

# THE AUTHORITY GUIDE TO NETWORKING FOR BUSINESS GROWTH



How to master confident, effective networking and win more business

**ROB BROWN**

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# Introduction

Networking has existed since the dawn of time. Ever since humans started communicating with people they don't know, we've had networking. Back in the day, people would tell you that it's all about 'who you know'. But somewhere along the way, networking got commercialised. Named and claimed. Hijacked and highlighted. And largely for good reason.

Connecting and being connected is a route to the top, whatever the top looks like for you. Your network says much about you. It accounts for many of the opportunities that come your way. People even say that your income will be the average of that of the five business people you most associate with.

So investing in mastering the skill of business networking is a smart move. This might be the only education you get on the topic apart from the odd blog post or wise word from a seasoned rainmaker. So buckle up, get your business cards printed and let's get ready to network!

## How good a networker are you?

This is the perfect question to start with. It gives you a benchmark, a starting point. You've probably never been taught how to network. At best, you've sat through a workshop or read a

few articles. Maybe you've watched a few people in action who you consider to be good at the networking thing.

A great first task is to take the Networking Success Test. Go to [networkingsuccesstest.com](http://networkingsuccesstest.com) and spend five minutes answering the questions. It quizzes you on the eight core competencies of networking, from the mindset and preparation to the execution, dialogue and follow-through. Your score will be a percentage, and you'll see how you compare to the world's best (and worst) networkers. For the moment, the test is free.

Great networkers are made as well as born. What's for certain is that we can all improve. The skills of networking are coachable. There are two main skill sets in networking. First, the sexy, social working the room and chatting stuff. Then, the unsexy, disciplined and organised follow-up. Few people love them both, but both need to be done to make money from networking.

## **Do you struggle to make networking work?**

Do you want more sales, more leads and more business from your networking efforts? If you've got any kind of sales, marketing or business-development angle to your role, then you'll recognise how vital networking and referrals can be in your lead generation. The trouble is, few people know how to do it properly. As a result, they get frustrated or worn down by networking and connecting. Do you recognise any of these problems?

- Wanting and needing to network but not knowing quite where to start.
- Moving into a new role or location with few useful contacts you can leverage.
- Struggling to break into established networks where everyone seems to know each other.

- Wanting referrals but not having a big enough network or client base to get them from.
- Getting into good networking situations but not knowing how to start meaningful conversations.
- Struggling to reach your target market through traditional networking events.
- Returning from networking events with a pocketful of business cards that are of no use to you.
- Coming back with lots of business cards but not knowing how to turn them into business.

If these sound familiar, you're not alone. Most people struggle with making networking work. When you're not confident or particularly effective with your networking, you're not going to get tangible results, which is a shame, because as a route to market and a way to uncover new business opportunities, networking works. This failure to get results is not because many people don't know how to generate return on investment (ROI) from networking, it's because they ignore it entirely.

### Can you ignore networking?

Where does your business come from? When asked, most people say referrals, recommendations, introductions, repeat business. Think about this. All of that stuff comes from relationships and connections. You've got to know people to capitalise on those lead sources.

That means some kind of marketing, outreach or networking. If you ignore networking, you're left with other perhaps more expensive and often less productive avenues of lead generation, such as cold-calling, email marketing, advertising, PR and direct mail.

Of course, you can ignore networking but, if you're responsible for winning new business, you ignore it at your peril. You're in a people business. You're in a relationship business. Referrals come from people. So does repeat business. And the best way to develop a network of fresh, influential introducers and potential new clients is by getting out there, shaking their hands and having a meaningful conversation.

This is what networking is. Trouble is, if you're like most people, you're probably not comfortable with networking. Good news, though – that's not your fault.

## It's not your fault

Networking is a critical skill for business. Knowing and being known by the right people opens doors to new deals, investors, customers, clients, mentors, staff, partners, buyers and experts. Yet, very few people claim to feel comfortable, competent or enthusiastic when it comes to networking.

Why is this? One reason is that skills such as networking are rarely taught. They're not part of any university curriculum, commercial qualification or on-the-job accreditation. Nobody really teaches you how to work a room and move a conversation from small talk to business talk. You will never be shown how to introduce and position yourself properly when meeting people and how to handle the conversation to create opportunities. Little training is ever given on how to follow up your contacts, keep in touch and turn them into business.

So, if you're not particularly confident or effective when it comes to networking, it's not your fault. However, it is your responsibility. Investing in networking and relationships eats into your most precious commodity – time. It's time away from your

inbox, your family, your golf game, your gym class, your friends and your existing clients.

