Get to know the Small Business Council
Who we are and what we do.

Education & Events
Should you attend the Small Business Conference?

Registration
Don’t be late!

Small Business Awards
SAME wants to recognize you!

Helpful Articles
Tricks of the trade and more!
It has been my privilege to serve as the Small Business Council Chair this last year and a half. This Small Business Conference will be my last as Council Chair and I wanted to thank all of the Council volunteers that worked passionately and diligently to make our Council a success! A special thank you to Jayla Pine, Karen Buniak, Jodi Vaccaro, and Siokey Gastelum-Galvez for keeping me on my toes.

This year has brought changes to the small business council. In this newsletter we are introducing new Vice Chairs, strengthening the Council foundation in preparation for future Council Chairs. Our Vice Chairs are diverse professionals working and representing SBE, MBE, DBE, 8a, HUBZone, SDVOSB, WOSB, EDWOSB and ANC companies. This diversity speaks volumes to our mission of advocating for and engaging small business in support of SAME’s Strategic Plan through outreach, training, networking and recognition. Please plan on attending our Council meeting on November 16, 2016 from 9 am to 10:30 am to find out how you can get involved with our Council.

The small business community has also had a couple of positive changes impacting joint ventures and Mentor-Protégé Agreements, such as the updated Small Business Administration’s (SBA) Mentor-Protégé Rule, effective August 24, 2016, that will allow mentor-protégé agreements between any type of small business. We will discuss this and other positive changes in detail at the Small Business Conference in Atlanta.

I look forward to seeing you all in Atlanta!

Sincerely,
Clarence McAllister, PE, RCDD
Chief Executive Officer
Fortis Networks, Inc.
cmcallister@fortisnetworks.com
Stop by the Innovative Product Theater in the exhibit hall at the Small Business Conference for more information about the Small Business Council, what it does, how you can get involved, and how your business can benefit!

**When?**
Wednesday, Nov 16, 4:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Thursday, Nov 17, 2:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Friday, Nov 18, 9:45 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.

**Mission**
The mission of the Small Business Council is to be an advocate for and engage small business in support of SAME’s Strategic Plan through outreach, training, networking and recognition. Service to current and new SAME members, the Board of Direction, and the Uniformed Services shall guide the Council in the execution of its mission.

**Membership**
Membership in the SAME Small Business Council is open to all SAME members in good standing. General members other than Executive Committee are considered to be regular Council members.

Learn more at:  [http://www.same.org/Small-Business](http://www.same.org/Small-Business)
Clarence McAllister, P.E.
Fortis Networks, Inc.
Chair: Responsible for overall direction and management of the Council mission, maintains organizational control, coordinates Council meetings and draft agendas, and appoints Vice Chairs as needed. Serves as a voting member of the SAME Board of Direction.

Siokey Gastelum-Galvez, MBA
Fortis Networks, Inc.
Vice Chair, Proxy: Responsible for assisting the Chair when Chair is unable to coordinate/attend/present during their two-year tenure. The duties includes coordinating/attending/presenting on behalf of the Small Business Council Chair. Coordinates with other Vice Chairs to assist the Chair with overall Council mission.

Mario Short
SYTE Corp
Vice Chair, Outreach: Coordinates a SAME Small Business Council networking booth and networking lounge at regional and national conferences and coordinates with SAME Small Business members for participation in the Small Business booth and lounge activities. Takes a leadership role in recruiting small businesses to the Society and to the Small Business Council.

Karen Bunia
TTI Environmental, Inc.
Vice Chair, Communications: Coordinates public relations and informational outreach for Council activities. Communicates to council through email/LinkedIn. Administrator for the Council’s LinkedIn page. Keeps membership records and databases. Updates Council email list at least quarterly and provides demographic data on Council members for use in distributing information.

Melissa Tate
Metro Service Group
Vice Chair, Regional Programs: Assists SAME posts hosting Regional Conferences with Small Business speakers/session topics on an as-needed basis. Attends Regional Conferences and keeps Council informed on regional events and assists the Council with representation at selected non-SAME events.

Elizabeth Koski
Alaska Universal Services, LLC
Vice Chair, National Conferences: Coordinates and develops support for the annual SAME national conference, including speakers, sessions and general support of Small Business opportunity during national conference events.

