

WIDELY acknowledged as Australia's networking guru, Robyn Henderson's career includes more than nine years as a professional speaker, 10 years in sales and telemarketing and 13 years in hospitality. She also ran women's networks for six years and was listed in the 1997 Businesswomen's Hall of Fame and in a leading magazine's Top 100 Spirited Women of Australia. Robyn was presented with the 1997 Speaker award from the National Speakers Association of Australia (NSAA) for her contribution to the speaking industry. She's one of only 11 women in Australia to gain accreditation as a Certified Speaking professional with the NSAA. More recently, Robyn received the prestigious 2000 Nevin Award, which is given annually to a member of the NSAA whose accomplishments reflect outstanding credit, respect, honour and admiration of the entire speaking profession. She's also the author of six books, the latest titled *Masters of Networking* which features the likes of Bill Gates and Colin Powell. According to Robyn, not only is networking an essential life skill, it is also the most basic business building tool in today's competitive market. She has spoken in more than 10 countries and presents over 150 times a year. She has never advertised — all her work comes from networking and referrals. Her piece for MICE Asia-Pacific is called *Be Seen, Get Known, Move Ahead*.



— ROBYN HENDERSON —

Be Seen, Get Known, MOVE AHEAD

In our fast-paced global marketplace world, it is too easy not to follow up potential prospects and strangers met at networking events. In fact, figures show fewer than 13 per cent of us follow up after making those all-important new connections. What a waste of time, energy and effort, not to mention money if you don't follow up.

Today we connect face to face, by phone, fax, email, teleconference and Internet so who can remember every chance conversation with a stranger? "Sure, they seemed interesting — but they said they'd follow up, and they haven't — YET."

How often do we hear this comment — and if people are saying that about us, can we really call ourselves a good networker?

If you don't follow up when you meet new people, you may as well have stayed at home in the first place.



We often become very smug at our regular business networks, MIAA, EIAA, AIME, Chambers of Commerces and so on — we know more than 50 per cent of the room, we get a referral every month or so and we are comfortable. However, if we really want to put a rocket under our referrals, expand our client base and really get our business and career rocking — we need to attend other networks. And most importantly, we need to follow up with the people we met there.

Let's look at a few strategic yet powerful post event follow-ups.

1. When you commit to forwarding information post event, don't over commit. Be honest, if you have a full schedule that week, indicate that it may be four-five days before you can forward the information and check if that is okay. Most people are quite okay with this. It's when you say you will do something and don't do it that you can lose credibility.

TIP: That old phrase — under promise and over deliver is exactly what you aim to do. Tell them you will have the information by Friday and surprise them when it arrives on Wednesday or Thursday — constantly aim to exceed people's expectations.

2. Your post-event system may include having a specific business card holder for that network, where you place all the cards from the people you meet at this event. Prior to putting them in

the folder, you make a note on the back of the card with the date and place you met the person and something you remember about them — ideally something they are interested in outside of work. I refer to this something as the WOW — the thing that is unique to that person, the thing that puts a sparkle in their eye when they talk it — maybe its their favourite hobby, sporting team, external study, renovation, grand child - this WOW will be unique to each individual.

Once you know a person's WOW it is so much easier to network with them and to build solid trust and communication.

TIP: Finding out the WOW of each of your current clients is a great way to improve your communication with that client and really understand where they are coming from. And like everything in life, if you never ask the question (So, how do you spend your weekends or your free time?) you will never know the answer.

3. Prior to going to the next event at that network, you browse through the cards to remind yourself who you met. You may also enter the contact details from the card of key prospects in your electronic database and make a note to reconnect with them in 30-45 days. Remember you are building trust and earning the right to gain business as well as aiming to be remembered positively — without being pushy.

TIP: The quickest way to earn the right to do business with a prospect is to give them a referral. And to do that you have to do your homework and ask questions about the profile of their ideal prospect.

4. One of the easy ways of making contact with people post event, is to send them a copy of an invitation to another event they may be interested in attending. An email or fax: "Hi Joe, enjoyed our conversation at the Chamber of Commerce, here is the invitation I mentioned. Hope to connect with you again." Another may be sending an article that is

relevant to the person's business or profession. You may in fact collect a file full of these and forward as required.

TIP: Keep an eye out for articles that interest you — if they interest you, they may also interest your prospects. And you don't have to have hundreds of articles, just a small quantity on a variety of business and career building topics.

For your interest, www.corporatetrends.com.au has a large selection of appropriate articles on a variety of business subjects.

5. Send an electronic postcard. Visit www.networkingtowin.com.au and click on the icon — send a postcard. You will find a variety of designs that are different, easy to send and download quickly. The key point is that you follow up.

TIP: Aim to be different. Avoid just sending a standard email — great to meet you, plonk — here is my promotional material. This information will be deleted, sometimes even before it is read. Take the time to build a relationship.

The absolute fastest way to be seen, get known and move ahead in any circle is to follow up. Do what you say you are going to do. Exceed people's expectations - every time.

If you see attending networking events as a three part process,

preparation before you go, connecting with people at the function and most importantly follow up after the event, you will really start to see reward for your effort. Always remember small but significant help can be extremely powerful and memorable. Happy networking.

- Global Networking Specialist Robyn Henderson will send you a complimentary networking ebook when you email her at: robyn@networkingtowin.com.au

Or visit her website - www.networkingtowin.com.au

New Mercure hotel targets business, conference markets

ONE OF Indonesia's most historic hotels, now part of Accor's Grand Mercure network, is targeting business travellers and conference groups.

The Grand Mercure Phoenix Yogyakarta hotel can cater for major functions, meetings and incentives in the 500sqm of function space.

Located in the centre of Yogyakarta near Malioboro's shopping and entertainment district, the hotel plans to launch new packages supported by the latest audio-visual equipment and a range of themed activities both within and outside the property.

Special theme evenings will include Dinner at the Palace, Malioboro Street by night and Java Delights.

The property has been converted from an original

colonial mansion built in 1918. Added to in the 1930s and 1940s, the hotel was operated as the Phoenix Heritage in the 1990s. Now fully renovated and upgraded, the Grand Mercure preserves its classic art nouveau style and combines it with stunning Chinese and Javanese cultural influences.

A new wing that maintains the historic design of the building has been added.

The 143 rooms, including 10 suites, offer private balconies and are furnished in the style reflecting the hotel's past combined with the latest modern comforts.

The hotel joins a number of other heritage properties managed by Accor in the Asia-Pacific region, including the century-old Grand Mercure Hydro Majestic in the Blue Mountains near Sydney.