

A Network is a Powerful Resource

Contributed by Mel Brooks
Sunday, 17 January 2010

Start by developing your resources. A Network is a powerful resource

Getting ahead in business requires a personal investment on your part. However, investing time and effort in upgrading skills and knowledge is not enough. You need to invest in a good network. A network consists of a wide range of people who will be willing to provide you with information at short notice.

How does a network fit into the scheme of your business plans? Everyone needs a core of expertise in order to get the job done, but to get ahead in your own business; you need a much wider range of knowledge. Being a specialist in your field is well and good, but as your business grows, you need to know as much, if not more, than those who report to you in order to manage them effectively. A business owner needs access to current information about a wide range of things. A well-developed network is the answer.

Being able to provide information gives you power. A member of your staff, a business associate or client may ask you for advice or have e.g. a legal query. By using your network, you become an information broker. Never claim to be an expert in all fields yourself. Your power comes from being the source of information.

How do you develop a network? Your network need not consist only of people with whom you socialise. Engage in activities that expose you to people from other fields or organisations. Do this by taking part in the activities of business associations relevant to your business – and your clients businesses. Mix with people from other businesses in your industry and even businesses in other industries. Hand out and collect business cards. It may seem like hard work, but this is all part of your personal investment. And the more you use your network, the more it will grow. But don’t only be a user - really good networks are based on reciprocity.

Your network can be the backbone of your power in business.

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