



## 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)



## Finding a Networking Role Model

Things in life are so much easier to achieve if you have a clear picture of what you want to achieve or where you want to go. The same applies for networking where it is very helpful to have a role model or two who manifests the qualities of a great networker you want to become.

So as you develop your networking skills and confidence a useful strategy is to identify several people you think 'walk the talk'. You don't necessary have to know them or have them as mentors (more on that option another time), but they can people in your organisation or events you attend that you can observe and model some of their tactics or behaviours yourself.

It maybe that you are a young professional who wants to make their way in their department or company and there are managers you admire who seem to know everyone and have great relationships with their colleagues , or you are in a new role and want to be more confident in your presentation and introducing yourself- you could identify someone working in a similar role who has a good reputation and rapport and look at the way they operate.

But what are some of the characteristics of a great networker for you to model yourself on?

Here are some views of Schmooze members:

- *Great networkers genuinely desire to help their peers, knowing that in the future the favour may be returned. In addition, networkers tend to know many people, and they become connectors of peers with like interests or who can benefit each other.*
- *Someone who is an open, friendly person with a willingness to help others and share contacts and information*
- *Great networkers have good listening skills and an ability to connect different people in a given setting or room*
- *Networkers are always bringing people together for mutual benefit*
- *They always do whatever they promised to do during a conversation, no matter how small or big*

Rather than try and take all this on board at the same time, I suggest you break your look for several role models – each offering a different aspect. For instance you can observe the sort of events and activities one role model does that suits your career direction. Another may have a really effective way of remembering names and information about the people they meet.

One person may be really good at walking up to people and introducing themselves and getting a conversation going. Decide what you want to achieve from your networking, then identify those people who are on a similar track and observe closely.

Better still you could say hi and tell them how much you admire the way they operate- that will go down very well!!

That could be the start of a mentoring relationship or at least a great learning opportunity as they share their insights and open up opportunities to you. Great networkers are always happy to ‘pay it forward’ and share insights, it all goes around after all.