

Networking Face-to-Face Versus the Internet? Via FIABCI



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The Social Networking Site, **Facebook**, recently advertised that they reached 300 million people worldwide. Since the total population for the U.S. is estimated at about 307 million people, Facebook membership is very impressive. As a career consultant in real estate, I know that with the growth of the Internet and Social Networking Sites, many real estate professionals believe that they can forego meeting others in person, and instead, focus on building new business relationships via the Internet. Although I am a great believer in having a strong presence on the Internet since many properties we manage, people often rent directly from our web sites. However, I want you to think about **how easy it is for people who use the web to change who they do business with a simple click of a mouse!**

Given that fact, I strongly urge you to not only build a strong Internet presence, but you should also schedule regular opportunities to meet others face-to-face. Although I realize that attending conferences at FIABCI and other professional organizations may be very time consuming, I know that by attending face-to-face meetings, you will be able to build long lasting relationships with a variety of business people (i.e. clients, bankers, lawyers, other REALTORS, etc.) and, you will have more fun in your professional life.

I just read a column in the Orator written by news correspondent, **Cara Breeden; Cara** echoed my thoughts exactly about the importance of building relationships via face-to-face conferences. Cara Breeden says, "Here's a wakeup call to you computer-bound professionals: you have to crawl out of your computer cave and meet people, in person, if you want to increase your business leverage. Networking in person is more time-consuming, but each individual relationship is more personal. More personal equates to more valuable. When you cross the line from e-friend to real friend, you become more than just an e-mail and a profile picture. If your personal contacts are like dogs, then your Internet connections are like fish. You may like your fish, but if something goes wrong, there are, as the saying goes, "plenty more fish in the sea."

So I encourage you to learn how to become a "great networker" at face-to-face meetings, because it will enable you to develop meaningful connections and be able to leverage those connections to relationships that will benefit all parties. If you want to be a great "networker", you must be able to focus on building relationships with people who can and want to help you and you in turn, are committed to always looking for ways to help them. The Key is mutually beneficial relationships. So here are some great networking tips:

Step One: you should identify where you can build your networks by making a list people you know and want to connect with because they will support and believe in you:

- Family members

- Friends
- Colleagues
- Other business relationships including builders, bankers, other REALTORS

Step Two: you should ask yourself:

- How many networks do you belong to?
- How many professional organizations do you belong to? (NAR, FIABCI, ARES)
- How many do you participate in? (Civic, charitable, school, fraternity/sorority, etc.)

Step Three: next, you should write a formal action plan of how you will build your networks. In my experience, if you want to make your dream into a reality, you must commit to a plan that contains your next steps along with the times and dates for expected completion.

Step Four: you should plan to attend conferences where you can build long-lasting relationships. At a recent FIABCI networking event at the Greek Islands Restaurant in Chicago, I had the opportunity to meet FIABCI-USA President, Judy Shenefield, reconnect with other FIABCI-USA leaders, President-Elect, Wayne Carroll and Mary Carroll, FIABCI-USA Officer, the newly elected Chicago Council Board Members, and also many new business contacts --- all while having fun at a very reasonable cost.

Picture #1 below includes: Chicago Council Directors, Lino Darchun; Margery Shinnars, Deputy and CEO, Main Street Organization of REALTORS; Secretary, Karen Renella; Immediate Past Present and Director, Vanessa Falcon; FIABCI Member, Consultant, Trainer & Writer, Dr. Margot Weinstein; FIABCI-USA President-Elect, Wayne Carroll; FIABCI-USA President, Judy Shenefield; FIABCI –USA OFFICER, Mary Carroll; FIABCI-Chicago Council, President-elect Debbie Maue (to be president Jan. 2010, and President and Board Member of FIABCI Chicago Council, Nancy Suvarnamani, and President, Century 21 S.G.R.



Picture #2 (Left to Right): Consultant, Trainer, and Writer and FIABCI member, Dr. Margot Weinstein; FIABCI-USA President-Elect, Wayne Carol; Director and in January of 2009, will become President-elect of the Chicago Council, Maria Davies, and REALTOR, Coldwell Banker, and Mary Carroll, Officer FIABCI-USA.

Picture #3: Jana Herdova, NAR representative, and broker, Regency Inc. Realtors, with Nancy Suvarnamani, 2009 FIABCI Chicago Council President, and President, Century 21 S.G.R.



Step Five: you must remember to follow my key networking guidelines:

- Treat everyone you meet with respect
- Build relationships that are win/win for all involved parties
- Have a story, “Your Elevator Speech.” Your speech should be a 30 to 60 second introduction about you that includes your name, company, and products and services that you could use to introduce yourself to someone and be memorable in the time it takes for a short elevator ride.
- Listen to others needs always
- Ask to work together
- Provide business cards
- Get business cards
- Follow-up with an email within a couple days of the event
- And most importantly always, become a resource for others by asking yourself, “What is in it for them?” As in the words of networking expert, **Dale Carnegie:**

“You can make more friends in two months by becoming more interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get people interested in you”

Bio: Dr. Weinstein is an internationally renowned speaker, educator/trainer, consultant, and an award-winning author in real estate. She specializes in teaching career techniques, leadership strategies, and real estate topics. She is one of the only women endorsed by the Signature Series 2010 Speakers by the Commercial Alliance of NAR. Her latest books are: She can be reached at: www.drmarginotweinstein.com
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