

Radio and TV –

I host an internet radio show and a local access TV show. You want to take advantage of every offer you receive to appear on radio or TV, it is a great way to position yourself as an expert. You can post the interview on your website or social media accounts so people hear your advice. Now I realize the first time you do a show you may be a little nervous but like all things in life the more often you do it the easier it becomes. You should also consider hosting your own show; again it is a great way to position yourself as an expert.

Take Control –

You have to take control of your life if you want to be successful. You have to think about how you are spending your time and who you are spending it with. Now I like being in control of everything but it's not easy for a lot of people. Please stop waiting for things to change and get better it won't happen by accident.

Take Two Days Off –

I had worked 7 days a week for the last 6 years when my body and mind revolted and demanded a break. I was so burnt out I could barely think straight. Please learn from my experience and don't make that mistake. I know how challenging it is to launch a successful business and how important it is to put your heart and soul into the business, but you need to take time off and find balance in your life. Right now I am running two networking groups, hosting about 25 networking events a month, writing a book and speaking about business networking to various groups a few times a month. It's a pretty quick pace, however, I force myself to carve out two days a month where I don't do any work. What I have found is just taking a few days off helps my mind and body rest, which allows me to have better focus, which makes me more productive. Go to your calendar right now and block out two whole days and be sure to enjoy them.

Read –

The best advice I can give you is to spend a few minutes each day reading about your industry. I like to spend a few minutes each day searching twitter for #networking. I have found some awesome ideas that I have been able to share with my followers. Try to schedule in a few minutes each day to read and share articles with your friends about trends in your industry.

I Messed Up Today –

I am embarrassed to admit that for the first time in six years I forgot an appointment. I have to be honest when the guy called me I was really tempted to lie and say we were scheduled for 11am not 10am or that I had it in my calendar as next week. Luckily I caught myself. Why should I lie to him? He knows I messed up and lying to him will only make it worse. My friends, we all make mistakes so please admit it and tell the person you are sorry. Most people will forgive you and if they don't that's ok too. Either way, reschedule and move on, but do it honestly.

Guard Your Time –

I was speaking with a potential client last week and when I asked him when he wanted to meet. He replied anytime next week works because he has nothing at all going on. Now that may be true my friend but please never admit that to anyone. It sends out the wrong message to people. Your time is your most precious resource so please treat it that way. I have many people reach out to me asking to meet for coffee because they want to talk to me about 'something'. Sorry guys I don't have time for vague requests. If someone doesn't tell you why they want to see you then you can be pretty sure you are in for a sales pitch. I try to do more of these meetings by phone or by Skype. Please be respectful of your own time and the person you want to meet.

Before Events

Five Things to Do Before a Networking Event –

Here is a list of five things that you should do before attending a networking event. Number 1 is register for the event. By registering you are giving the host and the other attendees a chance to review your website and social media sites to gain knowledge about you and your business. Number 2, review the list of attendees and make notes about the people you would like to meet. Most people will be very impressed that you spent the time researching them and their business. Number 3, Bring business cards. Here is the rule of thumb; bring twice as many cards as you think you will need. I have to admit I was embarrassed when I attended a networking event and one of my friends asked me for a stack of cards for his office and I only had four left

on me. Yup that made a great impression and I was rather embarrassed. Number 5, arrive on time for the event. Please factor in traffic and getting lost if you are not familiar with the venue. You want to do your best to maximize the time you have available for networking.

Promote Networking Events You Plan on Attending –

Most people think that it is really easy to run a Business Networking Event and I wish they were correct. But sadly, it's not the field of dreams they think it is. I don't just invite people and they attend. I have to follow up with them, remind them, and send them text messages. If you want to be my best friend, help me promote my events. Helping build the attendance not only benefits me, but you and the entire group as well. It creates chances to meet friends of friends, and make new connections. I always joke with people that I run a really awesome networking group but what am I supposed to say, it stinks but you should come anyway? When you share my events you are helping me raise awareness of the group while at the same time endorsing me to your friends and letting them know that, yeah, it really is an awesome networking group. For that I am very appreciative.

Schedule your networking events like appointments –

If you are reading this book you know that networking is essential to growing your business. However, many people never make networking a priority. They attend events only if it is convenient and will look for reasons to skip the event. Now I do recognize that client appointments are important, but you have to treat networking events like appointments and schedule them in your calendar at the beginning of the month. If someone asked to meet you and you already had an appointment wouldn't you suggest another time? Of course you would but if someone asks to meet you most people will skip the networking event to take the meeting. I always suggest that you try to do both before you just back out of the event. Or try to meet them before the event and then bring them along to the event as your guest and help introduce them around it will make a great first impression.