Alex Masters
Advanced Integrated Solutions (AIS)
Vice Chair, Education & Training: Develops session topics and speakers for programs in support of Small Business topics and initiatives. Informs Council on trends and tracks data on Small Business issues through the use of surveys, emails and other research formats. Coordinates and moderates quarterly webinars.

Karen Buniak
TTI Environmental, Inc.
Vice Chair, Communications:

Christine Tsai
CES Consulting LLC
Vice Chair, Recognition: Promotes the recognition of Small Businesses through the Society, Region and Post awards programs. Coordinates nomination package reviewer team and the selection of award winners.

Jayla Pine
Baer Engineering & Environmental Consulting, Inc.
Secretary: Serves as the primary administrative liaison for the Council by providing meeting minutes. Primary point of contact for the Post Small Business Liaisons. Generates quarterly newsletters. Keeps SAME national website up to date by communicating changes to SAME HQ. Responsible for other councils and committees liaisons.
The conference will kick-off on Wednesday, November 16, with an **Opening Plenary Session** featuring Keynote Speaker: **Michael Jackson**

**Global Business Expert**

As a successful business strategist for over 30 years working with the likes of Microsoft, Virgin, HP & Qatar Airways amongst others, I've now become highly regarded as a professional conference speaker on the subjects of business change, excellence, leadership, consumer & trends.

Following the luncheon—and throughout the three-day event—numerous concurrent **Education Sessions** will be held covering topics of interest to all businesses--large and small--looking to succeed in today’s marketplace.

The **Thursday Plenary Session** will feature leaders from the Army, Navy and Air Force and other government agencies in a moderated panel to discuss where the relationship between government agencies and small businesses is headed in the future.

On Friday, the **Luncheon and Awards Ceremony** will feature keynote speaker: **Lt. Gen. Rick Lynch, USA (Ret.)**

Lynch will share with SBC attendees the key leadership principles he has come to embrace in his 34 years as a soldier, and a leader—from focusing on opportunities, not obstacles; to being demanding, not demeaning; and remembering to always celebrate diversity, achieve a work-life balance, and have fun.

**Networking**

Individuals looking to form teaming agreements and partnerships will find the **Matched Networking Sessions** profoundly helpful. These sessions focus on matching specific large business and government agency needs with the small businesses that can fulfill them. This format should allows both parties an opportunity to discuss real business opportunities and lay the foundation to develop new client-consultant relationships for small businesses.
Preliminary Agenda, Subject to Change

A tentative schedule for the 2016 SBC is noted below for your planning purposes. Updates will be made as the program is further defined. We encourage you to check the link below periodically for the most up-to-date information. All events take place at the Cobb Galleria Centre unless otherwise noted.

