

# Networking

## building relationships through trust

**NETWORKING CONSULTANT VALTER BARREIRA EXPLAINS WHY KNOW-HOW IS ESSENTIAL FOR BUSINESS AND CAREER SUCCESS**



**Knowing Counts:**  
Valter Barreira

### **WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO START YOUR NETWORKING CONSULTANCY?**

I didn't get as much payback from my networking activities as I expected and discovered others had the same problem. I realised networking doesn't depend on personality or social circles alone. It's a series of skills that can be acquired. I learnt these in the United States and did a Master's degree thesis on the subject. Now my aim is to help others.

### **WHAT IS NETWORKING AND HOW CAN IT BE USED?**

Networking used to be seen as a sales tool. Today it is recognised as a fundamental professional skill for business people. It is a process of building trust through informal relationships. Seventy per cent of what people do in their work they learn from others and successful networking adds the element of trust.

### **ISN'T NETWORKING THE SAME AS SELF MARKETING AND PROMOTION?**

Not really. Lobbying and marketing are unilateral processes and the target person is not a volunteer. Networking is a win-win, two way process. It's also about character, competence and skills. Networking generates good word-of-mouth marketing.

### **HOW CAN SOMEONE BE A SUCCESSFUL NETWORKER AND LEVERAGE PERSONAL NETWORKS?**

Some people may intuitively have a feel for networking, but the required skills can be learnt and developed by anyone. It requires a set of skills and a particular mindset. Research has shown that once these have been acquired, business capacity and productivity can be boosted by as much as 30 per cent.

### **WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU ARE A NATURALLY SHY OR OVER DIRECT PERSON?**

All personality types from all walks of life can learn the eight skills groups and adapt them successfully to their character. The skills will help you to ask the right questions, listen attentively, build confidence and overcome shyness, have an agenda, and transmit success stories from your organisation and reveal how you helped others.

### **WHAT KIND OF COMPANIES AND ENTITIES CAN BENEFIT FROM NETWORKING?**

Companies, associations, universities, public and private sector organisations, individual business people and freelancers can all benefit from networking. As a consultant I listen and try to work out the client's needs and adapt the networking tools to them.

### **COULD YOU NAME THREE AREAS WHERE NETWORKING HAS RELEVANCE TO OUR READERSHIP?**

Professionals in the property, golf resort, hotel and tourism sectors. Networking skills can help the management of better events, while the golf course has long been seen as a place to make contacts and do business, but there are ways of doing this more effectively. Effective business networking activities can improve sales, partnerships, intelligence gathering and encourage innovation.

### **IS NETWORKING WELL DEVELOPED IN PORTUGAL COMPARED TO OTHER COUNTRIES?**

Not yet. Of course the Portuguese have been building networks all over the world since the 15th century, but research shows that today there is a lack of effective knowledge in all three phases of networking: acquiring contacts, developing and nurturing relationships, and getting value from the network. That's where we step in and help.