

## **10 Commandments of Networking a Mixer by Trey McAlister and Dr. Ivan Misner**

When asked, most of those who attend mixers say that they really don't like them for two main reasons: 1) they hate being bombarded by unprofessional "salesy" people who are just there to direct prospect them and 2) they walk away from an event feeling it had been a waste of time. If you have ever heard this (or perhaps even felt this), the following are ideas that, when done effectively, will all but change your approach and success at mixers.

### **Commandment 1: Have Your Networking Tools with You at All Times**

- plenty of business cards (readable print with full info)
- a pocket-sized business card file that has the business cards of the professionals whom you refer

### **Commandment 2: Set a Goal for the Number of People You'll Meet**

Don't let the only goal in your mind be the time you plan to leave. You set goals for your business, why not effectively use your time at a mixer? Based on your energy level and inspiration, set a reachable goal considering the type of group and number in attendance. Some ideas:

How many people do you want to meet?  
What might you be able to do FOR THEM?

### **Commandment 3: Act Like a Host, Not a Guest**

By acting like a host you place yourself into a completely different mindset and your role at the mixer becomes more active.

You can also volunteer to be an ambassador or visitor host at the networking groups you belong to which will help hone your skills and learn to get great exposure to many business professionals in a short time.

### **Commandment 4: Listen, and Ask the Five "W" Questions- Who, What, Where, When and Why**

The answer to each of these questions will give you a better grasp of the individual and the type of work they do. Thus, you're in a better position to refer them to others or invite them to different networking groups.

### **Commandment 5: Give a Referral Whenever Possible**

A successful networking strategy should be built on the philosophy of "givers gain." However, you need to be creative in this area.-REMEMBER, your credibility is on the line, so if you don't know them well yet, information is better than having them get in touch with someone you know.

Few of the people you meet for the first time at a business mixer are going to express a need for your product or service. That doesn't mean you can't give them something.

If you work hard at developing your skills, people will remember you in a positive way.

### **Commandment 6: Describe Your Product or Service**

After you have learned what other people do, make sure to tell them what you do. Be specific but brief.

Use the Sixty-second Introduction to its full advantage.

(for more info on 60 second infomercials, check out BNI.com or look into the Referral Institute's Certified Networker Program course)

### **Commandment 7: Exchange Business Cards with the People You Meet**

Keep your cards in one pocket and put other people's cards in the other pocket.

Always review the cards for pertinent information.

For example, if you've just received the card of an attorney, check to see whether the card indicates the attorney's specialty.

To demonstrate your interest, write the missing information you collect on the back of the card.

### **Commandment 8: Spend Ten Minutes or Less with Each Person You Meet and Don't Linger with Friends and Associates**

Recalling Commandment 2, if your goal is to meet a given number of people, then you can't spend too much time with any one person, no matter how interesting the conversation gets.

If it's going that well schedule a one-on-one and move on. In fact if you want to learn about how to use "funneling conversations" to reach your goals at mixers, contact [Trey@referralinstitutesfbay.com](mailto:Trey@referralinstitutesfbay.com) for more info.

**Don't try to close deals** while you're networking; it's impractical.

Be prepared with some good questions to ask. A couple to think about:

- Why did you get into this business?
- What challenges have you resolved for a recent client?

Learn to leave conversations gracefully. Honesty is usually the best policy.

### **Commandment 9: Write Comments on Backs of the Business Cards You Collect**

This helps you remember more about the person when you follow up the next day.

When you conclude a conversation with a new acquaintance, step away and jot down notes, including the date and location of the event, what the person is seeking, etc.

**This info is crucial for effective follow-up**-becomes more important the busier you are.

### **Commandment 10: Follow Up with the People You Meet**

Some people can spend untold hours in networking organizations and still fail at networking because their follow-up was appalling.

Remember, good follow-up is the lifeblood of networking.

You can obey the previous nine commandments religiously, but if you don't follow up effectively, you're wasting your time!