# Getting the Most out of Networking for FranNet

Tomato planting analogy:

“Networking is like planting a tomato. In the beginning you do lots of work with little results. Planting, watering, fertilizing with tomatoes. Attending events, volunteering to help, helping other members with real networking. After some time, a single bud appears. It may or may not blossom into fruit. But with time more and more buds appear and after a time you have so much fruit you have to give it away”

Strategies for Successful Networking

Set a goal to attend a certain number of events per week. 3-6 is good to start

Show up!

Be consistent. You are building relationships, so don’t expect immediate results. This is a process and doesn’t happen overnight.

In franchise consulting it is rare that you directly meet a prospect at a networking event other than job related events. The goal is to cultivate referral partners.

Adopt a “Givers Gain” attitude. You can’t expect to get business if you don’t give business. Look for opportunities to connect referral partners. Recognize that helping your referral partners is actually working on your business, not a diversion.

Set a goal to obtain business cards from 3 or 4 new people at every event. Add them to your database for email blasts about your seminars.

It’s not NET-sit, NET-eat, its NET-WORK. Good networkers work the room until it is time for the program. Meet as many people as you can.

As you add new networking groups, look for groups that involve people you are NOT meeting in your current groups. You will see master networkers at all sorts of networking forums. Don’t expect one or two kinds of groups to provide everything you need.

How to handle the face to face discussion

Nobody likes the pushy networker. The person that starts off talking about themselves pushing their card into your hand. When you meet someone new ask them “What do you do?” Show genuine interest; ask them, “What’s a good referral for you?”

Wait for them to ask about what you do. If they don’t, they might not be a good referral partner anyway. But if you listen and show an interest in them, most people will return the favor. But wait to be invited!

One advantage to the franchise consulting business is that most people are interested in business ownership and franchising. Most people are not aware of our business, so it is new and interesting. Experienced networkers have met tons and financial services reps, real estate agents, and bankers. We don’t need another one in these categories to network with. But there are usually few if any franchise consultants in a group.

Have your elevator speech ready: “Hi, I’m \_\_\_\_ with FranNet. We match folks who want to own a business with franchise opportunities. We typically work with folks who are in a job transition and would like to learn more about the option of business ownership but are not sure where to start. Best of all our services are no cost for the franchise buyer!” Let people react before you offer more.

Promote referrals to your seminars. Seminars are a comfortable, non-threatening way for others to make an introduction to you.

Expected Outcomes

**Good**: Add new contacts to your database for future email blasts.

**Better**: Send them a personal letter saying it was nice to have met and include a brochure or schedule of your upcoming seminars.

**Best**: Find them a referral! You cannot control someone else sending you a lead. Work on what you can control.

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|  | **Strong Contact Networks** | **Casual Contact** | **Community Service Clubs** | **Professional Associations** | **Women and Minority Networks** | **Internet Based Social/Business Networks** |
| **Examples** | Business Network International (BNI)  Fast Pitch  Local Groups | Chambers of Commerce  Neighborhood Business Associations  Themed Meet-ups, e.g., entrepreneurs, small business owners, etc. | Rotary International  Kiwanis  Optimists  Lions | International Franchise Association (IFA)  Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)  Association of Career Management Professionals | National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO)  Minority Chambers of Commerce  WBC | LinkedIn  Facebook |
| **Characteristics** | Business Oriented  Profession Limited to One Per Member | Business Oriented  No Limit within a Profession.  Can have large attendance | Community Service Oriented  May be “movers and shakers”  Retired/Older business owners | Profession Oriented | Business Oriented  Focus on Ethnic or Gender support | Online  International connections |
| **Type of Networking** | Structured Networking with the explicit purposed of exchanging leads | Unstructured Networking. | Networking is indirect and a long-term benefit. | Unstructured networking to develop professional referrals | Unstructured networking | Evolving  Early theme is job placement |
| **Getting Started in FN** | A must for early results | Also key in early days | Great if you already belong, but later if not | Career and Job Related good early on | Provides access to additional markets | Must |
| **How to Find** | Business Calendar  Google  BNI.com  Referral | Local Chamber  Economic Development Authority  Local Government entities |  |  | Business Calendar  Google national websites | Eventbrite.com  Eventful.com  Meetup.com  LinkedIn Groups  Facebook Groups |