



UNIT 3

Handling Tough Situations

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Apply the concept of give first and be helpful as part of a system of reciprocity
- ✓ Use strategy and systems in order to network effectively



Unit 3

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The Things We Say

Assessing Ourselves

Networking isn't easy! If it was, everyone would be doing it and seeing great success. It is, however, the way to meet people and start relationships that you want to further. In very tight, well-established networking groups we can witness some uncomfortable and downright awkward situations.

If you encounter a network that seems to be closed to you and where people form cliques that appear unapproachable, you'll have to plan for how you want to handle that. If you say something you later regret, you may have to do some damage control.

Finally, you have to monitor your own behavior. Do some self-evaluation and ask:

- Do I think before I speak?
- Do I blurt things out and regret it later?
- Am I aggressive in my introductions and interactions?
- Do I speak inclusively and diplomatically?
- Do I get angry, sad, or frustrated when I speak?

Making Connections

Situations when I spoke hurtful, uncaring, or emotionally loaded words for the sake of being honest or transparent	How I could have made that moment better by paying more attention to what I was saying

Six Strategies for Success

When you are having a problem, there are six strategies we recommend you choose from.

- Stop talking (bite your tongue if needed) and stop the words from tumbling out.
- Simply walk away. You could say, “I’m not handling this very well. Please excuse me.”
- Use a paraphrasing technique to repeat what’s being said to you back to the speaker. This gives you a chance to hear what they are really saying and to consider your response.
- Pause. Take a deep breath and think about what you’d like to say, instead of just jumping in.
- Afterwards, take a few minutes to write out your potential response. This will give you a chance to work through what you will say the next time.
- Apologize, and be sincere about it.

What Others Say

If you have done your pre-work, the networking group you are meeting with should be the right place to be. However, sometimes personalities, the weather, or the stars are out of sync and you will find yourself in what seems like the wrong place. Maybe the dynamics of the group are off, the group is too small for good networking to take place, or there is something else going on.

Resist the temptation to leave the room. Don’t ask for your membership to be refunded. Instead, get strategic:

- Suspend judgment. There may be some dynamic present, but you don’t have to understand it right away.
- Practice patience and curiosity. Who is the leader of this group? What is the purpose behind the meeting? Who can you introduce yourself to?
- How can you make the meeting better, just by being you and being willing to meet people? How can you help?

As you receive answers and information, listen with your ears, your eyes, and your heart. By being strategic and working with what you have, you are more likely to benefit from being at this particular meeting. Granted, you may not return to the group again, but at least you have fully fleshed out the opportunity.

You might make just one good connection in that room, or perhaps you meet no one. Just remember that something drew you to that group. What was it? If your intentions fell in line with the purpose, why are things not working out? If you can’t change it, do you continue to pay attention to the issues, or not?

Introverts and Extroverts

While everyone who networks may have their own reasons for doing so, one common aspect is that they network to meet people, and ultimately, do something with those connections, whether it is to sell more products and services, find a new job, or raise money for a charity.

At any networking event you'll find yourself in a room of people who lie somewhere on a continuum of introversion to extroversion. While we think of **extroverts** as people who are outgoing and have the easiest time making new connections, that doesn't mean they are naturally good at networking. It might be something they need to learn.

On the other hand, **introverts** are people who can be extremely to moderately shy, but they can learn to network extremely well and even be mistaken for extroverts as they connect and build relationships.

Where is your comfort level? How about that of the people you are meeting? While labels can be limiting, using them can also be helpful in figuring out how we want to meet people, and how others perceive us. Whatever you do, don't use a label as something that limits you or becomes an excuse, like this: "That Joe has all the luck – he is a real extrovert."

Self-acceptance is an important attribute for living up to your own potential. Extroverts can struggle with networking because they assume their outgoing nature is all they need to build important relationships, and introverts can be master networkers. It depends on skill, attitude, and openness to learn.

You have the same chances as anyone else to develop strengths and skill, and to grow. Be willing and open to stretch yourself and develop the skills that you want. No matter what your own style is, what labels you use, or your comfort at forging new relationships, you need to know and accept that you can improve your competency at relating to people, no matter what their style is.

Making Connections

List five tips for making great networking contacts for introverts and extroverts.

Introverts	Extroverts

Following Up

You've networked, conversed, gathered information, and now you have a fresh new stack of business cards or electronic entries in your smartphone. Now it's time to do something with that information and to make the most of it.

