



## Networking and Professional Relationship Articles

Phillip Jones is a Canberra-based social entrepreneur who manages two companies, in addition to be a recognised expert on social and professional networks.

He is the director of *Two Degrees Group*, which provides a range of consulting services including tailored on-demand professional development workshops, discrete professional intermediary services and the design, and the development and management of professional networks for organisations.

He is often invited to deliver workshops on a range professional communication topic and strategies, as well as a being a guest speaker for a range of organisations on professional networking.

Phillip is also the founder of Canberra's most innovative professional and social networking community, *Schmooze* which he founded in 2003. Schmooze offers a comprehensive range of events and business opportunities for its members and guests each month and online including workshops, special interest groups and networking functions.

You can also visit his personal website here at [www.phillipajones.com](http://www.phillipajones.com) and the Schmooze website: [www.schmooze.net.au](http://www.schmooze.net.au)



## Networking: Fostering Future Opportunities

Our professional lives now run at an unprecedented pace and the division between work and social life is fast being diluted- unfortunately.

Good networkers understand that time and favours are the currency of networking. These are the things often in short supply in our professional life, and the giving of them provide both a 'bank' which you can draw on later, but also the conditions for a mutually rewarding relationship.

Making yourself available to others and assisting in small ways when you can is a powerful way to foster relevance and professional profile.

This is not to suggest that you give to the detriment of yourself or your organisation, there has to be discrimination in your investment into others. There is a risk that people may just take what you offer, but there is another way of looking at this- wouldn't you rather be involved professionally in the life of others than not- wouldn't you want your phone to be ringing, than not?

People resent being turned into approached only when someone wants something from them. You don't hear from them for months and then a call and they want a favour-you may well help them, but do you feel a little used? Much nicer is to have those contacts who you stay in touch with frequently, mostly about non-work matters and when they do ask for favour you don't mind at all- you don't feel like a commodity.

Gaining access to the right people in an organisation can be very challenging- no one gets good results from 'cold calls' anymore – you need access through existing relationships to be effective in finding the information or contact you are seeking to communicate with.

This point is particularly true for young professionals who tend to live in the now and can have very transient relationships (of all sorts). But think about this – its much easier to meet a young lawyer, public or architect or designer now when you have far more in common, than in five years time when you might need them the most.

Not all of us know the CEO of a company or Secretary of a Department. But one day we will - maintain the contacts we have now and you'll have the access when and where it counts.

So by cultivating contacts and networks now you are sowing the seeds for future success and prosperity.