



## 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: A Way of Seeing the World

The most common perception of networking is of turning up to a venue, putting on a name tag, and handing out business cards to complete strangers whilst sipping on wine of a dubious ancestry. Many people who network do so unwillingly - it being part of their job description and they feel the pressure of collecting business cards and getting the word out about their organisation to as many people as possible. This pressure and stress can make it even harder for good contacts to be made and to communicate effectively.

But it doesn't have to be that way.

By changing the way we see networking we can approach the process with confidence. In fact, many of us network very well all the time without realising it. Every time we recommend a good place for coffee, or recommend a plumber, or someone to wash the dog is a form of networking.

We share information, ask advice, make time for each other, send interesting articles via email or clips from YouTube to stay in touch with friends and colleagues . All this activity and maintains your relationship, keeps you in synch and a great way to keep the momentum up. The process should be the same for your professional relationships.

The sharing of information, the giving of favours and making time for others is the essence of great networking.

In my networking workshops, I stress that networking is a way of seeing the world full of opportunity. It may sound paradoxical in the commercial world, but the more you give out the more you get in return, eventually. All things being equal, people (especially in a small place like Canberra) want to do business with people they like and they trust.

To earn that relationship takes time, personal attention and cultivation- just like any good relationship. So the more you help your professional colleagues out, the more positive they see you, the more relevant you become and your professional profile rises above your peers and competitors.

But more importantly, over time those professional relationships you've cultivated will in turn recommend you to others (the best form of marketing there is) and when the time is right you'll get the work, the lead, the information you were seeking. So stay focused on the main game- the quality and depth of your relationships and not the number of business cards in your collection.