

The Benefits of Your Chamber of Commerce Mixers

Your Twentynine Palms Chamber of Commerce Mixers are an important part of your membership and I want to take this opportunity to talk about the benefits of attending networking events.

Small business is all about building relationships and taking action and networking is a key activity that is not only fun, but critical to your personal growth and business development. Networking is basically talking to people, making connections and developing relationships to grow your circle of influence for mutual gain and creating lasting impressions with people. Business networking should focus the attention on growing your organization and developing two-way dialogues that have benefits to all parties involved.

Here are a few benefits of networking:

1. **Shared Knowledge** - The depth of knowledge and experience from a group of people can be staggering. Networking provides opportunities to ask questions and receive feedback, discuss other points of view to expand your knowledge base and see things from a broader perspective.

It is also likely that within a group there will be those who have already been where you are today. This provides you with an opportunity to learn and avoid some of the common pitfalls they experienced.

2. **Connections** - When opportunity “knocks” you want to be in a position to take advantage of it. Many times there is a need for information-sharing, joint ventures, partnerships, and even needs for services. Having a wide network of individuals to contact may be the difference in seizing the moment or missing it completely.

Remember you are not just gaining exposure to the people in the room, you are building connections with their network too. If someone they know has a need that matches your business, if you have made an impression, you will likely get a referral.

3. **Promotion** - Whether promoting yourself or your organization, having a large network may assist you in moving your career forward, promoting a new product launch, or driving new members to your organization. “Word of mouth” is still one of the best forms of advertising. Spreading good information about you or your organization may provide leads for career advancement or organization growth.

4. **Raising Your Profile** - Being visible and getting noticed is a big benefit of networking. By regularly attending business and social events, people will begin to recognize you. This can help you build your reputation as a knowledgeable, reliable and supportive person by offering useful information or tips to people who need it. You are also more likely to get more leads and referrals as you will be the one that pops into their head when they need what you offer.

5. **Self Esteem** - Socializing is an important aspect of human nature. Developing new relationships leads to higher self esteem and confidence. By taking the steps to improving yourself and connecting to people you are moving forward and your confidence will continue to grow. This is an important attribute as a business owner, because your business growth is dependent on talking to people and making connections.

The important thing to remember about networking is the growth you will experience by putting yourself “out there” and taking steps to improving yourself and your organization. It’s good to have a network of friends and associates to draw energy from and keep you going. By surrounding yourself with people who share a similar drive and ambition, you are more likely to move forward as a group.