

How to Become the ‘Go To’ Person in Your Industry

by Carol Dunitz, Ph.D.

All of us are in sales. That's because we all have to sell ourselves to achieve success. There are a multitude of ways to jump start your efforts. Start out by choosing several of the suggestions below. As you develop more confidence, try some of the others. In the process you can develop a reputation that has others flocking your way.

Get Involved. Your involvement in the community is an opportunity to help others while you help yourself. Try working for the charity of your choice or for your favorite political party. Join and participate. When you participate, you make new contacts. Those contacts may lead you to places you are only dreaming about now.

Attend Functions. Do you belong to trade associations? Join them and attend their events. Make a point of meeting the speaker as well as other important people in your industry. As you get better known, you may want to chair events. This means more work but it also means higher visibility.

Improve Yourself. Be all that you can be. Make an effort to learn something new every day. Read. Keep up with current events. Attend seminars and take classes to keep up with changes in the workplace. Others will recognize your dynamic approach to life. You'll be someone they want to know, someone they want to work with, someone they ‘go to’ when they are ready to buy.

Attend Leads Breakfasts. There are numerous organizations that put on events where non-competing entrepreneurs can wheel and deal with one another. Investigate which ones are in your area and make a point of attending them to see what they are like. If the setting appeals to you, join the group that sponsors the meeting. It will pay off.

Form A Local Business Network. If you see a need for a networking situation that has been overlooked, consider starting one yourself. Choose a time and place. Then invite people who might benefit to attend. The atmosphere should be noncompetitive to facilitate open communication and referrals.

People You Know. Don't overlook the people with whom you already have relationships. Make your contacts and resources available to people you already know and work with. They are likely to reciprocate.

The Clock is Ticking. Are there key people you'd like to meet? Make a point of meeting them. Arrange for a mutual friend or business associate to introduce you. Attend a function at which

they're speaking and go up to talk with them when their address is over. Call them to make appointments. Don't wait for opportunity. Make it.

Use PR To Your Advantage. PR or public relations is similar to advertising. Both get you exposure. Advertising is often hard sell. PR is always soft sell. Advertising costs money. PR is free. If you have a story you believe others would like to know about, contact the media. The media gets its stories because people just like you call them.

Become A Sponsor. Consider sponsoring an event or getting your business to do it. Donate a site for a charitable function. Pay for shirts for the local little league team. Contribute favors for a charitable event. This is one more way to gain respect and get your name out there.

Only You. Set yourself apart from the rest of the crowd. Create a unique identity for yourself. Have a logo and/or slogan that attracts people and makes them think of you. Free gifts? Letters of thanks? Offer something extra that meaningfully differentiates you.

Reputation. Reputation. Develop a reputation for high quality and reasonable prices, honesty, and respect. Cultivate qualities in yourself that you value in others. Give your customers and clients a reason to refer their friends.

Find A Happy Medium. Some folks specialize. Some folks don't. Find yourself a niche but don't make it too narrow. That's how to have your cake and eat it, too.

Don't expect to make these changes overnight! Take one step at a time. You'll be surprised how quickly you can get where you want to go and become others 'go to' person in the process.

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