

Buddy Up for Networking Success

Just as people lose weight more effectively with a workout partner or earn higher grades if they study in groups, your efforts to build great relationships for your career and life will be much more successful if you team up.

Get yourself a buddy or two or more and try these four ways you can enhance your success together.

1. Ongoing Support

The most obvious things a buddy can provide are some accountability and motivation. Agree to create your own Relationship Action Plans by a certain date, and when the time rolls around, check each other's work.

Compare notes, and copy best practices. Then establish another deadline to set up a certain number of meetings with your target contacts each month.

You'll need this ongoing exchange of support, guidance and motivation to build relationships consistently and effectively throughout your life.

2. Sharing Networks

My friend Lisa, who runs the Hotel Bel-Air in Los Angeles and I use this tactic all the time. We plan a series of dinner parties, one per month, and alternate the location between her hotel and my home. We each invite half the list, and we split the tab for each event.

The result: Not only do we introduce each other and our friends to entirely new groups of people, but we also save a bundle of money and headaches each time, because we're working together.

3. Job Hunting

This may seem counterintuitive, but job hunting can be easier and more effective in groups of two or more. When I advise business school students to join up with classmates who want to work in the same industry to do their job search, they look at me like I'm nuts. Their natural inclination is to do everything alone so their "Competition" won't benefit from their research or good fortune.

This is obviously narrow-minded. Do they really think there's only one or two investment banking jobs out there?

You and your buddies should work together. Split up the research work to save time and individual effort. Reach out to industry professionals you admire for group informational interviews.

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They'll be more likely to spend time with you because in your group you'll seem far more genuinely interested in learning about the work than begging for a job. And always look for ways to help each other. Maybe one company seems like a better fit for Lisa, while Joe prefers another. Point them in the right direction. Work together, and everyone wins.

4. Crashing Conferences

Having a wingman never hurts when you go to conferences or other events. Share with each other your real reasons for attending the conference, whether it's to look for a new job, to fill your sales pipeline or maybe even to seek a romantic relationship.

From scouting the attendees to endorsing each other to new people to running interference when necessary, you'll love the benefits. You'll be more confident than ever at these events if you go with a buddy.

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