

Networking or *not* working? How can we make networking really work?

Andrew Gibbons in conversation with Jon Bowles

One of 100 recordings

Summary of content with timings

- 1.35 A lot of people claim to be active networkers, then when you drill down into that it gets a bit 'woolly'.
- 2.15 Fundamentally, for networking to be effective, it must have purpose, with clear outcomes in mind.
- 2.45 Networking should never be aimless, nor should it be aimless or random, outcomes should be clear.
- 3.50 One aim from networking may be to learn from others, and much of this is mutually developmental.
- 6.00 We should be careful and selective about the investment of time in networking – it can be wasteful.
- 6.40 Networking one-to-one can be best for working on mutually helpful specific issues than in groups.
- 7.15 Networking often means 'meetings' or gatherings of like-minded people – that's not how I network.
- 7.35 Although *potential* value may be greater in groups, I find networking value diminishes and dilutes.
- 7.50 My personal approach to networking is focused on the specific value I can gain from individuals.
- 8.20 When I identify someone from whom I can learn, I often make a 'cold approach' and tell them that.
- 8.40 My network feeds me insights and sources of tangible value I wouldn't get from any other means.
- 9.25 A different value comes from opinions, beliefs and practices being challenged – maybe in groups!
- 10.55 Maybe more on-on-one networking is going on than is recognised as being as being that.
- 11.00 "Exchange of information and ideas among people with a common profession or special interest".
- 12.00 When working as a pair there is more focus on specific interests, in groups a wider range of options.
- 12.55 One value that comes from large groups is the chance to network with more on a one-to-one basis.
- 15.30 In groups of more than two, we can't focus solely on our specific interests, which can lessen value.
- 17.00 The only cost with networking is time, which of course has a value – it can be time very well spent.
- 18.35 One-on-one conversations focusing on priority needs can be the most cost-effective way to learn.
- 18.55 Something I have done very consciously lately is to retrieve lapsed people back into my network.
- 19.30 It's been really worthwhile re-connecting with stimulating, informed, interesting people.
- 20.00 Don't give up on 'lost' people, if they value the relationship as you do they'll welcome re-connection.
- 22.15 Tangible benefits resulting directly from networking rarely happen instantly - may need time to show.
- 23.20 Cost incurring networking groups may be very beneficial, or may not be worth what is spent on them.
- 24.00 Sometimes organised events are more akin to selling than developmental networking.

- 25.30 Strong networking extends capabilities, knowledge and competences through contact with others.
- 28.55 This conversation is helping me to see the pattern of my preferred way of networking.
- 29.50 There is no compulsion to be my networking friend – I get approached declined for various reasons.
- 30.20 People who only use networking groups and collectives may be missing out on one-to-one benefits.
- 31.55 Networking is of little value if it is passive, the best networkers are active and purposeful.
- 32.25 Networking is only about ‘taking’, it works best when, over time it is mutually worthwhile for all.
- 33.15 A potentially valuable networking approach starts with a hope not an expectation of value resulting.
- 34.10 Over a period of time if we are not getting value from a networking contact we typically drift away.
- 34.30 Some networking relationships burn intensely and are short term, others last years, and burn slower.
- 35.40 I have tangible evidence of benefiting from the knowledge of people my networking has gleaned.
- 34.50 A brief explanation of the Dunning-Kruger Effect - an example of learning prompted by networking.
- 38.25 My network knows things I don't - I can extend what I know and can do beyond normal parameters.
- 39.10 Knowing the knowledge bank and skills set of those with whom we network can guide our efforts.
- 41.00 Networking is not about sucking people dry of all they know and can do – it's important to give too.
- 42.10 Networking is not abstract, or conceptual, it's real, it has substance, it's about outcomes.
- 42.40 Too many people seem to think networking is mostly a social activity, drink coffee, have a chat...
- 43.20 Reinforcing earlier thoughts, networking should be a long term, outcome driven, reciprocal process.
- 44.00 As a learning and development method, targeted, purposeful networking is a very efficient method.
- 45.30 When it works well, networking is a process you can control and direct to gain the maximum value.
- 46.00 Conventional training courses can't provide the personal learning that focused networking delivers.
- 46.40 Secondary level networking means accessing the networks of others with whom we network!
- 47.00 The more actively we network, the more people we have access to who know people we don't.