http://s3.goeshow.com/same/business/2016/schedule-at-a-glance.cfm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tuesday, November 15</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Government Intra- and Inter-Agency Meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Conference Registration</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>Exhibitor Set-up</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>SAME National Board of Direction Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30 p.m.—1:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Gov’t Training Sessions</td>
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<td>2:00 p.m.—3:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Gov’t Training Sessions</td>
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<td>4:00 p.m. —5:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>Gov’t Training Sessions</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:00 p.m. —6:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>President’s Reception (by invitation)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Wednesday, November 16</th>
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<tr>
<td>8:00 a.m.—8:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>Conference Registration</td>
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<td>8:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>Exhibitor Setup</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 a.m.—10:30 a.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Small Business Council Meeting (open to all interested in become involved in Council) RVP Meeting (by invitation) Council &amp; Committee Chairs Meeting (by invitation)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>Opening Plenary Session and Luncheon: Michael Jackson &amp; Chiefs Panel (RSVP Required) Led by Global Business Advisor Michael Jackson this moderated panel featuring military and federal engineering leaders will truly explore the Power of Small Business and Government Agency Collaboration.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:20 p.m.—2:20 p.m.</td>
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<td>Army Mega-Session</td>
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<td>2:40 p.m.—3:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Navy Mega-Session</td>
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<td>3:50 p.m.—4:40 p.m.</td>
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<td>AF Mega-Session</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:00 p.m. —5:50 p.m.</td>
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<td>VA Mega-Session</td>
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<td>6:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>Ice Breaker Reception in Exhibit Hall</td>
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<th>Thursday, November 17</th>
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<tr>
<td>7:00 a.m.—6:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Conference Registration</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:30 a.m.—8:30 a.m.</td>
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<td>Continental Breakfast</td>
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Thursday, November 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
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</table>
| 8:30 a.m.—9:45 a.m.| **Plenary Session:** Michael Jackson & Small Business Administration Speaker  
Known as “The Other” Michael Jackson, he will connect with attendees and deliver insights on the topic of change in a business context. Following our keynote speaker, SBA will provide updates and information on policies and trends impacting small business owners. This session is a “must attend” for companies large and small that do business in the federal marketplace. |
| 10:30 a.m.—11:30 a.m.| A&E Business Opportunities  
Cyber & Security Business Opportunities  
Legal Secrets: Winning Proposals and Bid Protests  
Master Planning Contracting Opportunities with USACE |
| 11:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m.| Networking Luncheon in Exhibit Hall |
| 1:00 p.m.—2:00 p.m. | Environmental Business Opportunities  
Vertical Business Opportunities  
How We Did It! Small Business Graduation  
Recent SBA’s Rule Changes Impact Joint Ventures  
Driving Success through Mentor-Protégé  
Intricacies of Succession Planning and Leadership Transitions |
| 2:30 p.m.—3:30 p.m. | Research/Tech Business Opportunities  
Horizontal Business Opportunities  
Resources that Prevent “Pain” in Government Contracting  
Using Sources Sought to Successfully Influence Acquisition |
| 4:00 p.m.—5:00 p.m. | Matching Networking Sessions  
Exhibit Hall Open |
| 5:00 p.m.—6:30 p.m. | Reception in Exhibit Hall |

Friday, November 18

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>7:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:00 a.m.—8:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Continental Breakfast</td>
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</table>
| 8:30 a.m.—9:30 a.m. | Construction Business Opportunities  
Changes to the Small Business Administration’s Regulations  
Developing Effective Proposal Strategies for Government Evaluations |
| 10:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m.| Renewable Energy Business Opportunities  
VA Cemetary and Leasing Programs  
Minority Resources - Information from the Experts  
Secrets of the Selection Process |
| 11:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.| Matching Networking Sessions  
Exhibit Hall Open |
| 12:45 p.m.—2:30 p.m. | Closing Keynote Luncheon: Lt. Gen. Rick Lynch USA (Ret.) (RSVP Required)  
Join your colleagues in this Closing Luncheon and hear how Lt. Gen. Rick Lynch, USA (Ret.), steadily climbed his way up. He will share with attendees the key leadership principles he has come to embrace in his 34 years as a soldier and a leader—from focusing on opportunities, not obstacles; to being demanding, not demeaning; and remembering to always celebrate diversity, achieve a work-life balance, and have fun. |
| 12:46 p.m.—5:00 p.m. | Exhibit Breakdown |
REGISTRATION FEES
SBC pricing is structured to allow for maximum discounts to early registrants and SAME members. Not a member? You can purchase a SAME membership online here:

https://www.same.org/Get-Connected/Be-a-Member/Join-SAME

REGISTRATION FEES PER PERSON

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<tr>
<th>Full Conference</th>
<th>Regular Registration: September 3 - October 14</th>
<th>Late Registration: October 15 - Onsite</th>
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<th>Full Conference + SAME Individual Membership</th>
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<td>Wednesday – Non-Profit, Academia, Fully Retired</td>
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<td>$275</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Thursday – Small Business</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Friday – Small Business</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speaker/Moderator (one-day; day of session)</td>
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<th>Exhibit Hall Only Passes (for Exhibiting Companies Only)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Exhibit Hall Only - Uniformed Service/Govt</td>
<td>$78</td>
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Nominations for the Small Business Awards are being accepted through September 30, 2016.

