



Magical Networking Moments

Ten Secrets to a Powerful Self-Introduction

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How to Create a Magical Networking Moment

Ten Secrets to a Powerful Self-Introduction

1. It's About Them
2. Know Your Material
3. Practice, Practice, Practice
4. It's SHOWTIME!
5. The BIG Bang Theory
6. Thank Others
7. Create a Tag Line
8. Use Props
9. Tell a Story
10. Deliver it Often

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1. Remember that it's about them, not you – this is hard to do, especially since you are the one talking, and you are talking about your product and/or services. Most people are listening to WSIC radio – (Why Should I Care?) While you may have the floor, you must find a way to grab and keep the audience's attention. Ask anyone if they would purposely ignore a presentation given by another and most everyone would say that they could never be so rude. Yet we all spend most of our time thinking about ourselves. When you're in a battle for attention between someone thinking about you and them, you're fighting an up-hill battle. But it doesn't have to be a lost cause. If you begin with the simple idea that your self-introduction is audience focused, you will have the foundation necessary to succeed.
2. Know your material – most of us know our products and/or services inside and out. We give presentations and answer questions about what we sell every day so we believe that we can give short self-introduction about our goods without preparation. **WRONG!** Expert marketers know that it takes hours of planning, practice and even editing to come up with one commercial that is worthy of presenting on television or radio. You should be no different. The good news is that, unlike one-way advertisements on media outlets, your commercial will be in front of a live audience, and you can gauge its effectiveness right away. To be certain you have good feedback, practice and memorize your commercial word for word until you become more skilled.
3. Practice your commercial in the mirror – while learning your commercial, practice in front of a mirror. This will give you the opportunity to see the facial expressions and physical characteristics of your deliver. While what you say is vitally important, experts tell us that more than 80% of what people will think about something is in the non-verbal cues they pick up from the presenter. For example, I often find myself unintentionally frowning when I speak in front of audiences. I know others who unknowingly shake their heads as if saying “no” when delivering a message they want the audience to agree with. By practicing in front of a mirror, you will pick up many of these misleading traits.

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4. Remember "IT'S SHOWTIME!" – You will be different than you are naturally the moment you stand up or begin to speak. People just naturally change when they are the center of attention. Most people don't realize that there is a rush of adrenaline when we stand to speak and in order to keep it in check we subconsciously draw back – we become a bit more reserved. There are those who naturally use this adrenaline to power their talk and those are the ones who seem to naturally love the spotlight. You need to learn from them. Gear yourself up for SHOWTIME. People who seem reserved and shy may have great products or services, but we'll never know. We may mistakenly take their shyness as a sign that they don't believe what they are saying. Remember the line from the Mickey Mouse Club "smiles everyone!" Now you're ready – IT'S SHOWTIME!
5. Subscribe to the "big-bang" theory - your audience is very busy, mostly thinking about themselves. It is essential that you grab their attention in the first 7 seconds. When it comes to marketing, we suggest the big-bang approach. In the beginning "bang" something that grabs them and says "hey – I'm here!" Then in the end, "bang" – there I was! Big bangs can be anything from a raised voice to a funny line. I know a man of short stature that always stands on a chair to deliver his self-introduction. I also know a southern lady who begins every time with "hey y'all!" These become trademarks of the individuals that use them, so much so that they begin to need a secondary "bang" to keep the audience that knows them well.
6. Use your time to thank others – This is a powerful technique if you can master it (and if you can do it with integrity). When you stand, give your "big-bang" statement. Then turn the attention to the audience in a very strategic way. Begin to thank those in the audience for the referrals and service they have given you. You may even find it appropriate to thank them for service they delivered to a referral you gave them. Spend your time thanking others – why? It takes the focus off of you and on the audience. They are already thinking about themselves anyway. It catches the audience off guard, so they are prone to listen more. It rewards people for actions that you want repeated. Remember that which gets rewarded tends to get repeated. Finally, it sends the message loud and clear that you are a player – everyone will want to know you if you are clearly giving good service to those who are referred to you and if you are giving referrals to the group.

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7. Create a tag line for the close – so challenging for some and yet this is a difference maker every time. Remember that you're giving a commercial. The purpose of a commercial is to educate your consumer to be sure, but first and foremost you must be memorable. How many times has it happened that we find ourselves talking about that great commercial and yet no one can remember the company? A great commercial isn't great unless it compels the audience to tell others – and when it does that it must compel them to tell others what company it was. Create a tag line and that will help your audience remember your company. There are artists who are paid millions of dollars to develop company jingles. To this day I can sing the 800 number jingles for Best Western and Sheraton – both of which haven't been aired in over twenty years. Cigarette ads have been banned for at least twenty-five years and to this day you can ask most Americans to finish the line "Winston tastes good.." and they will naturally say "like a cigarette should". Create your tag line to get the same traction.

8. Use a prop – Props are easy to use. Props are everywhere. Depending upon your industry and company, a prop may already be prepared for you. AFLAC agents can hold up the stuffed duck or even use the recorded "AFLAC". If you are in the computer business, a can of "spam" held up easily communicates to your audience that you can help them. We know a man who dresses up in drag to piggy-back on the success of the Citibank identity theft commercials. He sells identity theft insurance. What about your company or service? Is there something you can use to visually communicate your message? Banks could use compact discs with their information on them and "hand out free cd's", promoting certificates of deposit. There are unlimited ways you can use props to promote your products or services. Often it can be the product or service itself. Spend some time thinking about how you can use props to better communicate your message.

9. Tell a story – While people want to think about themselves, they also love to hear stories about others. They just don't want us to tell them about us. Tell a story about a client who used your product and had a favorable result. Then simply close with "if you could identify with the person in this story, please see me." People can see themselves in a story about someone who is like them. Don't have a story? Maybe you just started with your company and you haven't had a success yet. Not to worry. Use a story from someone within the company. Even if you have just started your business, there is someone somewhere that has had success with you or with the product/service line you are presenting. Use a success story and win.

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10. Deliver your commercial often – there is no substitute for giving your commercial and seeing the results in front of a live audience. To do this you will need to attend meetings regularly. We encourage you to visit groups that you don't normally go to so that you can get feedback from people who don't already know you as well. You may be tempted to use friends and family to gauge your effectiveness – don't. Friends and family will either tell you that it's especially good or they will drag you down by telling you to change one thing or another. Either way, you will be less likely to deliver it like you will in front of a room full of strangers – and that's the target audience for this message. Deliver it often, see the results firsthand, and make changes until you are getting the results you want from your 60 second commercial. Then it will become a Magical Networking Moment.



Glen Gould is the world's foremost authority on networking and referral generation through chambers of commerce and associations.

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