

# **THE NETWORKING POCKETBOOK**

***3rd Edition***

By Jon Warner

*Drawings by Phil Hailstone*

“The Networking Pocketbook provides a simple but well-written guide to building great connections in both personal and professional life.”

**Rebecca Jennings, CEO, Hips and Curves, California**

“Effective networking can provide big returns. It is also a skill that should be mastered at all levels. This pocketbook makes it easy for everyone to learn more about this subject and to invest their energy in much greater networking effort.”

**Winston Rugman, General Manager, Organisational Development, Qantas Airways**

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## 1: LEARNING STAGE

### NATURE OF NETWORKING



Networking effectiveness starts with a positive personal attitude and an understanding that **successful networking is built on a spirit of giving and sharing and not of bargaining and keeping score.**

Armed with this knowledge, we can now look at how the process of good networking actually works in practice.

The first thing to realise about networking is that everyone you meet is a useful prospective network contact. This seemingly simple fact is often overlooked, as people engage in their own private screening process before they will talk to anyone.

There is obviously a line to be drawn between talking to anyone and everyone in the street and talking to almost no one. However, if you want to network more and to do so successfully, there are many situations that qualify as 'the right opportunity'.

## 1: LEARNING STAGE

### **TAKING INTEREST IN ANYBODY & EVERYBODY**



It is often the case that we don't really know very much about even close people around us (let alone distant contacts). Even if we do know a little, we are less likely to know how far or deep their skill, knowledge or resources extend. If this is true of your knowledge of others, how much do they really know about you?

Herein lies the basic secret of networking success:

- **You have to become interested in anybody and everybody**
- **You have to share more about yourself than you may have done in the past**

It is out of this mutual exchange of knowledge that network contacts will connect and start to offer support, help, advice, favours, referrals and other benefits on a regular basis.

## 1: LEARNING STAGE

### CORE PROCESSES



Developing a conscious understanding of this *giving and sharing strategy* can take some time and some practice.

Giving without an expectation of reciprocity or ‘giving without hooks’, as one expert networking author calls it, earns you permission to ask the other person for a favour. This implies two processes that operate pretty much at the same time (and neither of them necessarily our first reaction).

**The two processes in earning the right to ask a favour are:**

- **Giving away information (to be helpful)**
- **Being open for any help you may need**

Let’s look at these two processes in turn.

## 1: LEARNING STAGE

### GIVING AWAY INFORMATION



Whether it is accidental or planned, formal or informal, random or structured, in discussion with other people the effective networker offers his or her knowledge, skills, ideas, resources, guidance or data **freely** – without any ‘hooks’ or expectations that repayment is due in any form. In fact, the only immediate benefit may be the pleasure to be derived from assisting someone with information that was of value to them.

Whilst the giver expects nothing in return, the receiver has a very positive experience and memory of you upon which they can act (if they so choose) in the future. If they do, either directly or indirectly, at some indeterminate time, you **may** receive some reciprocal benefit.

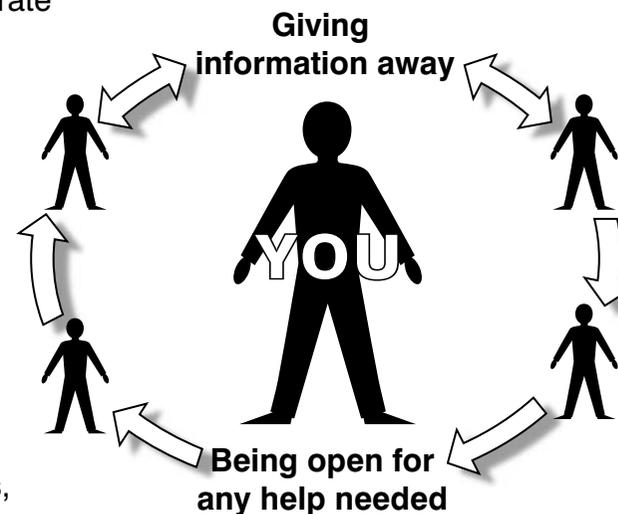
## 1: LEARNING STAGE

### BEING OPEN FOR HELP



Along with openly offering any possible help and support, the effective networker does not operate as a *one-way helper* or *superperson/white knight/angel* coming to the rescue of everyone else, but never personally in need of assistance. He or she also talks realistically about personal goals, tasks, challenges, problems and general issues, and acknowledges feeling vulnerable in not being able to do everything single-handedly.

Being open means being receptive to help when it is offered and, on occasions, asking networking contacts if they can suggest ideas, strategies or approaches that could assist you.



## 1: LEARNING STAGE

### TWO-WAY PROCESS



As the diagram on the previous page illustrates, these two processes operate at the same time and together to create a cycle through which 'favours' are continually offered to all who participate. These favours are both offered and taken in order to keep the network strong and capable of growing to include more and more people.

This process is called 'reciprocity'. It simply means that effective networking is a coin with two sides rather than just one. You can't have one without the other.

Successful networking is therefore about:

- Giving *and* receiving
- Contributing *and* accepting support
- Offering *and* requesting
- Promoting others' needs *and* promoting your own needs
- Trust *and* persistence

## 1: LEARNING STAGE

# HOW TO RESEARCH POTENTIAL CONTACTS



We suggested earlier that **every individual in the whole world is potentially only five or six contact steps away**. This 'five or six degrees of separation' shows that even an entire population of over six billion people is still highly accessible.

For practical purposes however, we don't necessarily want or need to meet thousands of people in different organisations, age groups, religions, professions, cultures or places. Ideally therefore, we need some kind of filtering or research system that will help us to build a set of relationships of high quality, and a strong network that can find people and resources both efficiently and effectively.



## About the Author

Jon Warner is the Chairman of the Worldwide Center for Organizational Development (WCOD-see OD-center.org) and Managing Director of ReadyToManage Inc, both based in Los Angeles, California. Both of these organisations are focused on building leadership and organisational skills.



Prior to his roles above, Jon spent 5 years as CEO of PaySwyft, an innovative online payment and digital billing platform in the UK and US, and 6 years as CEO of Team Publications, a large Australian based Human Resource publisher. Previously, he spent 7 years in Exxon Mobil (in the UK, Australia and Nigeria where he became deputy CEO). His career has spanned a wide variety of disciplines including marketing, sales, finance, operations, human resource management and engineering. Jon's earlier career was spent in the industrial gas business working all over Europe. This involved a considerable amount of networking and relationship building (on and offline), which has proved invaluable in writing and updating this book.

Jon has published several books on best practice management. Titles cover topics such as leadership, communication skills, customer service, negotiating, sales, conflict management and teamwork. He has also written a wide range of online competency based diagnostic assessment instruments (including one on the networking competencies mentioned in this book) that can found at the [www.readytomanage.com](http://www.readytomanage.com) store.

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