All Small Business Awards nominations must be submitted to SAME HQ using our online nomination process. Awards will be presented at the SAME Small Business Conference. For more details on eligibility and award criteria and links to nomination forms, please visit:

http://s3.goeshow.com/same/business/2016/sbawards.cfm

**Small Business Award Criteria (One Award)**

The nominee should meet all of the following criteria for work completed for the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy or U.S. Air Force within the last five years from nomination due date (September 30, 2016) in an outstanding manner as evidenced by:

- Letters of commendations, awards, previous project evaluations, etc. to show past performance.
- Company’s track record for working with other Small Businesses in the Industry
- Company’s track record for the professional development of its employees through SAME participation; and
- Company participation in one or more small business conferences.

**Large Business Award Criteria (One Award)**

The nominee should meet all of the following criteria for work completed for the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy or U.S. Air Force within the last five years from nomination due date in an outstanding manner as evidenced by:

- Small business subcontracting performance as evidenced by Summary Subcontracting Reports within the past 3 years;
- Description of the efforts to support small business programs and the result of such efforts
- Letters of recognition or awards from DOD agencies or the Small Business Administration (SBA) for outstanding small business utilization and/or SBA subcontracting program review ratings;
- Company’s demonstrated support for the internal training of the nominee’s program/project managers on how to involve and support small business initiatives; and
- Company’s participation in one or more small business conferences.

**Industry Small Business Advocate Award (One Award)**

This award recognizes an individual from industry who has been an outstanding spokesperson and advocate for small business. The award recognizes efforts and actions accomplished for programs within the past three years. This person may be the Small Business Advocate within a Large Business.

- The nomination must show examples of how the nominee worked on small business issues with SBA, DOD agencies, or other groups to support Small Businesses
- How the individual contributed to SAME Small Business Conferences and training sessions, or represented small business interests in SAME forums.
- The nomination should include letters of commendation, awards and other recognition for the individual’s efforts to support small business programs.

**Post Small Business Liaison Officer Award (One Award)**

This award recognizes the PSBLO whose leadership, support and activities best exemplifies the mission of the Small Business Council. Must be member of a Post Board of Direction as the named PSBLO or Post Officer to be eligible.

**SAME Post Participation:** (1) Implemented Innovative membership recruiting of small businesses; (2) Advocates providing discounts to small businesses for Post or Regional Events; (3) Recognized a small business member or firm via newsletter, newspaper, magazine award, monthly Post meeting; (4) Received Letter(s) of appreciation/commendation from their Post President, a local or national organization or agency for post efforts in small business activity.

**Small Business Council Participation:** (5) Member of the Small Business Council and have contributed to Conferences, Newsletters, small business Training, Webinars; (6) Attended SAME Small Business Conferences in the past two years and can offer insight on improving the programs.

**Small Business Advocacy Outside SAME:** (7) Works for a small business; (8) Coordinated or assisted a small business event with a Local Government Agency; (9) Assist with conference planning of at least one (1) community small business outreach event.
15 Networking Tips
by Jill Johnson

If you say you will come to an event, show up.
Look for opportunities to use and promote your area of expertise.
Be selective and definite about what you ask for from people.
Connect in small increments and be careful about being too familiar too quickly.
Use meal times for networking.

Get to know people first and pay attention to what's important to them.
Follow through - if you promise to do something do it.
Use the telephone to keep in touch and make it personal.
Make time for networking even when you are busy.
Write hand written letters and send emails.

Face time is critical - people will help you if they know you.
Do better than your best in your work.
Use your expertise to help others.
Refer other people.
Build your network before you need it.

Johnson Consulting Services
Marketing & Management Consultants
763-571-3101  www.jcs-usa.com  @JillJohnsonUSA
I often speak to groups about networking. People think I have a success secret on it. But I’ll tell you the same thing I tell them: I don’t like networking.

If networking means an attempt to increase my address book contacts by learning what people do for a living, while I try to figure out how they can help me, then I want no part of it. What I prefer, is this: making new friends while discovering their passions as I figure out how I can help them. Is that networking? Sure. But many people have a bad taste for the concept because it’s often pursued in the first manner. Then some people try to cram it in only when a new job or customer is needed. When that doesn’t yield results, they believe they are no good at networking.

It doesn’t have to be that way.