You've probably realised that's my story. I learned the hard way. For you, it will be much easier, much faster and much more enjoyable, because you have this book in your hand. Networking is a brilliant way to raise your profile, source new referral partners and meet new clients.

### A typical networking story

Once upon a time, a talented, handsome young man left a promising career in teaching to seek his fortune in the world of sales. His new company gave him 75 per cent of his leads, meaning he had to generate 25 per cent on his own. Having all the product knowledge in the world but no clue how to actually generate business, he was initially at a loss what to do. Then his boss suggested he try networking: *'You'll like networking because you dress up, you go out, you meet some nice people, you shake some hands, you swap some cards, you drink some nice drinks and you eat some nice food. It's like partying but without the dancing!'*

So off he went with his box of brand-new business cards to every networking event he could find. Trouble was, he had no idea what he was doing. Two years later, he'd attended 126 events and spent thousands on breakfasts, lunches, dinners, mixers, conferences, group memberships and club subscriptions. And secured exactly *zero* business. Nobody told him that you go networking to make money, not spend money.

In these two years, he'd wasted precious hours and precious money and won no work. All he had to show for his efforts was the 2,987 business cards he'd collected. He felt

like he was doing everything right but, in reality, he was a brilliant example of how *not* to network. He could count his conversations, but not make his conversations count.

## Learning to think differently

He was faced with a return to teaching or somehow becoming a more confident and effective networker. He chose the latter, got some education and training, watched what the good networkers were doing and took some action. In just 13 months, he'd multiplied the small amount of business he was generating from the company leads by a factor of 15! That's when people began to take notice of what he was doing and asked for help in doing the same. And a new career was born – ever since then, he's been teaching people how to network successfully.

In this book, you have everything you need to begin making networking work to generate more leads, sales and business. For you, that means you hit your targets, keep your boss off your back and keep your bank balance full. Let's get started.

## How to use this book

You should be able to read this whole book in two hours. If you have a short attention span, it's broken down for you into three parts explaining what to do:

- 1 Before you go networking: mindset, strategy and preparation
- 2 While you're there networking: working a room, handling the dialogue
- 3 After you've been networking: following up, keeping in touch

Some people will use this book as a resource to dip into for particular situations or scenarios. Others will read it to get a thorough grounding in what it takes to make money from networking. If you're really pushed for time, each part has a brief summary entitled 'Key takeaways'. These are your action points which distil the core messages into short soundbites and key lessons.

Let's talk about customers and clients for a moment. They mean the same things to most people. It's simply those who buy from you. I prefer the word 'client' and use it throughout the book. Client is a more relational word. Customer to me is a transactional word. I work a lot with accountants and lawyers, who use client rather than customer. I also work a lot with bankers, who use customer. Whatever works. Client works for me so substitute your own word when you see it – buyers, patrons, investors, supporters...

A final point before we get moving. Networking is a process as much as an event. It's more like a long-term relationship than a one-night stand. So make the commitment to invest in networking like you invest in any relationship or marketing activity. It involves some heavy lifting and intentional effort to get things moving.

### Key takeaways

- Networking, if done well, is a powerful way to source new business and raise your profile.
- Networking is generally not taught, so it's up to you to teach and coach yourself.
- Networking is coachable – everyone can learn how to do it. Networkers are born *and* made. If you think a little differently about it, you can make it work for you.



- Networking represents precious time away from important stuff like your inbox, your family and your personal time. So make it work for you.
- There is no one networking style or one-size-fits-all strategy. Follow your own path according to your own personality, strengths and objectives.
- Don't count your conversations, but make your conversations count.
- Prospecting is vital for sales. Without networking, you're relying on avenues like cold-calling and email marketing.

You can't afford to be a well-kept secret. The business, the deal, the sale, the contract goes to those who are known to potential buyers and introducers as the obvious choice and stand-out voice for what they do. You're about to discover how networking will help you do that.

## You *can* master the mysterious art of networking.

Overcome all your networking fears and learn how effortlessly to build and leverage the powerful connections you need to enhance your reputation, raise your profile and win more business. Networking expert Rob Brown will coach you on all the essential skills that will help you meet new people, create new leads, open up opportunities and grow your business – confidently and effectively.



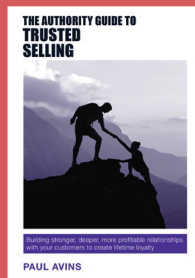
“Success is a team effort that comes through building and leveraging powerful connections. Rob Brown is *the* networking guy and here shows you exactly how to network confidently and effectively!”

