

Trust – Based Relationships

Many of our members report that they have received valuable advice, assistance and support when posting requests to our Discussion Group. There is a way to improve the quality and quantity of your success when expecting others, who are fellow members yet total strangers, to provide you with valuable networking contacts and information. Unlike many online groups where geographically dispersed members expedite the sharing information or technical data that is often public knowledge, we typically ask each other to introduce us to private networking contacts or to share valuable business studies we may have personally researched and authored. It is inappropriate and poor etiquette to expect others to facilitate contacts with trusted business partners, co-workers and supervisors without at least offering our own name. This also holds true for our requests for consulting studies, sample proposals and the like. Ending your Email request without offering more about yourself than your first name lends in unintended tone of demand and expectation that may be viewed as arrogant by your recipient.

One of our members commented that he finds it may take as long as five or six months to develop someone into a true networking contact. It is our nature to build trust in others over time and he found that multiple communications are required before a genuine trust-based comfort level is created between two people. This may involve personal meetings, but at the least due to our national presence, requires an exchange of phone calls and Emails over some period of time.

In the spirit of “Pay it Forward” as well as “Pay it Back”, we should all reply to any member request whenever we can share information and contacts that will assist a colleague. Giving valued aid to others without expecting a return gesture will eventually reward each of us. While anyone who requests information from other members in the Discussion Group should not have to post her or his life history to get it, common courtesy dictates that we provide some minimal basic information that would include our first and last names, our present or most recent title and company / industry experience, some brief comment about our background as well as our Email address and phone number. The Email address is mandatory, since it is not appropriate to expect someone to pay for a long distance phone call to provide you with information you requested. At least by offering this information, we leverage the potential to ignite a creative spark in some other member who may share a common experience or employer, break the ice and take the first step in building a life-long relationship. I can’t promise this will be the result with every request, but it stands to improve our odds of success.

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