With a perspective shift, anyone can become a better networker. In fact, most people could become great if they approached it with a different attitude. What follows are some key ideas I’ve used in everyday life that have helped me tremendously. But before we start, let’s ditch the word networking. For many, that label carries negative connotations. I like to use the word “connecting” instead. Here goes:

Be Authentic

Too many have the notion that an individual must be Mr. or Ms. Personality to be a great connector. Not true. You simply need to “be yourself.” Yes, that phrase gets used so much it has become cliche, but it’s popular for a reason: it’s true.

When I became co-owner of a previous software consulting firm at 29, I tried to imitate what I thought was a business professional. I wore suits often, talked a lot of business, and, in short, attempted to be someone I wasn’t. Over time I realized that all I had accomplished by donning that business-professional mask, was to come off stiff and boring. Once I let the real me shine through, a person who likes to talk about everyday life and passions, with a smidge of business thrown in, finding and winning business became much easier.

As you go through life meeting and interacting with people, stop trying to act like what you think makes a great business professional, and bring to your connection activities whatever makes you a great human being.

Have Fun

Stop seeing connecting as a chore and have fun with it instead. Use your face time with others to discover their passions. Most people have hobbies or activities they love. Get them talking about those things. I’ll give you an easy way to do that. But first, a word of caution: guess what a significant number of people in this world are NOT passionate about? If you guessed “their jobs,” you are correct. Yet, many networkers bombard others with a variation of this question: “What do you do for a living?” I haven’t asked anyone that question in a long, long time. There’s a good reason why.

When you meet someone new, you want them to feel energized after they walk away from your interaction. If you ask the livelihood question of someone who doesn’t care for his or her job, you risk invoking a negative emotion, something you don’t want associated with you if your goal is to make friends. So how do you tap into the positive emotions of another individual? Ask what the person does for fun.

Most people’s eyes spark when asked this question. After you ask, let the conversation unfold. A second word of caution: don’t ask this question first thing when meeting someone or it may come off as strange. Instead, start with widely accepted questions that get conversations going, like asking where a person is from or what brought him to the area.

Discovering people’s passions is way more fun than learning what they do for a living. And it’s often easier to remember that passion, versus a job title, the next time you see the person.

Make Your Goal, “How do I help others?” If you practice this regularly, at some point you’ll look back over your life to realize that your path to success was cleared of obstacles by the people you once helped. One of the best ways you can help others, is to connect them with like-minded individuals. If you meet a person who loves to fish, offer to connect him with that avid fisher you know. If a person wants to pursue photography, then introduce her to a knowledgeable friend who can offer advice.

This small action doesn’t take much time, but yields big results. And I’ve never met anyone who didn’t enjoy being connected to like-minded souls.

Be Approachable

You may think you are approachable, but are you really? Be aware of your resting face. This is the expression your face carries when you are not engaged in conversation or you’re simply thinking about that never-ending to-do list. Inside, we may feel approachable, but aging and gravity conspire against us with a tendency over time to convert our youthful faces from angelic to dour. To see an example of this, the next time you are stopped at a traffic light, look at the person in the car next to you. Most of the time you will glimpse that person’s resting face. Many of these drivers, caught unaware, don’t look approachable at all.

The best way to combat an ornery resting face, is to smile. Smile big and smile often.

Discover What Works for You

One piece of advice that stops some people in their connection efforts, is the recommendation to remember names better. This is good advice, but not everyone can make it work. Many people have issues with name recall so they label themselves as poor connectors since they believe great connectors are good with names. Learn how to work around this, or any other connection challenge.

If you have trouble with name recall, you may be tempted to avoid someone you met recently when you see her again somewhere else, simply because you can’t remember the name. Don’t do it.

The other individual probably doesn’t recall your name either and is considering the same thing; to avoid you. Be brave. Go up to the person. Remind her where you met and say your name, then ask her to refresh your memory with her name. The person will respect you for it and admire your effort to reconnect. And it’s more likely, with this reminder, that you’ll remember the name the next time you run into the person.

Don’t let conventional advice that doesn’t work well for you, stop you from becoming the great connector you are meant to be. Become unconventional. Experiment to discover what works best for you.