Daniel Priestley, founder of Key Person of Influence and bestselling author of *Oversubscribed*

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Available in paperback and ebook [here](#).

## THE AUTHORITY GUIDE TO TRUSTED SELLING

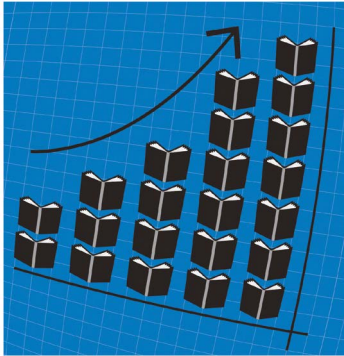


Building stronger, deeper, more profitable relationships  
with your customers to create lifetime loyalty

PAUL AVINS

In today's volatile world sales professionals must know how to build trust in their company, their products and ultimately themselves in order to win the business. In this *Authority Guide*, sales coach Paul Avins shares his proven, 4-step system to help you contact, connect and convert more customers with less effort and no pressure.

## THE AUTHORITY GUIDE TO MARKETING YOUR BUSINESS BOOK



52 easy-to-follow tips  
from a book PR expert

CHANTAL COOKE

It's never too soon to start thinking about how to market and promote your book. In this *Authority Guide*, leading book PR and marketing expert Chantal Cooke, presents 52 tips that will make your book stand out from the crowd, build your credibility as an author, and ensure you achieve those all-important sales.

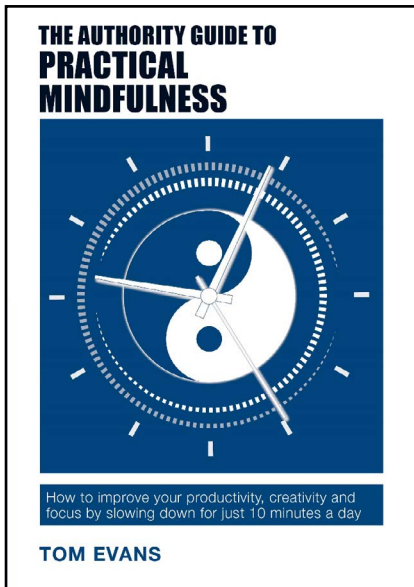
## THE AUTHORITY GUIDE TO PRESENTING AND PUBLIC SPEAKING



How to deliver engaging  
and effective business presentations

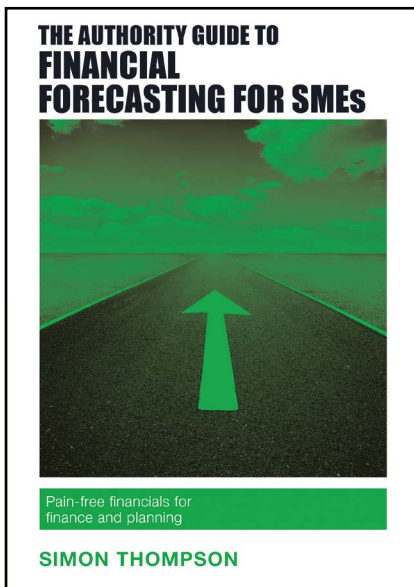
STEVE BUSTIN

Whether it's your first presentation or you're an experienced speaker, this *Authority Guide* will give you the tools, tips and confidence to deliver engaging, creative and effective presentations. Steve Bustin, an award-winning business speaker, an executive-level speech coach and corporate presentation skills trainer, will teach you simple but effective techniques to keep your audience engaged.

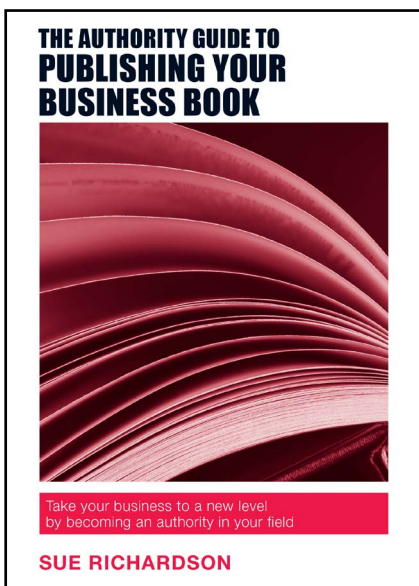


Enhance your wellbeing, creativity and vitality with mindfulness meditation.

