



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT FOLLOW-UP

I want to talk today about business development follow up. It's a very **simple concept**, yet it can be one of the hardest tasks we face as business people. It's something **we have to make time for each and every day**, but it is often the first thing we don't do when we're confronted with something that seems more 'urgent'. Following-up on business development tasks is not complicated stuff. But I think we would all agree that it can be easy to let it slide.

Let's take a look at what happens when we let something simple slide:

Let's say that you're out shopping on the weekend and find some beautiful plants. You decide to buy two of them---one for your home and one for the office. Here they are:



Now, let's say that you put the first plant in your kitchen at home. And every Saturday, you get up, you make coffee, and, because it's on the counter near the coffee maker, you get into the habit of watering the plant right after you've got the coffee started. So, here's the plant in the kitchen:



Now, the other plant you bought that day you've taken to your office. You put it on your desk and you give it all the care it needs. For six weeks, you keep it watered, maybe you add a little Miracle-Gro, who knows! But one day, you need to make space on your desk and you move it over to your file cabinet, and pay less attention to making sure it stays watered. You get busy, there a million other things on your mind when you're in the office, and you just pretty much forget it. You might water it every once in a while, but by and large, you neglect it altogether.

So, what has happened to the plant we ignored?



It died. That's right....**DEAD.**

So here you are today. Plants are the furthest thing from your mind! But you have invested in learning more about better business development. You are devoting time to this task. You've spent the money for the event. You think business development follow-up is important.

So what happens if you leave here and you ignore everything that transpired while you were here? Yes, the answer is very simple. **DEAD PLANT!**

So right now, let's make a pact with ourselves. Let's agree that today will be different. **Today will be the day that we create some healthy habits that will help our businesses grow.**

FIVE SIMPLE CONCEPTS

There are five simple concepts in play when you talk about business development follow-up. Everything I'm going to talk about for the next 15 minutes requires a relatively small investment in time management. I'm here to tell you that all you need to make this work is 10 minutes a day...that's right, just 10 minutes a day.

TEN MINUTES A DAY

Let's talk about what can you do after leaving here for the very first ten minutes of each day. I'm going to lay out for you how to allocate the first ten minutes of your day tomorrow! So no excuses! I'm going to do the work for you!

1 Choose two or three people you met here today and put them in your 'stay in touch' business development database. It's not important that you have an actual 'database'—you can do this in your day planner, if you use that, or a Palm, or in a spreadsheet. But regardless, you want to pick two or three people and here's what you do—put the names and complete contact information of at least one of them, into the database. Every piece of info you have—phone, email, fax, etc.—into your database.

2 Determine the value-add for that contact. You have to ask yourself, what can I do for this person I met today that will help my business and stand out to them. How do I get their attention? How do I get on their radar? It's not as simple as: I'm an attorney—I'm a mortgage broker—I'm a real estate developer—I make handmade jewelry—I'm a graphic artist.

This is not the answer. We live in a VERY commoditized world, and if you think there's an emphasis on commoditization today, just wait three years from now.

So, what do we do? We do something very personalized, very thoughtful, and very sincere to help that person succeed in THEIR business efforts. The attitude you take is as simple as: **What can I do to help? I want to help, too!**

PEOPLE CONNECT WITH PEOPLE FIRST, THEN BUSINESS FOLLOWS.

So what can you do to make an impression? I'm going to give you some suggestions. You could introduce that person to someone who would be a powerful and valuable connection in their business over lunch. Remember, people connect with people first, THEN Business Follows.

You could invite that person to an event, a business or social function and as your guest, make sure that you graciously include them in your circle and promote their business and their mission. Ask your self: What can you do?

Another thing you can do is talk to people you know about who you've met. Let's say you've met a graphic designer today. You get her card, you go to her website, you look at her work, and it's great. On top of that, you really enjoyed talking with her. So maybe you call a friend of yours with a direct mail business, who always has the need for good graphic designers because of the amount of collateral they are constantly creating. You say, "Hey, I met the greatest woman today. I think you two would work well together and her work is great. Could I have her call you?"

What can you do? You can invite this person as your guest to an e-women networking event, invite this person as a guest to hear a speaker at an organization you belong to, or invite this person to a grand opening of sporting event.

What can I do? I met Kristy Rogers more than a year ago. I have referred a number of your speakers for e-women networking to assist Kristy.

What can you do? One of your e-women networking members who was referred to me by Kristy as a client for a small project sent me a lovely box of chocolates from her native country.

What can you do? Believe me, this is not rocket science, it is much more important that you actually do something ... usually much more important than what you actually do.

