



## Handling Incoming Event Leads

How do you handle that pocketful of cards you just picked up during a networking meeting? If you're like most people you take them back to your office and, with good intentions, tell yourself you'll act on them "soon." So, tomorrow after tomorrow passes and the stack of business cards moves from place to place on your desk with renewed promises. And now, the leads are chilly. Oooops....You don't remember now which meeting they're from.

There are quick and easy ways to make the cards you pick up at meetings work for you - or at least stay warm.

Use easy tips to create supportive new habits today. Take one or more of the following items with you to events you attend:

- ◆ plastic snack bags
- ◆ plastic sandwich bags
- ◆ a small decorated box
- ◆ a colorful zippered envelope
- ◆ a zippered makeup bag
- ◆ a small manila envelope with clasp closure
- ◆ three-ring notebook size plastic pocket page for storing business cards
- ◆ business card book
- ◆ plastic sheet protector page

Before the event, label the snack bag, sandwich bag, business card book pages, sheet protector pages and 3-ring binder card pages. Make sure you include the date of the event, location and purpose. Add cards to the bag, pocket page or card book as you receive them during meeting breaks or immediately following the event.

Plan to remain at the event until you've accomplished this. Seriously, it gives you an opportunity to chat with possible prospects after the event about further information you may need or questions they may ask. It also gives them an opportunity to ask, "What are you doing?"

Building a bridge of commonality will benefit you when you return to the office and finally make calls or visits. You will be remembered for your diligence and organization. A definite plus when you want a prospect to recall your name or something about you!

When attending meetings or conferences implement the helpful habit of nurse practitioner/gerontologist Blanche Katz, MSN, RN. Blanche includes three-ring notebook size pages with eight card pockets per side in her conference or meeting briefcase. The bigger the event, the more pages she includes. Cards she receives during the event go into the pockets that same evening. Yes, before bedtime.

The great success in contacting prospects depends on consistency and organizational techniques. Julie Webb, national telecommunications sales consultant, immediately labels and places cards she received into a card book. "Success is in the system," Webb encourages. "Create a system and stick to it!"

What system do you have in place? Implementing a system of maintaining prospect cards will support your success. When you get back to your office your cards will all be in one place. You can attend the next meeting knowing where you received these cards, when you met them and a specific point or two about each person.

As you interact with people and receive their card, note highlights of your conversation with them on the back of their card. It's alright, friend, for them to see you make a note or two - as long as your attention is on them during the conversation - *not* on your note-

making. What does this mean? You don't have to rush to the restrooms to make your notes privately. Just don't make note-taking the primary function of the event you're attending. It's critical that you shake hands with the person handing you each card, and look them squarely in the eye.

By the way, you'll want to carry a pad of small sticky notes to use on the back of high-gloss, double-sided cards. Ink pens typically don't work on them consistently - or at all - for note making.

Back at the office, cards can be separated further into hot leads, warm and chilly calls to make. Remember to always add the date you met the attendees and the event you attended, if you plan to keep the card.

Having a plan for how to handle incoming leads will escalate your success. Follow-up plans and rapport-building plans can also be easily created to contribute to your success! Good luck - and may all your leads sizzle! © Copyright Belinda Sanders. All rights reserved.

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