It’s an amazing world out there full of wonderful people. Don’t isolate yourself because networking has never been a strength. Go out and connect instead. The rewards are great.
A guide to Trade Show Etiquette

Be Presentable & Professional

- Be courteous:
  1. Treat each guest like a human, don’t get caught up in a sales pitch or demo.
  2. Greet each guest as they arrive at your booth, say thank you as they leave.
  3. Speak at an appropriate volume, don’t yell, but make sure you’re heard over the noise of the crowd.
  4. Don’t solicit guests in the aisles, that’s a big no-no.
  5. Also be sure to stay out of other booths, especially those of competitors.
  6. Keep your booth clean, don’t eat in the booth - hide trash & supplies behind a backdrop or under a skirted table.

- Be prepared:
  - Practice your pitch, presentation, & product demos.
  - Use strong opening lines.
  - Research attendees & know who you want to talk to.
  - Keep your hands at your sides, not in your pockets or folded on your chest.
  - Stay attentive, don’t chat with coworkers or look at your phone.
  - Don’t sit but if you have to, use a stool to stay at visitors’ eye level.

Be Prepared:

- Use a breath freshener because no one likes that guy.
- Who would you rather talk to?
- Perfect your posture, back straight, feet 6 to 8 inches apart.

Tips for Networking After the Show!

- Just say Hi!
  - The goal is to make honest connections.
  - Don’t just ask “where do you work”.
  - Ask about passions, hobbies, & interests.
  - Offer help, genuinely.
  - Ask, listen, observe, don’t just talk about yourself!

- Follow up!

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We collect business cards, capture great quotations, stumble into great conversations... But how can we really measure the value of attending a conference?

I must admit that I’ve always been skeptical of conferences. Taking days out of the office (for a reason other than vacation) is expensive. If you’re going to spend money and sacrifice a valuable chunk of time that could be spent taking action, then it had better be worthwhile.

Our team at Behance debates the merits of conferences quite a bit. Some of us attend TED, SXSW, and the occasional tech conference. And, of course, all of us attend our own annual conference, The 99U.

When we developed the first 99U Conference in 2009, we sought to create an experience with the opposite intention of most other conferences. Rather than seek to inspire more ideas, The 99U was created to serve as an impetus for action. The fact that the conference now sells out many months in advance suggests that we struck a chord. But how do we as individuals measure the value of a conference? Is it the number of business cards collected? Old relationships rekindled? New ideas gained?

With the next 99U Conference right around the corner, I thought it would be useful to discuss how to get the most out of your conference experience—whether at our event or at any other event. Here are a few insights:

**1. Separate the wisdom from the action.**

At just went through my notes from the past two years of TED conferences, and I realized that I had never even re-read my notes from the 2009 event. Little observations and quotes that I particularly enjoyed were still scribbled amidst many pages of notes.

However, the Action Steps that I had come up with during the conference had fortunately been captured separately and addressed after the conference. During the conference, I had recorded these Action Steps with a star next to each—making it easier to decipher them from the other notations. There were people I planned to follow up with and a few ideas for improving one of our products.

The first thing I do after every conference is review the notes and transfer every starred item into my task management tool. Some people I know use a different color for the actionable stuff. Whatever your system, recognize that conferences are liable to overwhelm you with notations. You must enter and leave with a bias-towards-action to capture the gems for post-conference execution.

**2. Distill every talk down to one key takeaway.**

Every presenter at a conference has his or her own style. Some people tell a story, sometimes there is a video or set of images, and sometimes there is a full slide presentation. Given our short memories and the great amount of stimuli, it is important to distill each presentation down to a central point.

After each presentation, ask yourself what struck you, what did you learn? Perhaps there was a specific tip that you could adapt in your own work— or some piece of counterintuitive advice that really resonated. If you write anything down during a conference, make it the one key take-away from each presentation that is worth additional consideration upon your return to real life.

**3. Defy structure to mine the circumstantial.**

How should you spend your time at a conference? Should you cut off a great conversation with a fellow attendee to make the next session? Should you take a breakfast meeting with a potential partner in lieu of attending the opening remarks? Don’t assume that you should follow the herd and do what you’re told.

