



Connection Pros

I'd like you to close your eyes for a second. I'd like you to imagine the size of your business if you were the only person on earth that was offering what you were offering. You could sell your product for any price, work any hours you wanted, and provide whatever type of service that fits your schedule. With no competitors, people would only be doing business with you. Would that be great? Isn't that a nice dream?

Well, it's time to open your eyes and realize that you do have competitors; you have to price your product competitively and offer the best service possible. Most important, you need to do everything possible to separate yourself from your competition. You need to stand out from the crowd. I see hundreds and thousands of people attend networking functions and hear them say the same words and phrases that their competitors do. Then they wonder why their business isn't growing.

If you are in an industry with LOTS of competition (insurance, financial planning, consultants, chiropractor, etc.), you need to start thinking about how you can differentiate yourself from everyone else. You need to find a way to meet and connect with people in a way that makes them think you're unique and not just one of the masses.

Someone who has done this beautifully is Helen Goldman from Primo Promos, an advertising specialties company. "I attend as many networking functions as possible, not limiting myself by time of day or geography. I bring promotional products to every meeting, demonstrating the effectiveness of my products. I change my 30 second commercial often, making varied points about the benefits of my business and expertise, often including humor, but always using my memorable tag line, "A Plethora of Positively Perfect Promotional Products." In addition, I donate promotional items as door prizes, giving my business additional publicity. My best networking tip: Always bring plenty of business cards with current and correct information. A scratched out phone number or e-mail address doesn't present a professional image."

Helen mentioned some really good points, especially the part about changing her 30-second commercial and making varied points about the benefits she offers. People don't want to hear the same thing over and over again. If you tell people something that they've never heard from one of your competitors, you will engage them in a better conversation and you'll have a much better chance of connecting with these people. See you next month.