3 TIPS

to strengthen your networking relationships

by Chi Chi Okezie, contributing writer

The key to effective networking is staying consistent. Building quality and meaningful relationships takes time, energy, and resources, as well as developing a viable network through strong relationships. Relationships make all the difference in networking. Focusing, fostering, and fortifying relationships lead to several networking benefits.

This article offers three tips for making the most of relationships, as well as valuing, respecting, and appreciating your counterparts.

Tip #1: Manage Your Relationships
Do not leave your networking and interactions to chance. Create a system for following up, checking in, and staying in touch. These can be high/low touchpoints for staying engaged and supporting one another. Consider using a software system, application, or simple spreadsheet to manage your interactions. Many social platforms offer suggestions, reminders, and announcements which can assist your efforts.

Also, leverage technology to enhance the development of your relationships. Consider apps or software that can help with meetings, calendar scheduling, virtual connections, etc. Make it a point to be intentional, mindful, and respectful of your contacts.

Tip #2: Manage Your Time
As previously stated, building quality relationships takes time and effort. Utilize time management to be efficient and effective in your networking interactions. Be creative and savvy with how you spend your time and connect with others. Make it convenient and reasonable in regards to meetings, meet ups, events, etc.

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Additionally, share your time, accessibility, and limitations with your counterparts. Setting expectations, offering standards, and being flexible are great ways of managing time and energy. Be purposeful and intentional as well as organized in your meetings and interactions. Following up with next steps or actions for moving forward can also be beneficial with respecting time and schedules.

Tip #3: Manage Your Commitments
Along with strengthening relationships, learn to manage your commitments and responsibilities in the connection. Depending on expectations and the nature of the relationship, be proactive and aware of your role and steadfastness. This requires exercising Emotional and Networking Intelligence™, as well as adhering to communications styles which are useful for everyone.

In regard to being proactive, take notes, jot down info, and follow up where applicable. Keeping commitments builds trust and reliability, as well as credibility and business acumen. This can promote your personal, professional, and company brand. Position yourself to be held accountable and vice versa.

Forging strong relationships while networking leads to great success. Use these three tips to understand, appreciate, and foster quality relations. Leverage technology, applications, and other resources to be professional, efficient, and responsible. The purpose of strengthening these relations is to not only expand your networks, but build trust and support with your counterparts. **TE**

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