

# Networking When You Think You're Too Busy

**Stewart M. Hirsch** | Just because you can't do everything doesn't mean you can't do anything. Here are some practical tips for keeping the marketing ball rolling even when you're busy.

- If you don't have time to follow up properly with networking contacts, call or send an e-mail message to let them know when you *can* talk or meet with them. This will show that you are interested in maintaining contact.
- Being busy doesn't mean you don't have networking opportunities. Meetings with clients and other professionals in the normal course of business give you access to people. The more people you interact with, the more opportunities you have to network.
- When you meet new people who might refer business and you don't have time to network properly, agree to set your next step (meeting, phone call or whatever) for a few weeks ahead. This keeps you on their calendar and in their minds.
- Take a couple of minutes when you are in front of a client to deepen your relationship—learn more about the business and how you can help. When we're busy we have a tendency to focus myopically on the task at hand.
- Unless you're totally buried, take a few moments from time to time to stay on a client's radar screen. Call, just to say hello, and inquire briefly about their lives—and don't charge them for it.
- When you can return clients' calls, but time is short, just find out what they want or need, and let them know when you will get back to them. If necessary, be ready to pass the client on to someone else in your firm who can help if you can't.
- When you don't even have time to return clients' calls, have your assistant return calls for you to let clients know when you will call back.
- Use contact management software to help you create a daily (or weekly) calling list and help you prioritize.
- If you need to speak with a client or contact, but just can't take the time to speak live, control the amount of time you need to spend by leaving a voice mail message—but be sure to do it before or after business hours. You can use e-mail for this purpose too. Let the client know your situation, and say when you will be available.

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*Adapted from an article by Stewart M. Hirsch.*