SEAO NY: Effective Networking Strategies

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Building better communities with you
Session Outline: Networking

- Learn who you are
- Breeze through the early days of my career and the background of Nitsch Engineering
- Share resources and research data on networking
- Share some tips on networking and business development
- Leave time for questions
- Provide you with the opportunity to put some networking strategies in motion
Who are you?

- Public Sector & Non-Profit Employees
- Private Sector Employees
- Architects
- Structural Engineers
- Civil Engineers
- MEP Engineers
- Sustainability Professionals
- Transportation Professionals
- Marketing/BD Professionals
- Administrative Professionals
- Other

✔ Thornton Tomasetti

- AIA
- CREW
- DFI
- PWC
- SEAoNY
- SMPS
- WTS
How it all began — Judith Nitsch, PE

1971-1975: B.S.C.E. from Worcester Polytechnic Institute
1973-1974: Summers at Sanderson & Washburn, Tariffville, CT
How it all began — Judith Nitsch, PE

1975-1978: Project Engineer, Schofield Brothers, Inc., Framingham, MA
Judith Nitsch, PE

1978-1982: VP and Branch Office Manager
Freeman Engineering Co., Attleboro, MA

1982-1984: Senior Project Manager
Allen & Demurjian, Inc., Boston, MA

1984-1989: Senior Vice President/Director
Allen, Demurjian, Major & Nitsch, Inc.
Boston, then Cambridge & W. Warwick, RI
Nitsch Engineering

• Incorporated in 1989
• Civil Engineering, Structural Engineering, Transportation Engineering, Land Surveying, Green Infrastructure, Planning, and GIS
• 100+ Employees
  • Professional Engineers registered in 17 states and the District of Columbia, and with NCEES
  • 33 LEED® Accredited Professionals/Green Associates
  • 14 Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure ENV SPs
  • 1 SITES AP – The Sustainable Sites Initiative
• Projects in 20 states and five countries
• 100+ LEED Registered or Certified Projects
• WBE in MA, NY, PA, and VA; certified with WBENC; and a WOSB with SBA
• Office locations in Washington, DC, and Boston, Worcester, and Lawrence, MA
Resources and Research Data on Networking

• Start an office book club; read Ford Harding’s “Rainmaking”
  • Chapter 3 is called Networking: the Alternative to Cold Calling
  • Chapter 4 is called Special Rules for Special Networks: Trade Associations, Formal Networking Groups, and Internal Networks

• Start networking now
  • People who start networking early in their careers have the best networks later

• Be optimistic

• Develop a “system”

Everyday you waste is a lost opportunity!
Tips on Networking: Create Goals

- Bring valuable information back to your firm:
  - who has issued an RFP
  - who that RFP was sent to
  - who is on the “outs” with a long-time client of theirs
  - who changed positions
- Meet the speaker
- Target specific attendees
- What else?

“Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships.” Michael Jordan
Tips on Networking: Work as a Team

• Involve everyone: BD is ALL about teamwork
  • Technical staff: focus on repeat work
  • Principals: call on your contacts
  • Marketing/Administrative staff: contact peers
  • ALL: help identify strategies
• Acknowledge that “Somebody has to do it!”
  • Professional Societies
  • Golf
  • Theatre
• Document all information
• Understand the “rules of the game”
• Be sure everyone in your firm knows the clients you’re targeting
Tips on Networking: Where Should I Network?

- Everywhere!
  - In addition to the “usual” work-related places, you will meet people at church, at kids’ sports events, on airplanes…so be prepared
- Business events are the most common – but joining committees and volunteering for organizations are important too
- Always have business cards available
- Pick the right organization to attend for networking
  - The likely attendees are often more important than the topic or the speaker
Tips on Networking: Pick the Organization

• Find the organizations your clients and referral sources belong to
  • Become a member … and do these three things:
    1. Show up
    2. Do what you’re supposed to do
    3. Be fun to work with

• Divide and conquer
• Speak their lingo

Don’t forget to get to know your current clients better!
Tips on Networking: Target the Event

• What’s the topic?
• Who’s the speaker?
• If my “targets” want to hear this speaker or learn something about this topic, then I want to be there!
Tips on Networking: Nametags

What’s wrong with this picture?
Tips on Networking: Nametags

• Wear your name tag on the **right lapel**
• Try to avoid neck lanyards; knot it if necessary
Tips on Networking: Nametags

• Make sure your nametag includes your company name
  • Company names can be conversation starters
• Make sure your name is large enough to be legible across a table

It’s hard to see his badge.  Her badge is in plain view.
Tips on Networking: Nametags
Tips on Networking: Business Cards

- Keep your personal business cards in your right jacket pocket and business cards from others in your left jacket pocket.
- Keep a pen in your pocket to make note of their nickname or to write a note to yourself on the back of their card such as “met at SEAoNY 10/30/17” or “send a copy of my networking PowerPoint.”
Tips on Networking: Starting the Conversation

• Look for the person standing alone and initiate a conversation
  • Approach others with a positive and confident attitude
• Ask open-ended questions
• Be prepared with topics
  • Notice their tie or pin
  • Discuss business books
  • Share travel stories
  • Remember that politics or sports are potential land mines
• Always be honest
• Don’t hog the conversation – be gracious and take turns speaking in a group
• Share something personal if you are comfortable doing so
Tips on Networking: Starting the Conversation

Let’s practice some introductions!
Tips on Networking: Starting the Conversation

Now Switch Places!
Tips on Networking: Understand What You Need to Discover

• Find out who the decision makers are
  • To get on the list of potential consultants
  • To get selected
• Learn how to get in the door to see them
• Understand their selection process
• Know who is or has been working there
Tips on Networking: Exiting the Conversation

• Find graceful ways to move on to the next person
  • “I have enjoyed getting to know you! I have a goal to meet several architects here, so I need to excuse myself so I can report back to my boss tomorrow morning on my activities. Are there any here that you could introduce me to?”

• Remind your friends you're there to network…not chat
  • Ask if they know anyone they could introduce you to!
Tips on Networking: Exiting the Conversation

Let’s practice exiting!
Tips on Networking: Exiting the Conversation

Now Switch Places!
Tips on Networking: Seating Arrangements

- Try not to sit with colleagues from your firm; instead spread out to increase the odds of meeting new people.
- Find the table of someone who you want to get to know – avoid sitting with friends or colleagues.
- If appropriate, sit with your clients.
Tips on Networking: After the Program

• Meet the speaker
  • Introduce yourself or say “hello” if you already know the speaker
  • Graciously thank them for their speech
  • Take the time to meet others who are going to the front to congratulate the speaker

• Schedule a time for follow-up:
  • Write notes/send info
  • Add your new contacts to your database
  • Tell your boss who you met and what you learned

* Diligent follow-up and follow-through will set you apart from the crowd and communicate excellence.*
Networking: Identify Other Opportunities

- Join organizations you’re interested in
- Join a committee
- Join the Board

What if your company doesn’t support your participation?
Networking: Questions/Discussion

Whether you think you can or think you can’t, either way you are right!

— Henry Ford
Networking: Let’s Practice!

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