What if I am shy? –

I was speaking to a client and she told me that she struggles with networking events because she has a hard time walking up to people she doesn't know and introducing herself. So I suggested two ideas that could potentially help her. First, she could go to an event with one of her friends or as I call it the buddy plan. This can be a great way to feel comfortable at an event.

But please don't just stand together all night in the corner, you have to mix and mingle with others, so I always suggest you not go with someone who is as shy as you because that is probably not going to work. I personally like to go to events with my friends and spend the whole night introducing them around and my friends are always extremely appreciative. I always smile because I also receive a lot of benefits from helping, first my friends are thankful and I get a chance to meet more people who think I am a nice guy for helping my friends. Typically when I am at an event someone will ask me if I can introduce them too, so I can often have two or three people I am helping at each event. If you don't have a buddy, call or email the host and ask them if they have anyone who can help. Most groups can pair you with one of their regulars to introduce you around. If you come to one of my events just come over and stand next to me and I will take care of you for the event.

Things to Consider Before You Join a Morning Networking Group –

Are you a morning person? I have a lot of friends who simply do not like getting out of bed in the morning. If you are one of them, then joining a group and making a commitment to be there every week, may not be the best idea for you. What is the location of the group? Many people try to join the biggest morning networking group they can find, thinking that it will result in more referrals. That may be true, but are you committed to making that commute each week? I have many friends that commute over an hour to get to their meeting. Be sure to factor the commute in when making your decision. Next, think about the day of the week the group meets. Many of my friends take a three day weekend all summer long, so joining a Friday group is probably not a great idea. Also, make sure to try out various groups before you join. Now I am a huge fan of morning networking groups and what I like about them is each group has their own personality. Some groups can be very laid back and others can be strict. Look for a group that fits your personality. You should also consider your sphere of influence. Let me give you an example. If you are a Home Stager you want to meet with the realtor, mortgage person, and home builder in your group to see how well you get along and to see if they are open to working with you. This is probably the most important thing to do before you join any morning networking group. If your sphere of influence doesn't plan on using you, they already have long standing contacts in your field, then you may want to search for a different group. Lastly, ask about what happened to the last person that had your seat in the group. Why did they leave the group? If possible talk to that person and ask them. Now I respect that this can get a little tricky sometimes. Things don't work out because of personality conflicts or because you have different approaches to business. But if you find that there have been a few people who have had the seat and left the group quickly then a red flag should go flying and you'll want to know why.

Eat before you attend an event –

Unless you are attending a dinner, you should always eat before you attend an event. Now, I have people say all the time ‘Kevin there is free food, why wouldn’t I take advantage of that?’ Have you ever tried to speak with someone that has a drink in one hand, a plate in the other and a mouth full of food? How did that work out for you? It simply doesn’t. Now if you need to eat, grab a quick bite and get back to the reason you attend the event, to network. I always joke with my friends and say if you think you may have set a new world record for shrimp consumption at a networking event then you are doing something wrong.

Business Networking Event Registration Etiquette –

I want to discuss two types of networking events, Exclusive and Open. Exclusive events are often limited by industry or by the number of attendees. Please only register for these events if you are sure you can attend and please notify the host of the event immediately if something comes up. I host industry exclusive events as part of the New England B2B Networking Group and it is really challenging when people fail to show up. I try to invite people who I believe may be able to do business together or be great referral sources for the other attendees, so if one person is missing it can impact the effectiveness of the event. Now of course I do understand that things may come up at the last minute but, please call the host as soon as you can to let them know. Throughout this book you will see me ask the same question ‘Is that the image you want people to have of you?’ If you fail to show up to an exclusive networking event the message you are sending is that you are not reliable. My friends, nobody wants to refer someone who is not reliable.

Open Networking Events – These events are open to everyone and they are usually well attended. I can tell you the hardest part of running networking events is getting people to register. Many people want to wait to the last minute to sign up to make sure they can attend. I respect this but let me explain to you what goes on behind the proverbial curtain. When I am hosting an event, I think about the size of the venue and how many people will fit in there comfortably. Some venues can hold twenty and some can hold one hundred. So if the venue holds twenty, I invite people until I have twenty registered and then I stop because I don’t want to have 30 people attend a venue that only holds twenty. As a friend of mine always says, people want to know what is in it for them. Well, by registering, it gives me as the host a chance to review all of the attendees so I can do my best to introduce you to potential clients and

partners. Also many of my attendees review the list and will ask me to introduce them to people they may not know. So by not registering you are missing out on the chance to make those connections.

