

SHAW ACADEMY

NOTES

Career Advancement Programme



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Lesson 4: Networking

Summary sheet

Emotional bank account

There is a right way and a wrong way to open a conversation with a stranger. People in sales and people who are doing surveys on the street are doing it wrong when they open with something like ‘Can I have a minute of your time?’

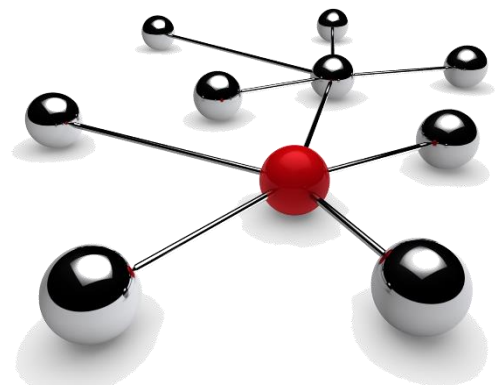
The reason is because they are trying to take something before they give.

Networking approach

It cannot be about getting whatever you can from an event or an interaction with someone. You must go into networking with the thought of helping others. You must also play the long game and ensure that you are focussed on building rich and deep relationships with people that can be mutually beneficial.

Why we need networking

- Regardless of whether you are already involved in the industry you are seeking employment in or you are brand new to it - You will need allies.
- You are looking to build relationships with people that will be mutually beneficial.



Where to network

Any time you think there is an opportunity to network with someone then you should take it. No one is waiting for you to regale them with your wit and wisdom, you have to start the conversation and see where it goes. Everyone you interact with who you do not know is an opportunity to network.

Preparing for Networking

1. Research

The networking really begins before the event ever starts. Any event worth attending is going to have a temporary website in place that acts as a noticeboard for the event and probably some sort of registration area where you can see a little bit of information about who else is going to be attending. This is when you look that person up on professional social media sites like LinkedIn. It is important that you are not looking this person up while asking yourself “What can I get from them?” you’re asking yourself, “I wonder do I have anything to offer them?” or even “I wonder do we have anything in common?” If you discover that there could be a conversation opener there then you mentally put that into your back pocket and remember to keep an eye out for them during the event. You then move on to anyone else who you know has registered and continue the process. There may even be a discussion board for the event where you can leave comments and begin gentle introductions.



2. Presenting yourself

When we have done some research in the days leading up to the event we then consider how others are going to see us. It is socially unacceptable to say we judge people on how they look, but it is really the first clue we have to how a person is going to be, is by judging the way they present themselves. Be sure to stand out from the crowd. Make sure it is something you are comfortable with, shoes, watch, nice jacket – don't be the office clown it's exhausting for other people.

3. Handling anxiety

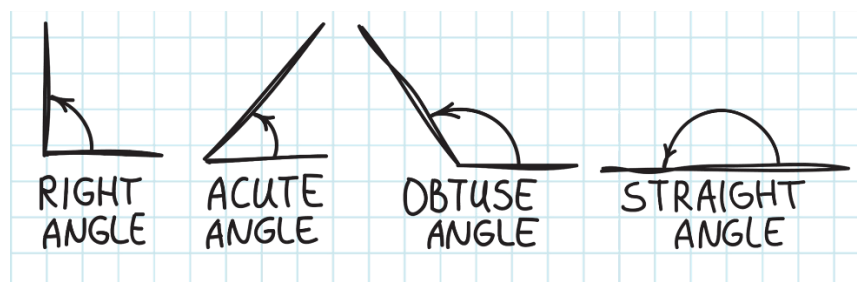
It stems from it being a threat to your life when you left the tribe back in the caveman days. Being away from the safety of our tribe would have meant certain death. So there was an instinct that developed in us to remove the impulse to leave the group. The bottom line is that it is hardwired into us and you simply can choose to be overwhelmed by it or ignore it.

Openers

In order to start a conversation and to overcome the approach anxiety it is important to have an intriguing way of starting a conversation. We call these openers. It should be something that is genuinely interesting to you and to the person you are starting the conversation with.

