Networking

A lot of people believe that the key component of networking is to know tons of people. WRONG. The key component is: *It's not who you know, it's who knows you.* (I stole that from Jeffrey Gitomer—because it's true.)

I wish someone would pay me for networking. I just love those breakfast meetings where a bunch of people sit around the table and talk about themselves, their businesses, and their lives. I'm also addicted to lunch meetings where I invite people (clients, business acquaintances, or someone I just met who's interesting) to tell me about what they do and who they know.

If you join networking groups or attend networking affairs with the expectation that you'll receive a one-on-one return for each of your efforts, you're setting yourself up for disappointment. If you don't have fun chatting with and getting to know total strangers, if you're not prepared to focus on everyone else first and yourself last, and if you're not prepared to offer assistance or advice without a guarantee of receiving an immediate benefit—then don't bother networking. You're wasting not only your time, but that of other networkers.

Here are some "tips" for successful networking. They're simple, uncomplicated, and guaranteed to make a difference to your level of success and reputation:

- Have fun: if you're enthusiastic and relaxed, it's easier to build rapport

- Be sincere: everyone has instincts and it's not difficult to spot a phony

- Be generous: not only do people appreciate "free" advice, recommendations to other business people who can help them, and "tips" – they feel grateful to people who help them. Having someone share what a "terrific" person you are is an invaluable boon to your reputation. (Remember: you can tell someone you're terrific and they may or

may not believe you. If another person says you're terrific, others are more apt to believe it.)

- Be visible: go everywhere and earn the reputation of being "nice" and/or a "resource"

I was in an elevator with half a dozen people about a year ago. A woman said to me, *"I know you, you're Linda McHenry."* Yup, I thought, that's who I am. But I didn't have a clue about who she was. (I was very appreciative, however, of the fact that she seemed thrilled to know me and that the other strangers in the elevator now thought I was someone *important!*) She must have been able to detect my puzzlement by the look on my face, because she laughed and introduced herself. She was the graphic designer who'd put together a series of newspaper ads for one of my clients—who happens to be my computer consultant. The series of ads involved a photo and testimonial from six of the computer firm's clients. The graphic designer "knew" me because she remembered my pic and the testimonial I'd written as a client of the computer consultant.

So, how do you attain this level of fame and popularity? You network your butt off <u>in a manner that's fun and enjoyable</u>. For more networking tips, just send me an e-mail.