**Networking Benefits**

Business networking should focus the attention on growing your organization and developing two-way dialogues that have benefits to all parties involved. When you network you give and receive. Here are a few benefits of networking:

1. **Information sharing**– The depth of knowledge and experience from a group of people can be staggering. Networking will provide many opportunities to ask questions and receive feedback. Learning from other’s “best practices” saves time, energy and resources.

2. **Connections**– When opportunity “knocks” you want to be in a position to take advantage of it. Many times there is a need for information-sharing, joint ventures, partnerships, and even needs for services. Having a wide network of individuals to contact may be the difference in seizing the moment or missing it completely.

3. **Promotion**– Whether promoting yourself or your organization, having a large network may assist you in promoting a new product launch, or driving new members to your organization. “Word of mouth” is still one of the best forms of advertising. Spreading good information about you or your organization may provide leads for organization growth.

4. **Credibility**– Improving your reputation and finding support are also benefits of networking. If you are successful at networking, you might get a reputation for being a person people will want to talk to and get to know. You may have valuable information, ideas, and resources those in your network may need. Establishing your desire to assist a colleague increases your credibility.

**Networking Opportunities**

Opportunities for potential networking venues and partners may be found by:

Attending Chambers of Commerce meetings, as well as Business Leads Groups, Industry Groups, etc.

Hosting your own networking event (i.e. Business After-Hours, Open House, etc.)

Looking in your local area for networking events that are open to the public

Attending industry related events at the local, state, regional, or national levels. Face-to-face networking has many advantages, but don’t forget about social networks. They offer advantages as well.

**Potential Cost Effective Events Include:**

Breakfast or Lunch Leads groups (no fee required)

Chamber Events (fee depends on Chamber of Commerce)

Linked In based Groups (no fee, except cost of meal)

Organizations such as Meet Up, LinkedIn Groups, offer us the opportunity to grow our Brand, with minimal funds needed. Most (fee based) Groups will allow you a couple of visits before you have to commit. By that point, you have already made some **Connections.**

**I could see Myself, Sam and Brian attending events of interest, maybe a couple per week, with minimal Interruption to the work day. I will speak with both of them to peak their interest.**