Top tips for successful networking
Or how to get more business from networking

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All about Networking
www.mixingbusiness.com

Choose the Networking group
Find a group that fits you and your business.
Find out if the people will be able to help/grow your business and vice versa.

Before you go
First impressions are crucial, how would you like to be remembered?
Always take loads of business cards.
From the attendance list highlight people you want to talk to and seek them out at the event.
Do some background research on the businesses you want to work with.

At the meeting
If you are a stranger get the organisers to introduce you to a few people.
Remember you are not there to sell to anyone.
Get to know people, ask questions.
Talk to at least 5 people that you have not met before.
Use the first 3-4 visits to build confidence and practice various approaches.
Be able to say what you do in 60 secs.
Be specific as to who you want to meet and work with.
Listen, resist talking too much.
Ask questions, show a genuine interest, try and create a relationship, try to understand how you could help, find out what projects they are working on.

It won't happen instantly
Networking takes time, it can take 3-6 months of attending, talking and listening to people
Follow up is important, remain credible.

To hand out or not to hand out your business card.
Hand out cards to people if there is common ground between the two of you, or you can help each other.

Write things down.
You can't remember everything, so just after the event make notes on whom you met, what they do and who they want to talk to.

Moving on from someone you do not wish to talk to.
There will always be people, for a variety of reasons, during the course of the conversation you simply find are not appropriate for you. You need to find a way to move on. Say you need to go to the loo or make a quick phone call. Time is precious, move on, talk to as many people as you can.

Speaking to one interesting person all night is not a great use of time either: you can suggest meeting after the event to explore things further.

After the event, then what?
Always follow up with people you have met. Send an email thanking them for the chat and follow up on any activities you promised you would do. If you said you would introduce them to someone, and then do it.
You must follow up! This is so important!

What to do with old business cards.
People change jobs; there may be someone in that pile of cards who now works for the corporate you want to get involved with. Drop people an email every 6 months or so asking how they are doing, are they still in the same company, doing the same job, you will be amazed at the response.

Enjoy yourself!
Networking is a great way to introduce your self to a group of people.
You are not there to sell anything to anyone.
Be patient, it takes months to benefit from any contacts you have made.
Help others, listen, make connections then things will certainly start happening for you.

Don't forget other forms of marketing
There are other forms of marketing that you should be using as well.
Constantly evaluate the time it takes up versus return gained.
Keep asking your self if the group/s you attend are really working for you after giving them a reasonable amount of time. If not move on.

GOOD LUCK