Lastly, I want to speak about what I call networking math, for me my magic number is thirty for open events. If thirty people register then people feel like wow everyone is going and they will want to go too. If I have only between fifteen and twenty then they feel that it's going to be a small crowd so they will skip this one and attend next time. So you are really doing the host a huge favor by registering early.

Events

Arrive on Time –

I really do encourage you to treat networking events like appointments and arrive on time. Now I do understand that this may not always be possible due to the location of the event or unexpected traffic. But if you arrive late to every event, then it does become challenging to refer you. People will feel that you will show up late for the appointments you make as well and nobody likes their time wasted. So please do your best to arrive on time it shows that you take your commitments seriously.

Summertime Networking –

I find that many people take the summer off from networking. I may be biased because I do run two networking groups, but I will do my best to convince you that it is a really bad idea. If you disappear for three or four months it is only natural that people may believe that you went out of business, especially if you are a new business owner. Also you have been working really hard to build relationships through networking and when you take months off from events it can feel like you are starting over again. I suggest that you find time to attend one or two events per month that you really like and find valuable to keep your name out there. If you find that you simply cannot attend events please make sure you are staying in touch with your connections through your newsletter or by emailing them.

Quality over Quantity –

I went out to a networking event recently and only eight people attended. I have to admit I was really disappointed when I arrived because I had lots to do that day and I could have been spending the next two hours doing something else. But I remembered that I am always telling people its quality over quantity when it comes to connections. Of those eight people, two of them were really great contacts for me. Let's be honest, most of us have skipped a networking event because we saw that the event registration was really low, but please remember it only takes one really great contact to make the event successful for you. I have a lot of friends that love to attend networking events with over 100 attendees and they love to call me and invite me to attend, telling me how great they are. I always smile and ask how many people do you talk with at these events and how do you choose who to talk to? The answer never really surprises me. Most people tell me they speak to 5 to 10 people at a typical event. That means the other 90 or so people are pretty much extras in the event right? For some reason they never seem to like that answer. Remember my friends quality over quantity is always your best bet when it comes to making connections.

Quality over Quantity (2) –

We had a gentlemen attend some events for a group I was involved in and he would just walk up to people and hand them his card. Finally one night I stopped him and said why do you pass out your cards to everyone in the room? His obvious response 'so you will call me when you need me'. I smiled and said I will never call you because I don't know you or what you, do so please take your card back. Next time take a moment to introduce yourself and tell me a little bit about what you do and then maybe we can work up to doing business together. He frowned at me grabbed his card and hasn't spoken to me since. You will run into a number of "card pushers" at an event. Their simple goal is to make sure that everyone in the room leaves with their card. My friends you always want to remember when it comes to a networking event it will always be quality over quantity. Please let me be very clear here, you cannot meet everyone at a networking event so please don't try. It comes across like you are running a campaign to be the President of the United States, trying to shake as many hands as possible. Instead focus on having a few really good conversations with people that will help you. Those are the people that you will build the know, like and trust with.

Keep Networking –

Last week I received a message from a friend saying that business has slowed down for them so they want to start attending some of my networking events. I smiled and asked them why they think their business slowed down? They smiled back and said because they stopped attending

networking events. I see this happen all the time. People attend as many networking events as they can and setup lots of meetings and then stop networking. The excuse is because they have appointments setup for the next month, so they won't have time to meet anyone else so why bother networking? Well what happens a month from now when you have met with everyone? That's right you start all over again. You are much better off to consistently attend events so that you are always meeting new people and staying in touch with your contacts. Have you ever asked what happened to someone that stopped attending networking events? Your first thought is 'are they still in business?' is that what you want people thinking about you?

Are You Dominating the Conversation? –

One of the things I like to do after I meet with someone is to spend some time thinking about how good of a job I did explaining the benefits of my networking groups, and sometimes guys, I want a do over because I did a horrible job. It is very important to understand the needs of the person before you pitch your business. I would like to use myself as an example here. As you know I host in person networking events and promote my clients through social media. So if I am out at an event and I ask the person if they come to events all the time and they say 'God no I hate going to events', then it would be rather silly of me to tell them about my in person events. I would be better off talking about my social media promotion. Or maybe you should take a minute to find out why they don't like certain types of events. Maybe you will find a common ground with them. In any case, I do believe that God gave you two ears and one mouth for a reason, try to listen twice as much as you speak.

