

## **Networking Essentials for Mental Performance Consultants in Private Practice**

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We've all heard the phrase: "It's not about what you know, but who you know." While it is still important to uphold professionalism as a mental performance consultant and maintain expertise in the field, networking is one way to help grow *who* you know in order to build relationships, market your private practice, and ultimately be successful long-term. Networking is the action or process of interacting with others to exchange information and develop professional or social contacts. The good news is that you don't have to network with everyone, but rather be strategic in why, when, and how you network.

### **Identify your Purpose for Networking**

Through networking, as a business owner, you may want to:

- Build your presence in a geographic area, community, or niche
- Market your business (in general or a specific product or service)
- Identify referral partners in mental performance
- Identify interdisciplinary referral partners for leads and to better support your clients
- Establish mutually beneficial partnerships
- Join a peer consultation group for professional and/or personal development

Regardless of which purpose resonates most with you right now, all of these are about building relationships. It's important to make a good first impression, build rapport, demonstrate genuine interest for the other person and make them feel important, be relatable, listen to others' ideas and what they have to offer, and think about how you could help each other.

### **Getting Started**

Before you launch into networking, ensure you have a few fundamentals nailed down with your business. The following items help to establish your credibility and enable you to achieve your purpose for networking more easily:

- a business name, logo, and established entity
- a business bank account
- business cards and/or brochures (for in-person networking)
- a professional website
- a business email address and phone number
- social media handles

Once you've established your fundamentals and decided on your purpose for networking, consider the following to decide your next steps:

- *Who do you want to meet?* This could be a specific person (e.g., coach, mental health professional, owner of a fitness facility) or a target audience (e.g., parents of high school athletes, medical professionals who treat athletes, event planners)
- *Where might you connect with them or someone who knows them?* Consider if anyone you already know might be connected to the specific person or target audience you've identified; research in-person and online networking (or other) events in your area; leverage social media and other online tools
- *How will you present yourself?* Prepare by researching the person, group, or event to help you be relatable; create and rehearse your elevator speech; consider the impression you want to make and what makes you stand out, as well as how you can do that through what you wear and/or say; anticipate desired next steps and align with your call to action

### **Follow Up and Follow Through**

After making an initial connection, if you determine that it could be mutually rewarding, the relationship should not end there but rather just be beginning! Consider how you will keep track of your networking endeavors, when you're following up, and how, such as with a spreadsheet or Customer Relationship Management (CRM). This could include reaching out at least every three months via phone or email, meeting up for coffee or lunch, sharing resources that add value, connecting on LinkedIn and other social media channels as appropriate, recommending them for opportunities that may be a good fit, and/or inviting them to events.

Throughout your networking journey, it's also helpful to use the principles of goal setting in order to stay consistent and motivated with your networking efforts. For example, set a goal to reach out to two new people or organizations each week for the next month or attend two events per month. Make sure that goals you set align with your purpose for networking.

Lastly, remember to reflect and recharge after networking. After each networking experience, take and review notes; consider what went well, what could have gone better, if this was beneficial or not (and why), and how you'd like to improve next time; and update your spreadsheet or CRM. Think of networking as a long-term process that requires intentionality, preparation, nurturing, and self-care. Over time, you'll gain confidence, clarity, and connections that can help you develop long-lasting relationships and boost your business.

### **Additional Resources**

Blann, F. W., Shelley, G., Gates, S. C. (2011). Marketing sport psychology consulting services. *Journal of Sport Psychology in Action*, 2(1), 33-52.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/21520704.2011.564719>

Simpson, D. (2016). Going up? A sport psychology consultant's guide to the elevator speech. *Journal of Sport Psychology in Action*, 7(2), 109-120.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/21520704.2016.1182091>

[The Art of Charm Podcast: Matthew Pollard - The Networking Mindset for Success and Why Introverts Have the Edge](#)

[Entrepreneur: How Networking and Relationships Propel Entrepreneurs to Succeed](#)

[Jonathan Hung: 10 Online Networking Tips for Startups and Entrepreneurs](#)

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