

Must-Do Tips No 34 - Building Professional Relationships

“I met him at a seminar – we exchanged cards and I gave him a call; but what do I do next?”

We have often heard variations on this theme from professionals of every ilk. For many, developing relationships with clients or prospects with whom we are not working currently presents a major difficulty. Some can't (or don't want to) see the fact that such relationship building is speculative and requires a pro-active approach; often, they rationalise away their lack of action (“I don't want to appear as if I'm a stalker”..“I don't have the time”).

Being proactive is the start. To help them on their way to this, here are three tactics that we have found useful to make the process of keeping in touch a bit easier and more productive for busy professionals.

Tip 1 – be ‘time smart’

For those professionals who, out of ignorance, envisage business development activity gobbling up hours (or even days) of their time, we have news. *You need spend only 15 or (maximum) 30 minutes a day to keep in touch with your contacts.* Why? Because like you, most clients or prospects are busy people – they spend much of their day unobtainable: working or in meetings. There are only two real windows of opportunity for calling them and making contact successfully; before 10am and after 5pm. So invest just 15 minutes at the beginning and end of each day.

Tip 2 – give PERSONAL value

This is one that crops up in so many marketing research studies. Receiving the firm's standard newsletter that goes to everyone is fine, say some respondents. But what would be really impressive would be to receive notification of something of value that is specifically relevant to me and my business. It could be a piece of impending legislation, adverse media comment about the company, competitor information, or about an important customer. Smart business developers keep their eyes and ears out for these nuggets and use them to such good effect.

Tip 3 – make opportunities to keep in touch

There is no excuse for not staying in touch if an interested first contact has been made. It is *our main objective*, even if the prospect is not going to give us immediate business. So develop your tactics for doing this like:

“We've a seminar running next month on this issue – would you like to come along?”



“Do you mind if I give you a call in a month or so to see if things have progressed?”

People Scope runs workshops to help professionals build better sales relationships. For more information, hit 'Reply' and type **Better BD Relationships**. For more general information about what we do, go to www.peoplescope.com.

We welcome feedback from you on what you think about "Must-Do Tips". If you like it hit 'Reply' and tell us specifically what you like. If there is a topic or issue that you would like us to cover, what is it? And if there's something that annoys, tell us too! We want to improve.

Need a stimulating contribution to your in-house publication or newsletter on Business Development, Client Relationship Management, or Professional Leadership from an expert? Call or email us and we will do our very best!

If you think someone else might be interested in receiving "Must-Do Tips" tell them about us.

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Best regards.

JAMES NEWBERRY

People Scope, 6 River Court, Chartham, Canterbury CT4 7JN, United Kingdom. Telephone: 01227 730411.

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