

## Top tips – nine ways to get more from your business cards

Networking forms an important part of many companies marketing strategy, and giving out business cards is crucial to marketing your products or services. Business cards speak volumes about who you are, what you offer and how serious you are marketing your business. Here are nine ways to get more from your business cards and increase your chances of creating a business opportunity.

### **1.) Observe the etiquette**

Whenever you give a business card, ask for one in return. When given a business card, don't just take it and place it in your pocket, make the person feel important by looking at their card for a few seconds. You might see something that could be a topic of discussion. Write comments on the card such as date, location and common points of interest.

These comments will prove valuable when following up with that person. This also demonstrates a sincere interest in the other person. Then place the card in your wallet as this lets them know they reside in a special place with you. Make people feel important in order to make yourself important to them.

### **2.) Always carry them**

Never leave home without them. Put them in your wallet or hand bag and even your casual trousers. Leave some in the glove compartment of your car or back at the office. Even socially you never know who you may come across.

### **3.) Maximise every chance meeting**

You never know when you might meet someone who can help you. Family or friends social events could produce unexpected encounters with people so don't discount those events. Which important purchasing manager might be at that barbeque or down the pub that night, you may meet your next biggest customer in the supermarket. Chatting to someone in a queue at the Post Office may develop into a long term business relationship. Always have those cards ready.

### **4.) Send a card when making payments**

Consider inserting a business card with your payment. Bills contain advertisements so why not advertise your skills or services the same way. You may not think a person on the other side of the country who opens your credit card bill payment can help you, but never underestimate the power of networking. Each of us knows someone, who knows someone, who knows someone. Developing this powerful networking attitude will be a fundamental source of continued success.

### **5.) Ask for referrals**

When giving a business card, people feel more comfortable when you ask; "I would appreciate a referral, if you know anyone that could use my services". People naturally like to do favours for people, so saying "could you do me a favour by referring my services to someone" always places you in a better position with them. They will feel better about helping you so give them more than one card.

### **6.) Follow up after a meeting**

If you ever have a meeting with potential client and wondered why they never called you back, remember the “Out of sight, out of mind” rule. In today’s hectic meeting driven world it’s quite a task for people to keep track of each individual meeting, so it’s up to you to give someone a reason to call you back. Immediately after a meeting send an e-mail thanking the person for their time and use an e-mail template with all your company details on it – it’s an electronic business card. Now you’re in the driving seat and start to stand out from other people. If you get no response, do it again as patience and persistence pay off.

### **7.) Congratulate other peoples achievements**

Trade magazines and newspapers often have stories of people being promoted or joining a company. This is an opportunity for you, so try writing to them to congratulate them on their achievement and enclose a business card. For the cost of a first class stamp, you have just made someone’s day and may create an impression that makes a person feel compelled to respond back to you. Make it a habit to do this on a regular basis as everyone responds to a pat on the back.

### **8.) Be generous**

Give business cards out to everyone, including family and friends. Don’t let vanity stop you from giving out your last business card or giving 2 at a time to each person. You want them to give it to someone else and act as another sales person for you and your services. Hoarding your business cards only makes your wallet feel full, not your bank account.

### **9.) Be in the right place at the right time**

If you have ever been to a business conference and been disappointed with the networking results, consider volunteering to help out at the next event. This puts you in a better strategic position for presenting your goods and services or business card. Company representatives might view you differently if they know you are willing to go the extra mile in helping them make their presence easier to manage. If you help enough people get what they want in life, you will get what you want in life.

### **REMEMBER!!!**

**A business card is your first pitch to prospective clients. It should be consistent with other aspects of your company brand, and if possible, it should stand out. The more people who have a card, the greater the number of new sales people you have working for your business.**

**Don’t just go through the motions and give out cards like confetti. Understand how they work and how to use them to their maximum potential. A good business card will get people talking about your company behind your back, and if you have given them to the right people, that should be good for business.**