In this *Authority Guide*, Tom Evans invites you to embrace the benefits of meditation in both your life and your business. With the practical mindfulness meditative techniques described in this book, you will learn how to get more done in less time. You will discover how to generate ideas off the top of your head and how to allow serendipity to land at your feet. This book opens the door to a new way to be and do.



In this *Authority Guide*, forecasting guru Simon Thompson shows you how to build financial forecasts quickly, effectively and cheaply through his unique, proven and easy-to-follow 10-step process. By learning how to create effective forecasts you will master the ability to understand the potential financial outcomes for your business and be able to communicate financial information in order to successfully raise investment or loans.



Publishing expert, Sue Richardson, shows you how to use your expertise, knowledge and experience to become a published authority in your field and gain the visibility you and your business needs. This *Authority Guide* will help you to create a plan that ensures you write and publish the right book for your business.



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**SUE MITCHELL**

This *Authority Guide* addresses how businesses can increase their performance, productivity and customer/ staff satisfaction through focusing on engagement. Sue Mitchell, an authority in coaching and leadership development, shows you how to build a team who is committed, inspired and eager to deliver their best work in order to make a difference.

**THE AUTHORITY GUIDE TO  
PR FOR SMALL  
BUSINESSES**

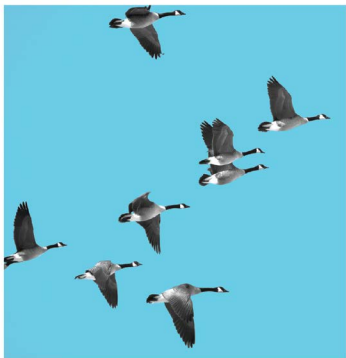


Use the power of public relations and the media to reach your target customer and grow your business

**STEVE BUSTIN**

Any business wanting to reach new customers should be embracing public relations to spread their key messages. If you don't, your competitors will. This *Authority Guide* shows you how to grab the headlines (for all the right reasons), reach huge audiences and grow your business by accessing the media to tell your story.

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**THE AUTHORITY GUIDE TO  
DEVELOPING HIGH  
PERFORMANCE TEAMS**



How to develop brilliant teams and reap the rich rewards of effective collaboration in the workplace

**ANDREW JENKINS**

To make your good business a great business you need to have more than just a strong product or service. Having a highperforming team in your organisation is guaranteed to give you a competitive advantage. Andrew Jenkins helps you discover how to cultivate in your people the willingness to grow as individuals and as a group. Packed with easy-to-follow activities, exercises and models this *Authority Guide* explains how to build a high-performing, collaborative, trusting and resilient team.

## THE AUTHORITY GUIDE TO WRITING & IMPLEMENTING A MARKETING PLAN



A step-by-step manual to make you a smarter marketer and maximise your business profits

**AMBROSE & JO BLOWFIELD**

Written especially for small businesses, this *Authority Guide* shows you how to write and execute your marketing plans efficiently and accurately. Ambrose and Jo Blowfield will help you create a plan using proven, affordable marketing tactics for both digital and traditional strategies. You'll have a year long marketing plan that is structured, well thought out and targeted to your ideal clients, allowing you proactively to promote your business.

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## THE AUTHORITY GUIDE TO NETWORKING FOR BUSINESS GROWTH



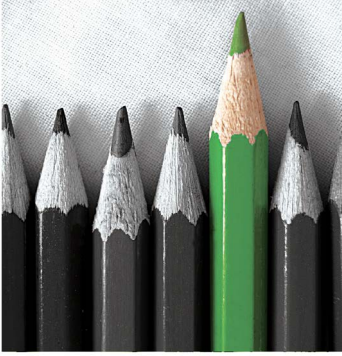
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## THE AUTHORITY GUIDE TO CREATING BRAND STORIES THAT SELL



Smart and simple strategies to  
make your business irresistible

**JIM O'CONNOR**

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BUSINESS**



How to inspire others and  
build successful relationships

**ROBIN HILLS**

Discover what makes people tick, how they perceive and react to different situations and why they behave the way they do. In this fast, focused guide, emotional intelligence expert Robin Hills reveals insights into motivation and how people perceive situations in business. As he unlocks the secrets of human nature you'll learn how to inspire top performance, gain trust, win confidence and build lasting relationships – more effectively and with great results!

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PROFITABLE  
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How to develop a powerful strategy to boost  
turnover, profit, cash flow and business growth

**SHAZ NAWAZ**

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