Following Up

Networking leads very naturally to follow up, despite the fact that people can actually be pretty poor at following up with people they meet! The reasons for this are mysterious and perplexing, since many successful networkers and sales people confirm that their freedom (or fortune, depending on who you speak with), comes from being diligent about doing their follow up.

While you are at a networking event, you can end the conversation with an invitation to connect (if you want to). Say something about what you enjoyed, and then extend an invitation that compels them to connect with you. Here are some examples.

- "Jim, it was fun to hear about your collection of bird watching books. I rarely meet someone with that much passion unless I am at a monthly bird enthusiasts club meeting. If you would like to meet some more bird buffs, I can let you know the next time they are getting together if you would like. How can I get in touch with you?"
- "I wonder if we could share a 15 minute phone call and talk more about this. I think I may be able to connect you with _____ but I will need a few more details. Do you have a card?"
- "I'll call you at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday. It's been great talking with you today." Then make sure you remember to make the call!
- "I have a monthly newsletter (or meeting) about (their need or pain point). Would you mind if I add you to my invitation/subscription list? Even if you get one gem from it, the difference in your results will be noticeable immediately."

If they don't accept your invitation, that's okay, because you've still made that connection and may see them again. What is essential about great results from networking is taking the next steps and developing that relationship. This is where your skill with following up becomes essential, although very few people actually consistently do it!

Case Study

In a great example of how well this can work for you, here is a true story from one of our team members.

I was at a networking event that consisted of a room full of business women. We were going through a very focused process and were asked to list the things we needed to buy in the next 30 days. I mentioned that I needed a new car battery and someone to take over the maintenance of my car because I had recently moved and my trusted mechanic was in another region. After the session, one of the women in the group handed me her business card with the name and number of her mechanic written on the back. Another woman in the group also endorsed this particular mechanic, which I thought was pretty helpful of both of them. However, the power of this connection grew the next day when I got a message from the mechanic, after he received a referral from the woman who gave me her card. Talk about powerful! I booked an appointment with him right away, and his attention to detail and service is fantastic.

Making it Personal

We've mentioned previously that networking is about developing relationships, and doing so means that your follow up needs to be personal too.

Phone Calls

One of the most effective forms of follow up is to call someone and either pick up on a comment that came out during the networking session, or offer to help someone with something (in a genuine offer to help, of course). This means that you pick up the phone and speak with them or leave a message.

E-mail and Text Messages

In this age, e-mail and text messages are highly utilized, and for many people they are clearly preferred over a phone call. You can ask the person you've met what method they prefer, and then go ahead and use their preferred channel.

In your first text message it's always a good idea to start with, "It's Pat, we met Thursday's networking meeting..." and in an e-mail, you should always have a signature panel that contains your contact information. Remember that you are building relationships and that people you have just met are not looking for, nor will they appreciate hard selling pitches and information. If you choose to do so, you run a very real risk of having your e-mail or phone number blocked or reported for spam.

E-mail can be very handy for informal follow-up, where you make meaningful connections and contributions to people's lives, and they get to know you without feeling like you want to sell them anything. Here are some sample formats that you can use.

Sample One

Hi John,

When we last spoke, you mentioned a new book by _____ that was coming out soon. I added it to my reading list and received it this weekend and had a really hard time putting it down! I really got a lot out of the chapter about _____. Thank so much for the recommendation.

Sample Two

Hi Marlene,

When we met a couple of weeks ago, you mentioned that you'd love to get some new artwork in your office. This morning on the Early Show they mentioned that the regional art gallery is starting up a rental program where local businesses and benefactors can rent great art for a reasonable price. Subscribers to the program get all kinds of services, including having things professionally hung at no charge. I thought I would pass the message along to you just in case you haven't heard yet.

Meetings

If you have taken the bull by the horns and will organize your own networking event, send invitations and invite people that you think could be of benefit to one another. This is not the same as inviting people who could be a direct benefit to you. If the integrity of networking survives on helping others, then your meetings need to have the same kind of professionalism attached to them as well.

Choosing to Abstain

You may not like follow up. You may not need more connections in your database. You may not need more sales. If any of those are true for you, the option certainly exists for you not to do any follow up. However, very few people attend networking sessions who don't want anything out of it at all. If you made the decision and had to work up any courage to go to a networking event then it's equally important that you make the most of those efforts and do your follow up.

Opting In

We'd like to share a word about newsletter and e-mails lists for those of you who author them. In many parts of the business world, you are not permitted to add someone to a group list without first getting their permission. If you add people to a list without their permission or having them complete an opt-in form from your website, they can (and will) click the unsubscribe button at the bottom of your missive, and they can report you to the authorities for spam, which means your account can be disabled. Make sure you only add people who opt-in willingly.

