



4 tips for social networking in real life & online

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We all know what it's like to go to networking events: Hi, How Are You? What Do You Do? Can I Have Your Business Card? Etc.

But collecting and distributing business cards that ultimately get slipped into a drawer is not enough anymore; it is important to create meaningful relationships both online and offline that people remember, even after the business card has been filed.

It's about being part of a community and joining discussions.

Here are **4 tips** that apply to social networking in real life and online.

1. Be real, be yourself

Real life: Think about how you want others to act toward you – with genuine interest, not with glances around the room to see if anybody better is coming along. This takes patience and good listening skills. Make sure that the friendly, not-nervous part of you that everyone loves comes out and shines – yes, you can even make jokes. We're human, and connect to other humans who captivate us with their personality, not with their business suits and stiff business-like manners.

Online: Revisit your profile and be clear about who you are. Relationships are built on trust. Be aware that both colleagues and personal relationships will probably have access to your profile so make sure to be comfortable with whatever appears there. Try to have as much of a personality as is possible online.

2. Help others - don't be pushy or sales-y

Real life: Make sure to get to know people's names so you can introduce them to others if you see a good business match. Connecting people, or offering pearls of wisdom based on your conversations will give you instant fans. On the other

hand, be sure to never aggressively push your website or product. People want to connect with you, not buy something.

Online: Listen to the questions being asked in your area of expertise. Can you help? If so, get out there and start offering tips, advice, resources, and anything else you've got hidden up your sleeve. Being persistent about offering help will bring you trust and friends, while being persistent about sales and products will only damage your reputation.

3. Prepare and research who will be there

Real Life: Try to find out who is attending and who will be on the panels, and look up some information about them. Think about how flattered you are when someone comes up to you and knows something about what you do or has read something you wrote.

Online: Before becoming part of a new network, get to know the site's culture, rules, and style before jumping in. It's often a good idea to "lurk" there a bit to see what types of information is being published, and the styles of conversations taking place.

4. Breaking the traditional networking rules

The line between social networking and real life networking has become a bit blurred. Are you supposed to meet people in real life and then connect online – or can it be the other way around too? Start rethinking how first meeting online and then meeting in real life can create an even more meaningful meetup at an event. Don't stop the networking at the collection of business cards and the standard "follow up" email or phone call. It's a social event. Feel free to take pictures or videos of people and then post them online so you

can continue your relationship and help jog the ol' memory if you forget what someone looked like.

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The irrelevant corporate website: "we're tired of the corporate website and all its happy marketing speak, stock photos of smart looking dudes or minority women crowded around the computer raving about your product..."

illuminea takes companies from the "[irrelevant corporate website](#)" to a web presence that works for them by providing the following services:

1. **Creating** comprehensive and measurable web marketing strategies:
 - identifying goals and audiences
 - identifying the appropriate tools to use to achieve goals and reach audience
 - designing a detailed content creation and management plan

2. **Implementing** web marketing strategies by:
 - Designing and developing search engine-optimized websites/blogs
 - Creating rich content for websites, blogs, press releases, e-newsletters, and more using a variety of media.
 - Creating and managing social profiles and communities
 - Designing and managing e-newsletter campaigns to drive people to your distributed web presence
 - Managing your blog and web presence with continuous content creation, online relationship management, etc.

We also provide consulting services to companies on their web, blog, and social media strategies. To find out more about illuminea, please visit our site at illuminea.com.