③ Put a **“stay in touch program”** in place. The new labeling for the process of staying in touch with clients, potential clients and referral sources is “dripping”. For this, you want to build a consistent message—delivered to a consistent audience—on a consistent basis. This program can involve the combination of direct mail, a one page letter on your letterhead, email, newsletters, etc. Margaret Di Maria, one of your e-women networking members and the graphic artist I have used almost exclusively for 15 years has attached a couple samples of things we have used for clients for their “stay in touch” program over the years. You will see them included in the hard copy of this speech handed out at the end.

We could spend all day discussing the optimal stay in touch program, but suffice it to say that the reason most professionals fall down on their stay in touch program is that they get too busy and neglect keeping it consistently in place. We focus on the moment at hand and ignore our business development tasks. And we learned earlier what happens when you ignore them—your plant dies!

It's pretty illogical if you think about it. Like the plant, you spend all the initial investment watering and caring for it. Then you get distracted and forget to tend the garden, as they say, and the plant dies. Your business development efforts will die, too, if you stay away from them for too long.

④ **Add to your network and your database** on a daily, weekly, monthly basis. If you really step back and think about it, you are constantly making new contacts. And every time you make a new contact, it should go into your database. Do this as you make them and, while you're at it, take the time to update the contacts that are already in your database.

Anytime you get one of those change-of-address emails or a card in the mail, immediately go to your database and make that change. If

you do this, the management of your stay in touch database becomes really simple.

⑤ OK, this is possibly the most important of all of the steps. Quite simply... **stay focused**. Do steps one, two, three and four each and every day!!

Gone are the days in the professional services arena when business just waltzed in the door. The only way you are going to get a substantive business development pipeline going is to make contacts, mine those contacts, and....**FOLLOW-UP!**

I want to close with a well-known Woody Allen quote. He says: **“Eighty percent of success is just showing up.”**

I think he's right, and I want you to think of business development follow-up this way: it's as simple as showing up. And if you 'show-up' every day and you spend your 10 minutes on business development follow-up, the other 20% of success will come to you in record time.

SO LET'S RE-CAP WHAT WE'VE TALKED ABOUT TODAY

① **Tomorrow**, you are going to **choose two or three of the contacts you made today** and put them on your 'stay-in-touch' list. Remember, we said you can do this in a spreadsheet, in your planner—whatever works for you. But start it tomorrow, and start it with your contacts from today's conference.

② Once you've put those folks in your 'stay-in-touch' database, you are going to **determine your Value-Add** for each. You're going to ask yourself “What can I do to help this person out?” and you're going to write that down next to their name and you are going to set about doing it.

③ **Put your 'stay-in-touch' program into place**. This is where the 10 minutes a day comes in and really pays off.

EVERY DAY YOU ARE GOING TO SET ASIDE TEN MINUTES

and you are going to 'work' your stay in touch program. You're going to go to that list and pick someone to focus on for that day. It can be as easy as sending an e-mail to say, 'just checking in—are you free for coffee next week?' The important thing to do is to stay in touch, right? So do that! And remember, your stay-in-touch program is designed to not only help you in YOUR business development efforts, but to help your contacts meet THEIR business development needs.

④ Here's where we take the AAC approach—**Always Add Contacts!** You are making them constantly. Part of the genius of spending 10 minutes a day on this is that you aren't going to fall behind in keeping track of all of them! Every day, remember if you've made a contact over the previous 24 hours and, if so, put their contact info into

STAY IN TOUCH!

These marketing cards show a front side and one back side for "stay in touch" programs for 4 different businesses.

For each client we designed 5 or 6 backsides which were sent out every 4-6 weeks.

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your database. And as we said, whenever you get change of address info, put that in immediately. By the way, when you get a change of address email or card, that person has done your work for you that day—just spend your 10 minutes writing back to them at their new email or address and figure out how you can be their Value-Add!

5 Finally, stay focused. If you spend this 10 minutes a day, I promise you it will prove to be the most profitable 10 minutes of your day! The key differentiator for business now is how well you network. It's a crowded marketplace, and the people who can master business development follow-up are the people who will succeed in today's business climate.

HOMEWORK!

Now, I'm going to give you a little homework! Just a little bit! This weekend, go to your local flower shop or Home Depot or wherever you like to shop, and buy two plants, both the same. Put one at your office and one at home. If either wilts, reevaluate your business development activity. I promise you—if you are neglecting one of the plants, then you are neglecting your business development follow-up!

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR TIME TODAY.



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