Be positive –

Have you ever met with someone who was negative about everything? How is your day? I had a horrible day. How is business going? It's been my worst year ever. Now why would you possibly want to do business with a person like this, when you can't be sure they will be in business next week? Please don't be negative when you are speaking with potential clients and business partners, it is a huge turnoff. Please don't use networking events to complain about your life. Please remember to always be positive. Attitude is everything when you are trying to sell yourself and your work.

Arrive Early for Networking Events –

I can tell you the hardest part of hosting a networking event for the host is the first 15 minutes. We can often get nervous thinking nobody is going to show up. Please do what you can to arrive on time. The host will appreciate it. What is in it for you? First, if you arrive early you can often spend some quality time with the host. Now I can only speak for myself, but when I have ten minutes to speak with someone before an event, I find that I usually end up introducing them to a lot of people simply because their story is fresh on my mind. Second, it allows you more one on one time with other early arrivers. Also the host often needs help with some last minute preparations so being that helpful person will go along way with building your relationship with the host. I would like to thank everyone who shows up early for my events. Thank for keeping me calm and entertained.

Measuring the ROI on Business Networking –

I do realize that I said please don't give up on networking, and I meant it. But you do need to measure the ROI from the various groups that you are a member of. When you first start your business, a large portion of your sales may come from one particular networking group. As your business and reputation grows, that may not always be the case. This is why it is very important to track where your referrals are coming from and to track the results every year to determine if you should renew your membership to a particular group. When you are making this calculation you need to factor in the cost of membership and the cost of your time to attend the events, as well as any meetings for coffee to follow up. You may be very surprised by the results. Again, please don't give up on networking. It may just be time to move on to another group(s) if the one you are currently in is no longer producing a fair ROI.

The Biggest Networking Mistake That You Will Ever Make –

I often have people say to me "Kevin, please only introduce me to people who have a need and the means to pay for my goods and services" My friend, that is the biggest mistake you can ever make when networking. You want to remember that you are not selling to your network, you are selling through them. I would like to use myself as an example, my needs as a business owner are pretty straight forward. I need a phone, Wi-Fi, computer, Mountain Dew and pizza. So many people would totally dismiss me because I probably don't have a need for their goods

or services. But I am a professional networker with over 17,000 (and growing) connections. Now do you want to network with me? Please remember to never dismiss people. You never know where your next referral is coming from.

My First Networking Event –

I would like to tell you about my first networking event. I have to admit I was scared and didn't know what to expect. So I showed up filled in my name badge turned around and realized I didn't know anyone in the room. So I started to panic a little and felt like I was back at the old CYO dances. Who should I talk to, what should I say? Luckily for me an older gentlemen came up to me and said 'son you have a deer and the headlights look. I take it this is your first networking event?' I smiled and said yes and he spent some time talking to me and introduced me to a few people. After I spoke with three people, I had reach my goal so I ripped off my name badge and left to pick up some pizza and a Mountain Dew.

To Reduce Your Fear of Networking Focus on Giving Rather Than Receiving –

I have found that when I focus my efforts on helping people connect at networking events; I always have a great night and end up signing a new client or picking up a few really great contacts. When you focus on helping other people, it takes all of the pressure off because you are not trying to sell anything you are just there as a resource. I have seen people fear networking simple because they don't know what to say or they struggle to find that line between trying to gain new clients and coming across as pushy and aggressive. The next event you attend please ask everyone you meet how you can help them or who can you introduce them to that may help them grow their business. This simple approach will help you stand out at networking events. Please be prepared to answer that question for yourself when someone asks you.

Be approachable and smile -

Have you ever walked into a networking event and nobody in the room would make eye contact with you? That has to be one of the most awkward feelings in the world. Please remember people want to feel welcomed when they arrive. So please smile at them and say hello and welcome them into your conversation. I have made some great contacts just by being approachable and being the first person to talk to somebody new at a networking event. I have a friend that always tells the story of how I stopped in the middle of a story at an event because

I knew he was new and waved him to come over and listen and meet my friends. We became friends that night because I showed him some love.