

“Professional Networking for Success”

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Course Description: In this course students will be brought up-to-date on the concept of networking, replacing the outmoded, insincere “backslapping” model with today’s caring and effective process. The instructor will review what is involved in networking and what people who network can expect concerning their own needs and goals. The instructor will reveal the unspoken rules of networking and provide practical tips that the participants can put to use immediately. The course time includes time for student questions.

Outline:

1. **Review of networking:** What it is and isn’t; setting goals; skills involved; who makes up your network; the four steps to success: preparation, participation, assessment, and action.
2. **Networking tools:** Preparation of a few simple tools will enable students to participate in all kinds of situations with confidence.
3. **Planning and preparation:** Specific steps that will document the student’s goals in networking and help guide the student to choosing groups that will help him meet those goals.
4. **Action, assessment, and follow-up:** Practical tips on entering and participating in a networking event or group; thoughts on assessing the value of the event or group; and thought-starters on following up to build the student’s network of contacts.
5. **Review of different types of networking groups:** Chambers of commerce, professional and trade organizations, groups based on hobbies and interests, etc.
6. **Checklist for evaluating groups/events:** How to evaluate whether the person will accomplish his or her ultimate goals by participating in a group.

Participants will learn:

- What networking is and isn’t, so they will use it for the right reasons and in the right circumstances.
- Key skills involved in networking, so they know what’s important and what they might need to brush up on.
- What networking can and can’t accomplish, so they aren’t disappointed, don’t expect the impossible, and don’t offend others.
- Practical tips for participating in a networking event, including do’s and don’t’s, how to enter and work the room, conversation starters, and how to deal with people who don’t understand how to network. They enter an event with *a plan*, which is empowering and builds self-confidence.
- The best way to collect business cards, and what to do with them afterwards, so they don’t collect cards meaninglessly, only to discard them and waste opportunities.
- The different types of networking organizations, so they can choose groups that meet their goals, and they can point others to helpful groups.
- How to choose a group to get involved with, and how to evaluate a group or event afterwards, so they can then decide how involved to be, thus ensuring their time and energy is well spent.

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Handouts

- A copy of all slides with space for notes.
- A handbook containing specific tasks to prepare to network, attend meetings successfully, assess results, and follow-up.
- Index card template for networking meeting notes (see exercises).

Class exercises

- How to break into a group of talking people at a networking function. (Group exercise.)
- Use an index card (provided by instructor) to write down meeting details and what is to be accomplished by going to a particular meeting. Index card becomes template for future use. (Solo exercise.)

Audiences

- a. Job seekers.
- b. Sales and marketing staff of any size company.
- c. Professional service providers such as attorneys, accountants, insurance agents, real estate agents, etc.
- d. Small business owners for virtually any type of business, but especially service businesses, e.g., consultants.
- e. Nonprofits seeking funders, donors, contractors, and employees to accomplish their missions.
- f. Anyone who wants to build a network of contacts and colleagues as a source of information, support, and referrals.

Instructor bio

Mary Anne Shew is the president of ShewTech Associates, a business that helps others build their businesses through market development projects and effective web sites. While her career has focused on putting technology to work for business, since starting her own firm, she has gained a substantial reputation as an excellent networker who has helped people find jobs, find people to hire, get business, and make other meaningful connections.

Mary Anne serves (or has served) as a board or committee member in a variety of professional and nonprofit organizations, including the Rochester Professional Consultants Network, the National Association of Women Business Owners, eBusiness Association, Rochester Arts and Lectures, Writers & Books, Wilson Commencement Park, and others. Mary Anne was a nominee for the 2001 and 2004 ATHENA Awards sponsored by the Women’s Council of the Rochester Business Alliance.

In her corporate career, Mary Anne designed, developed, and delivered successful training programs for internal software users. Since starting her own business, she has given presentations and workshops on various aspects of the Internet, entrepreneurship, and networking. Groups to whom she has presented include the Rochester Professional Consultants Network, National Association of Women Business Owners, Public Relations Society of America, Women in Communications, Brighton Rotary, Association for Women in Computing, Career Development Services, Albany (NY) Consulting Alliance, New Horizons (former Xerox employees), Goodrich and Sherwood, Drake Beam Moran, and SCORE. She has been invited to speak to several of these groups multiple times.