



## 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)

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### What is Networking?

Networking combines research, communication, presentation and interpersonal skills to cultivate contacts and opportunities in a professional and systematic manner. Networking is also more than about collecting contacts, it's a process that is a powerful way to learn and to collaborate and exploit potential synergies.

At its best, it is a mutually beneficial professional relationship that is targeted and systematic. Good networkers see the world in terms of connections, opportunities and what they can do to bring people together.

They know the cultivating and assisting their contacts in an collaborative way will payoff in the long term. This process builds a profile in the form of 'professional capital' which brings together their expertise, reputation, the circles they move in, and the access they have to decision makers.

That capital will be an asset you can take with you in any role and can help drive your personal and professional success- the old saying is true: its always about who you know. The contacts and colleagues you make will over time become a valuable source of information, inspiration and access.

These contacts are doorways to a world of opportunity and information, but have to be built up with trust over time. Organisations or individuals that deploy a systematic networking strategy will receive more financial, promotional and brand awareness benefits over those who don't.

Networking is also an invaluable means to gather market intelligence, or professional 'gossip' which helps build up a picture that can be very useful for policy proposal or business case.