

The High Cost of Not Networking ©

By Donna M. Reed

One of my friends related the following incident from a recent visit to her dentist. The dentist was giving her the usual lectures on teeth and gum care and maintenance and was unusually insistent that she spend more time flossing. In defense of her lax attention to her flossing, my friend gave all the usual excuses. "Not enough time." "Too tired at night." "Ran out of dental floss." And so on. Her dentist looked at her, smiled, and said, "All right. Just floss the teeth you want to keep." Point made.

I thought of this anecdote as I was preparing this column. How often have you said, "I don't have time to network." "It costs too much." "It takes too much work." Okay. Just network with the clients you want to keep!

Before we explore the high cost of not networking, let's define networking. Networking is making connections. It's the bridge between needs and resources, the link between ideas and solutions and the connecting of information with possibilities. It's the way business gets done. The heart of networking is relationship building.

The following are only a few of the casualties in not networking. As you ponder these, you will probably think of several more.

1. **Lack of Relationships.** People who don't network can end up alone and isolated. Not only do they miss the opportunities available through networking, they miss out on all of the benefits of having relationships. Our relationships with others spark our imagination, increase our idea pool, affirm our actions, and serve as our anchor in a rapidly changing world. It's not the quantity of your relationships that matters; it's the quality. Being in relationships with intelligent, honest, caring people actually expands our own personal growth and development. Other people serve as a mirror of our own actions and ideas. Without relationships, we are severely growth challenged. This is a high cost to pay for not networking.
2. **Lack of a Referral Base.** I seldom use the yellow pages. I always turn to my network for referrals. I know and trust the people in my network. I know I can trust their judgments in referrals. A strong network gives you a comprehensive referral base that enables you to meet any challenge with confidence.

Having a strong referral base makes you a resource to others. I saw a quote in a magazine article recently, "There's no 'higher high' than helping others." Being a referral source is a wonderful way to help people. People who don't network find their resources limited and they are at the mercy of people they don't know and sources they can't verify.

3. **Restricted Circle of Influence.** In a strong Circle of Influence, you always have people promoting you. A number of people who have taken my "Living Your

Vision" workshop are actively promoting it to potential participants. I do the same for them whenever possible. RFW members know they can trust the opinions of other members. By promoting each other, everyone wins. When you don't network, you forfeit the possibilities that result from a powerful Circle of Influence.

4. **Missed Potential and Possibilities.** Networking focuses on sharing leads, business and ideas. These all create possibilities that lead to success. Master Networkers depend on their network for all of these and turn to their network when faced with changing their business name, adding/deleting products and services, brainstorming a new product or service, etc. It's a natural reflex for networkers to turn to the brain power of their network for everything. To miss out on the potential offered through a network is like walking away from a pot of gold.
5. **No Growth.** This refers to business growth as well as personal and professional growth. A business owner can spend a fortune on all sorts of advertising but without the extra power of networking, the results are questionable and expensive. Your product may be known to your target market from advertising but only through networking will they understand your quality service, added value, warranties, etc.

You will be a better business owner by associating with other business owners. Their experience, ideas and suggestions are a growth tool. Their example provides you with role models to emulate. You and your business will grow through this association. If you don't network, you miss these wonderful opportunities.

Don't settle for just "flossing the teeth you want to keep." The cost of not networking is painfully high and will impact your business and you, personally. Avoid that pain and loss by getting actively involved in networking - NOW!



Tools For Achievers, Inc.

520-299-8199 ♦ Fax 520-299-3917

Article written by Donna M. Reed, Trainer and Life Strategy Coach, Tools for Achievers, Inc. Donna partners with clients to achieve clarity, strategies and systems for success. She does this through coaching, workshops and products. Donna can be reached at Reed@ToolsForAchievers.com or www.ToolsForAchievers.com.