The greatest benefits of a conference are circumstantial, often found in the seams of the experience. That chance conversation in the coffee line could make all the difference. A great conference is especially fertile ground for collaboration. As such, I don’t feel pressured by the structure. Of course, as a conference organizer, our hope is that you enjoy the full agenda. However, you must ultimately make sure the conference serves your needs as best as it can.

**4. Plan private gatherings with like-minded folks.**

Conferences are more than just the programming; they are an assembly of like-minded folks with great intention. How often do you get uninterrupted time to discuss matters of interest with industry peers from around the world? Many frequent conference-goers claim that their greatest conference experiences happened during the “down time.”

Don’t leave these benefits up to chance. Reach out to your contacts beforehand and propose grabbing an early breakfast together, lunch, or drinks during the conference. Encourage each person to invite 1-2 people that they deeply respect, thus broadening the potential of the meeting.

**5. Process business cards for follow-up in real-time.**

Most conference conversations end with a business card exchange. And then, post-conference, you’re left with tons of cards and little time to sort through them. One tip I’ve heard is to collect business cards into two groups—the first for those that you absolutely plan to follow up with for a specific need, and the second for those that you just want to put in your address book but don’t have any next step (and if any other cards fall into the third camp of “who is this person?”— discard).

For business cards that fall into the first group, write your intended action on the card. For example, “invite to do guest post” or “introduce to Alex for demo.” If you have a digital way to store contacts at conferences, use tags within the entry to distinguish those that are actionable from the others.

source: http://99u.com/articles/7020/5-tips-for-making-the-most-of-a-conference
Dressing for Success

Women's Staples
- A fitted black or white blazer
- Black or grey slacks
- Tasteful, non-distracting jewelry
- A tasteful mid-length dress
- A black pencil skirt
- Black or nude close-toed pumps

Men's Staples
- A neutral cashmere sweater
- Medium to slim-width, versatile, simple ties
- An appropriately sized watch (doesn't need to be expensive)
- A black or grey suit
- Black and grey slacks
- Polished black dress shoes

Staples for Everyone
- A white, long-sleeved button-up
- An iron
- Clean, neat, groomed hair

Sources: GQ, Forbes, & Business Insider
I have long believed that great relationships get their start in great conversations, and great conversations start from great questions. But too many people try to boil the ocean early in a relationship, instead of just boiling a cup of water.

In an initial meeting, there are three and only three tasks you should try to accomplish:

1. **Build rapport.**
2. **Convey your credibility through the questions you ask.**
3. **Determine next steps, if any.**

That’s it! But I see way too many people trying to jump too quickly to “business bestie” once they’ve gotten that initial meeting.

A recent experience brought this home. If you want to be a thought and practice leader, you have to drink your own Kool-Aid. I have a hard time with people who coach but don’t work on the behaviors they’re trying to develop in others. A few days ago I had an opportunity to practice what I preach.

I was invited by the Atlanta Business Chronicle to a reunion of “40 Under 40” alumni at an Atlanta Falcons pre-season game. This is probably the fifth year I’ve attended this reunion. Every year one of the executives from the Falcons addresses the group, and this year was the best yet. I’m glad I took my handsome son with me.

We were welcomed by Arthur Blank, owner and chairman of the Atlanta Falcons, one of the founders of Home Depot. I’ve met him once or twice—I genuinely believe that he gets how incredibly important the fan experience is. He brought out Mike Gomes, who is Senior Vice President of Fan Experience. Right up my alley.

Gomes spoke about his 20 years as a Disney VP working on guest experiences. He talked about what he’s doing with the Falcons organization to elevate their guest experience—for example, moving from their current home in the Georgia Dome to the Mercedes Benz stadium next door. Then he offered to answer questions. I’m in a room with about 75 very bright people, and I recognize this is my chance to differentiate myself. Practicing what I preach, I posed my first question.

“As you know, one of the challenges with customer experience is the experience you are NOT aware of—the people who leave mad, but never tell you. Or, getting that information after the fact when you don’t have a chance to do anything about it, like stale surveys. So what are you doing,” I asked Mike, “to capture as much real-time customer experience as possible, such as sentiment analysis and social media?”