Approach Angle

There are a few different elements to be considered when it comes to walking up to strangers and striking up a conversation. The first is the angle you approach. This is not some high concept about your tone of voice or your worldly outlook. I mean the actually angle you take with your feet to



walk up to someone. Think about it. What happens if someone you have known your whole life walks up behind you and just starts talking? You get the fright of your life and maybe after a few minutes you might calm down. Standing directly in front of them as you approach is not a great idea either. Why? Because it is too confrontational. It is almost intimidating.

Give a reason



Unless you give a reason as to why you are asking someone a question you will most likely be met with a blank stare. You need to ensure that you are rooting your opener. That is, providing some sort of basis for striking up a conversation. Usually the easiest way of doing this is to mention something that is undeniably true. For example 'while we are both getting coffee...'



Demonstrating Higher Value

Unless you are Ron Burgandy from Anchorman you cannot simply go up to people and say “I’m kind of a big deal around here”. You have to display it without coming out and directly saying it. This is the point in a networking conversation where you ‘display higher value’. This means that you should include somewhere at the beginning of your conversation something that displays your expertise or knowledge in your field.

Conversational hooks

When in conversation with others they will give you ‘hooks’ or ‘threads’ which you can pull on to keep the interaction going. These can be anything from talking about their work to where they went on holiday. If they don’t mention specifically where they went on holiday or the company that they work for, this is your hook. You can just ask them and continue the conversation from there.

Time Constraint

Whenever someone strikes up a conversation with us we instinctively question how long we will be engaged with them for. Regardless of how well the conversation is going with someone you need to let them know that you are not going to take up all of their time. A time constraint is just a little line that suggests that you are only stopping to talk to them for a brief moment. For example, something like “I’m just on the way over to grab a coffee but before I do...”

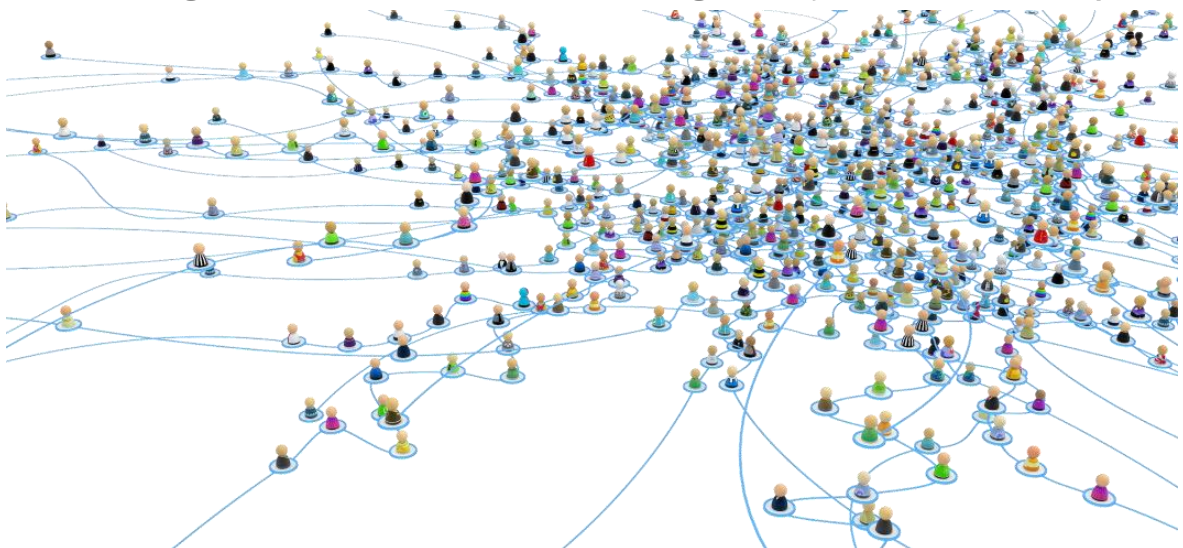


Group Pawning



Imagine if you are now the person making the introductions. You approach one group get their opinion on something and then move to another group and say ‘hey let’s ask these guys what they think’ you approach the new group, ask the question and then introduce one group to another. You can then excuse yourself using your time constraint, find another group and start again.

Networking is about understand others and creating mutually beneficial relationships



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advancemycareer@shawacademy.com



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