

The difference between selling and networking

Networking has often a negative connotation. This is due to the fact that many salesmen abuse networking to sell.

The main difference between selling and networking is that **in a sales process the goal of the interaction between two people is the sale of a product or service**. When **networking, this sale could be the consequence** of a contact that is built with respect and care. Hence, it is clear that the sale is not the goal of networking.

The comparison in the table (below) goes into the details of the difference between selling and networking. The table shows several elements of “negative networking” by hard sellers and “real networking”.

	Hard sellers who network...	Real networkers...
1	Are focused on the short term	Are focused on the long term
2	Try to detect a need that can be satisfied by their product or service	Share any information that can be interesting for the other party
3	Only give when they have an immediate profit	Give without expecting something back (and in the long run this usually pays off better too)
4	Listen in order to get the deal	Listen to help
5	Ask questions in order to be able to position their product or service better	Ask questions to be able to be better of assistance
6	Find people interesting only if they are a potential customer	Find everybody interesting as a contact. You can never be certain of who they know and what they know.
7	Want to collect and distribute as many business cards as possible	Ask and give business cards to people with whom they really made contact .
8	Talk often only about their product or service without listening to others	See to it that others always talk more than they do, listen carefully to them and encourage them to tell more.
9	Try to bring the attention to their product or service .	Recommend products or services of people in their network (and only if they are relevant for the people they talk to)
10	The goal is the sale . People are a means, a resource (sometimes even a necessary evil) to reach that goal.	The goal is to establish and maintain contacts . One of the possible consequences is a sale .

An example of the difference between selling and networking.

Situation: a salesman of fire extinguishers meets the manager of a local affiliate of a bank company at a reception of the Chamber of Commerce.

Selling

The salesman does his sales magic to convince the manager to buy fire extinguishers for his office. He is a good salesman and he manages to sell 5 fire extinguishers.

The evening of the salesman is a success.

Networking

The salesman is interested in the manager as a person. Amongst other things he learns that the manager is an active sailor and that he is looking for a new boat. The salesman remembers that a friend of his has a boat for sale. He not only tells this to the manager, but also provides them with each other's contact details the following day. A week later the boat has a new owner.

Four months later the salesman receives a phone call from the manager. The manager asks him to deliver new fire extinguishers for the office and for the facilities of the sailing club of which the manager recently became chairman. Moreover the manager proposes to write a letter to all members of the sailing club with a recommendation for the fire extinguishers of the salesman.

The year of the salesman is a success.

At your next networking event, remember this difference between selling and networking. You'll be surprised !

PS: Receive your FREE e-course concerning networking via www.networking-coach.com

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