The first words out of his mouth were, “That’s a great question.” (This is exactly what you want!) Then he described what the Falcons do to capture customer experience, and we’re making eye contact—I’m getting the signs that I’ve done what I advise others to do. I’ve conveyed credibility through the question I asked.

Toward the end of the Q&A, I asked another question. Gomes had been talking business for 45 minutes by this time, so I chose a different tack: “What do you do for fun, and how do you disengage?” The first words out of his mouth: “Another great question! Man, this guy asks a lot of good questions.” He went on to talk about how difficult he finds it, in a 24/7 world, to disengage.

The formal part of the program ended and the fan experience of the game began. I didn’t rush him with a business card like a coupon dispenser before he could get away; I know I can find him on LinkedIn and discover a way to connect with him. Oddly enough though, later that evening after the game we ran into each other again. I’d been one person in a room of 75, but not only did he recognize me—he asked, “What do you do?” I didn’t dump a rehearsed elevator pitch on him—I merely said, “I’m an advisor around this customer experience space.”

Having built rapport and established my credibility, I now had the opportunity to create next steps. “It would be great to connect over a cup of coffee and get to know each other better,” I offered. To which he replied by pulling out HIS business card, and said, “That would be great.”
In that moment I worked a system I have developed and refined over decades, and the results were what I have learned I can confidently expect. Which brings us back to my opening remark: Great relationships come from great conversations, and great conversations come from great questions. Over time, I’ve delineated seven types of questions that elevate business relationships.

**Ask questions that:**

1. **Make your relationships think**, particularly if you help them challenge their status quo. Mike Gomes already knows a dozen techniques to collect all kinds of customer experience data. By asking him what he’s doing to capture real-time data, I’ve forced him to think.

2. **Compel your relationships to reframe a challenge or opportunity.** If you do that, they associate that reframing with you.

3. **Convey your credibility.** Use the terminology of your domain or mention hot topics.

4. **Create conversation through their open-ended structure.** Offer conversation enablers, not close-ended questions that constrain conversation to yes/no answers.

5. **Haven’t been asked by others in the past.** Find your unique angle. Don’t ask, “What keeps you up at night?” We’ve heard it already.

6. **Create forward motion.** You want to move the conversation toward a relationship’s most important issues. The next steps, the next line of inquiry, that makes an individual want to know more about you.

7. **Make you personable.** Get to know the other person as an individual. Relationships are not between logos.

If you want to stand out in a crowd, if you want to be remembered, if you want your words repeated, ask more intelligent, more engaging questions. Great relationships will likely follow.

**Nour Takeaways**

1. Have three and only three goals for your initial meetings: Build rapport; convey your credibility through the questions you ask; and determine next steps, if any.

2. Don’t default to dispensing business cards or reciting elevator pitches; those moves seldom enhance rapport, credibility, or the desire for a meaningful next step.

3. Seven types of questions have proven to stimulate interest in developing a relationship; master them if you want to be remembered.

David Nour has spent the past two decades advising executives on building business relationships. In the process, he has developed Relationship Economics® - the art and science of becoming more intentional and strategic in the relationships one chooses to invest in. In a global economy that is becoming increasingly disconnected, The Nour Group, Inc. has worked with clients such as Hilton, ThyssenKrupp, Disney, KPMG and over 100 other marquee organizations. David Nour is a strategic relationship keynote speaker, consultant, and advisor that helps these companies drive profitable growth through unique returns on their strategic relationships. Nour has pioneered the phenomenon that relationships are the greatest off balance sheet asset any organizations possess, large and small, public and private. He is the author of nine books translated into eight languages, including the best-selling Relationship Economics - Revised (Wiley), ConnectAbility (McGraw-Hill), The Entrepreneur’s Guide to Raising Capital (Praeger), Return on Impact (ASAE), and the 2017 forthcoming CO-CREATE (St. Martin’s Press), an essential guide showing C-level leaders how to optimize relationships, create market gravity, and greatly increase revenue. Contact David Nour to learn more, subscribe to the Blog, sign up for the Rendezvous Newsletter or request his speaking schedule availability for your organization’s next event.

source: http://blog.nourgroup.com/blog/great-relationships-develop-from-great-conversations