advance** - Earmark your calendar to remind yourself to re-connect with a contact periodically. If you meet a new contact today, schedule the follow up call for two days later and plan a “check-in” email within 60 days.

Remember, the key to networking is building a relationship over time. By using the steps above you should succeed at establishing good relationships that empower you and your business, and yet, don’t use hours and hours of your time.

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