

Episode #17: Tips to Improve your Networking Results

Welcome to THE CAREER ACCELERATOR, the podcast where corporate managers will find tips and tools to deliver results through others.

Hello. In today's episode you will hear tips on how to improve your networking results, especially in these times of lockdowns and social distancing. I'm your host, coach Percy Cannon.

In our last episode you heard about how I recovered after losing my job 15 years into my corporate career. I shared the three lessons I learned both from what I had done right, and what I should have done better.

1. The first one was to **assume 100% accountability for managing your career**. In particular, to beware that at some point we ALL will reach a plateau in an organization. That's why it's so important to become a professional student and an expert networker.
2. The second lesson was to **be humble**.
3. And the third one was to **become more people-oriented**.

I invited you to be proactive and consider applying one or more of these lessons before you experience a similar moment in your corporate career.

Today, I want to build on one of these lessons. I will provide four tips that can significantly improve the quality and quantity of your networking results. Now that Covid-19 has curtailed in-person networking, it's become especially important to kick your networking skills up a notch. I will build on my own experience, augmented by insights from expert networkers.

1. The first tip is to **adopt the mindset of "What's in it for them" with any person you wish to network with**. Ever since I can remember, I was constantly surprised at how my father seemed to always have a contact whenever and wherever one was needed. At first, I thought this was something normal. However, it was not until later in life that I realized what my Dad's secret sauce was. He had built these relationships throughout the years by helping people, from all walks of life, achieve something, big or small. If it was within his means, he would always be willing to help. Prior, I had only witnessed the "receiving" benefits, but it was his years of "giving" prework that enabled all the payoffs. As I have learned from my friend and mentor Bob Burg, coauthor of "The Go-Giver" book series, networking is cultivating a mutually beneficial, give and receive, win/win relationship. Giving comes first, and it should be a result of understanding what's in it for the other person, of asking yourself how you can provide them with something of value.

Returning to my Dad's story, it turns out his secret sauce outlived him. He had served in the Peruvian Air Force and had retired as a Colonel two decades before passing. At his funeral, two of his Air Force friends offered to help me with the claims I had to submit for the various benefits my mother was eligible for, such as life insurance, pension plan and funeral expenses.

Of course, each benefit was handled by a different unit within the Air Force... As I dealt with these claims, why was I not surprised to find in each place I went at least one person who had known or worked with my dad? Nor by their willingness to help me navigate the bureaucracy and speed up the claims?

2. The second tip is to **search for Super-Connectors and become part of their network**. In his excellent book on networking, “Never Eat Alone”, coauthor Keith Ferrazzi dedicates a full chapter on “Connecting with Connectors.” Ferrazzi defines a super-connector as somebody “who seems to know everybody, and whom everybody seems to know.” Do you have one or more of these super-connectors in your network? I have two or three, although I have to admit I have not been consistent in nurturing our relationship.

Where can you find these super-connectors? Ferrazzi outlines eight professions in which you can find these people. Two of them could be particularly valuable to you, as they have been to me:

- a) First is **Headhunters, recruiters, and outplacement professionals**. They are immersed in the corporate world. Of course, these professionals need candidates to stay afloat, so one of the best things you can do for them is to refer acquaintances who could be potential clients. Indirectly, you can also help them by offering to be a reference for your close acquaintances who are in between jobs.

I recently connected with a headhunter who was interviewing a candidate who had provided my name as a reference. The 15 minutes I spent with her resulted in a new relationship and was also valuable for the candidate. By the way, the candidate eventually got hired as part of this process and was grateful for the feedback I provided to the headhunter.

- b) And the second profession where you can find Super-Connectors is **authors, bloggers and gurus**. Before the explosive development of social media and the broad availability of self-publishing, it was harder to reach these professionals. Although it’s still not a particularly easy task, the bar is lower now.

