



# Power Networking: Getting Past The Surface Layer

*By Steve Mortensen*

One of the best ways to grow a business is by networking – as in getting wired into the local business community. There are dozens of networking opportunities in town, including chambers of commerce, civic clubs, affinity groups, and networking organizations. But many people struggle with networking, don't get much business from it, and drop out. Let's review what often happens, and what you can do to go from networking novice to power networker.

Assume you show up at a networking event and begin introducing yourself. You ask people what business they're in, and find out that very few are good candidates for your products or services. You give business cards to everyone who extends a hand to shake yours. Then you leave, wondering if you've just wasted your time. Has this ever happened to you?

This experience is common among those new to networking. They see what I call the surface layer of opportunity, but have not yet considered the depths beneath. In other words, even if nobody at a networking event seems like a good prospect for you, it is almost certain that somebody you met knows a great prospect for you. However, that introduction won't be made until you establish a relationship of trust.

Earning trust requires more than simply becoming a familiar face. You need to know your associates, understand their business needs, and contribute to their success before expecting reciprocation. If you're willing to invest time and effort in the process, you'll eventually be well rewarded. One effective way of starting the process is to learn the basics of someone's business, and then ask, *"How can I know if one of my associates is a good prospect for you?"*

You may need to learn more about their strengths and reputation before introducing someone you know, but as soon as you give a qualified referral, you'll become a valued associate, and start earning trust and access to depths of their network.

---