Organizing Your Network

Contact Management Systems

The Importance of a System

As your network (and hopefully your results) grows, keeping up on all the people you have met, who to call, when to call them, and what to say is a real challenge. As a relationship developer you want to make sure that you are having meaningful, beneficial contact with people. As a result, you need to use a contact system. And yes, we said system. A system can be as complicated or simple as you need it to be. Systems are very important in organizing, managing, and succeeding in business – any kind of business.

Choosing a System

A simple contact system could be founded on something as straightforward as a spreadsheet where you track the people you meet, like this:

Name	Title	Organization	Phone	Address	Last Contact

There are many kinds of contact management systems available, and you have to decide what is best for you. There are

lots of different kinds of organization systems available. What's important is that you develop a system that works for you. To get started, you could ask colleagues what system they are using and what features they really like. Some systems will allow you to test it out for 30 days at no charge, although you won't want to be trying too many or you will be spending a lot of time on your computer instead of nurturing leads.

Most systems (such as ACT! and Microsoft Outlook) allow you to add contacts using a form. This type of system allows you to capture a lot more details, including notes on where you met, common interests, and so on.

About Integrated Systems

As your network grows, it is important to have it integrated with a calendar system so that you receive reminders about tasks and follow-ups that must be completed. These reminders are your cue for who to call and when, the purpose of your call, and much more. Again, these systems can be very simple and sufficient for a small network or business, and typically get more sophisticated for bigger operations. While they used to be strictly available for PC use, many of them now have a cloud-based element to them, making them accessible from any Internet-capable device, all the time.

Mastering Networking

Organization Skills are Important!

Getting good at networking is one of your goals. Being a master at it means that you adopt systems and make them work for you so that you can create opportunities. This way you never have to dig for phone numbers, addresses, miss an appointment, or arrive late. You won't be caught unprepared on a deadline, or when someone calls you out of the blue. If you tend to be someone who is not well organized, cannot find your business cards, arrives late frequently, or forgets to call people back, then you need to do some homework. Keep track of things, put them where they belong, and know where to find them. Set up systems that serve you, and design them to serve you well.

Skills to Develop

As you create opportunities and connections for others, you will create those same things for yourself. Rather than deciding whether something can or cannot be accomplished, look at the possibilities, and become someone who solves problems as opposed to giving up because of them.

Master networkers will ask people they meet to look at things in a different way and also consider some possibilities. They ask questions like:

- Have you thought about...
- Have you considered...
- I wonder if...
- What if we looked at it from a different perspective...

Master networkers are good at brainstorming, identifying solutions, and willing to share what they know (whether it is a service or referral to a person), and with the approach of serving and helping others before themselves. This is part of their commitment to **give and grow**.

Many networkers keep detailed notes in a journal or digital file to remind them of those relationships being fostered, ideas exchanged, and things to do. A paper journal might be filled with visual cues that help with memory or help someone to find what they are looking for. In contrast, a digital journal might take a little getting used to and lacks some features of a paper file, but may be a little more accessible if stored on a mobile device. As well, it becomes even harder to lose if it is backed up in the cloud. Your journal can become a living history of people you meet, topics discussed, and plans. You don't have to record long entries, but just put enough there to cue you to a particular conversation.

Here is an example:

Tuesday Networking Group, March 26

- James, new sports car
- Brian, new job starts April 21
- Megan, became an aunt March 20

This makes it easy for you to have a peek in your journal, review the last few entries, and refresh your memory on who was doing what. You can also flip back for months at a time. With a digital version, you can use keywords and tags to highlight things and locate them easily.

Setting Goals

People who master the art and science of networking know where they are going and what the purpose of networking is to them. If they attend a certain networking group because their boss tells them to, they know how to make the most of it. If they attend with the intent of getting or making referrals, the clarity they have helps them to make the most of opportunities as they arise, and to create opportunities if they don't surface on their own. Before any networking meeting, you should be very clear on who you want to meet, how many people you want to make contact with, what your objectives are, and what questions you will ask.

Consistency

Strong networkers understand the need to be consistent. They don't network at the time they need more contacts or to further their careers. They do it because they like to be able to contribute and serve. They understand that networking helps them and that it helps everyone around them, too. Networking is part of their lifestyle.

Independent Growth

Think about your skills as a networker. Reflect on what you need to add to your skills in order to be valued as a networker, and to benefit.