At the end of 2018, I reached out to the authors of the top ten books whose content was compatible with my coaching practice. I inquired them if they offered a certification on their book content. The response rate was low... but I still was able to connect with a couple of them, one of which was Bob Burg, who became my friend and mentor, and ended up certifying me as a speaker and coach on his Go-Giver program. My certification has allowed me to tap into his large network.

3. The third of the four tips to improve your networking capabilities is to **become a LinkedIn power user**. If you want to increase the quality and quantity of your professional and corporate relationships, I have found that LinkedIn is the best social media platform to accomplish this, more so now that Covid-19 has precluded traditional face-to-face meetings.

12 years ago, as part of the process to develop the business plan for my second career as a corporate coach, I consulted with a friend of mine, an expert in technology and social media. I sought his recommendation on which social media I should focus on. Without hesitation, he answered LinkedIn. Although at that time I already had a LinkedIn account, I had few connections and a basic profile. Throughout the years, I have gradually increased the time and energy spent on this network, where I now hold over 4,000 connections. I have also made it a priority to continually educate myself on how to best leverage this platform. One excellent book I read is “LinkedIn Unlocked” by Melonie Dodaro. Although it is mostly geared towards professionals who want to drive more business through social selling, it has plenty of wisdom for corporate employees.

4. And the fourth tip is to **make networking a priority if you truly want to reap the benefits**. If it helps, plug networking into whichever planning process you are following. A priority usually has a goal and an action plan attached to it. So set short, medium, and long-term networking goals. Then develop an action plan with milestones for each timeframe. Consider Ferrazzi’s suggestion of moving from a “To-do” to a “To-meet” list.

If you want to improve the quality and quantity of your professional relationships, I encourage you to follow one or more of these four networking tips—and there’s no time like the present. Don’t let the current period of global uncertainty defer your networking efforts. Start now.

I hope you enjoyed today's episode. If you like what you heard today, and depending on the platform you're using, let me ask you to please rate, subscribe or follow this podcast and share it with your coworkers and friends. Also, you can request a free consultation call with me by visiting my website at www.cannon.consulting, or if available in this platform, using the link provided in the Details section.

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In the next episode my guest will be Jorge Montoya, a retired President at Procter & Gamble. Here’s a preview of my interview with him:

“Never stop learning. You have to learn every day, even when you age. Have a passion and love what you do every day. That’s the only way you are going to have to have fun, and to have fun you have to love what you do. Practice servant leadership, what you can do for your organization, for your company, for your people. Not the other way around, of what they can do for you. And above all, be humble.”

Thank you for listening to THE CAREER ACCELERATOR, the podcast where corporate managers will find tips and tools to deliver results through others. Stay tuned for our next episode!

Percy's BIO

Percy provides corporate managers and leadership teams with customized coaching programs that help them develop the skills and capabilities needed to significantly increase their business results through others and accelerate their career growth.

Percy is an “alumnus” from three multinational corporations, Procter & Gamble, IBM & Microsoft, with whom he spent close to three decades.

Since 2011 he has been helping corporate executives, managers and employees ***make the rest of their life...the best of their life®***.

Percy has worked in the United States and across several countries in Latin America as an Executive Coach, Leadership Team Consultant and Keynote Speaker, serving companies such as Microsoft, Procter & Gamble, Citibank, Tiffany & Avianca.

Percy is a Certified Professional Coach from Wainwright Global, Authorized Partner for "The Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team" and "Everything DiSC" and certified as a "Go-Giver" speaker & coach.

He published his first book in 2012-13 in English (*The Business Apostolate: Insights to Define and Achieve Your Mission in Life*) and in Spanish (*El Negocio Más Grande de su Vida*).

Percy is a Consulting Partner with Grupo Azimuth and the Chapter Director for the COO Forum in Southeast Florida.

He has lived in 9 different cities and 5 countries, and speaks English, Spanish and Portuguese fluently.

Percy is married, has 3 children and 6 grandchildren, and is a passionate runner & reader.

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