

## Networking is a Marathon Sport

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I have a confession to make-I'm addicted to networking. The decision to network started 16 years ago and I have never looked back.

The beauty about the mortgage business is that EVERYONE is a prospect. Have you ever met a homeowner that did not want to save money on their mortgage? How about a renter who wants to be a homeowner?

You can network anywhere. Everyone you know should be aware that you are in the mortgage business. There are tactful ways of letting everyone know what you do for a living. Hey, I have the attitude that if they need a mortgage, they will end up doing business with someone- so it might as well be me.

It's not about where, it's about how. All of us have 24 hours each day, and it is important to make the best use of it. Your time is valuable, and you should choose how you are going to network. Over the years, I have received business from my roller hockey team, people I have met on the golf course, church and my children's playgroup and sports teams. It's like killing two birds with one stone.

Showing up is half the battle. Woody Allen was right. Just being there is sometimes enough. Be consistent. Show up at meetings, parties, and events. Eventually people will start to notice you and ask you what you do for a living.

Participation is the other half. When given the opportunity, volunteer! Once you establish that you are trustworthy, reliable, and ethical, people will feel comfortable about doing business with you.

Have a great elevator speech. People will ask you what you do, and you need to be PREPARED with your answer. **You've got about 30 seconds** to hold their attention and give them a reason to care-and tell them how you can help them-and not how wonderful and great you are. Have this ready to go! Don't stumble through it when an opportunity arises to share your information.

Give before you get. A "giver" gets! Always start by trying to connect with others. There is nothing you can do to obtain business faster than referring business to someone else first.

Put that business card away. Don't run around passing out business cards. Get to know someone first and make them **WANT** your card. Don't give it out unless you are asked for it. If you are sincere and give them a reason to care, they will want to know how to get in touch with you.

Follow up. A relationship is a series of contacts and must be established before business is transacted. Put a system in place to follow up right away with hand-written notes that are personal and effective.

Places to network.

Anywhere

Chamber of Commerce

Community Service Organizations

Religious Groups

Professional Associations (both industry and non-industry)

Sports Leagues

Professional Network Organizations

Non-Profit Organizations

Neighborhood Associations

I can assure you that if you make the conscience decision to network and let everyone know what you do for a living, you'll have more business than you ever thought possible.

**Cost:** Business Cards

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