



UPDATE

*The Voice of the Washtenaw,
Livingston, Monroe, and
Lenawee County's Rental
Housing Industry!*

Volume 28, Issue 1 — March 2012

Always available at www.wa3hq.org

Five Stumbling Blocks To Successful Networking And How To Overcome Them

By: Lydia Ramsey

Article source: <http://www.articlesoo.com>

The ability to connect with people is essential to success in any business. Professional networking events present opportunities to interact with others on a personal level and to develop profitable relationships. These occasions are critical for anyone who wants to grow a business or promote a career.

Many people are simply not comfortable walking into a room full of strangers and striking up conversations. Here are five common stumbling blocks that you may face and tips to help you overcome them.

A RELUCTANCE TO TALK TO STRANGERS. You were taught at an early age not to speak to people you don't know. It's not safe. In certain situations today this is still good advice. In business, however, talking to strangers is a way to generate interest and support for your products and services. If you only talk to the people you already know, you will miss out on opportunities to make new connections and establish valuable contacts.

To get past your discomfort in talking to strangers, set a goal for yourself before you attend any networking event. Decide how many new contacts you want to make or how many strangers you want to meet. In some cases, you may specifically target individuals whom you'd like to know.

Next come up with some icebreakers or conversation starters. Have questions prepared that you can ask anyone you meet at the event. You may want to inquire about other people's business, their connection to the sponsoring organization or their opinion of the venue.

LACK OF A FORMAL INTRODUCTION. It's much easier to make a new contact when there is someone else to handle the introduction and pave the way. If you wait for another person to make the move you may not meet anyone. At networking events, the goal is to meet as many people as possible.

This is the time to take the bull by the horns, walk up to people you don't know, introduce yourself and start a conversation. You can do this if you have prepared your self-introduction in advance.

You will not introduce yourself the same way on every occasion. Perhaps it is your first time to attend an association meeting. In that case, you might want to say that as part of your introduction. Let people know who you are, why you are there and give them a reason to ask more about you.

FEAR OF BEING SEEN AS PUSHY. You may think that you will turn people off if you are assertive and that if they want to talk to you, they will make the first move. If this is your line of thinking you will find yourself spending your time alone at the reception or meeting function and leaving without a single new connection. Being open, friendly and interested does not turn people off.

You will not come across as overly aggressive if you seek out the "approachable" people. These are the ones who are standing alone or who are speaking in groups of three or more. Two people talking to each other are not approachable because they may be having a private conversation and you would be interrupting.

THINKING THAT OTHER PEOPLE MAY NOT LIKE YOU. There is always the risk that the other person is not interested in you and doesn't want to meet or talk to you. It happens. If that is the case, don't take it personally. Nothing ventured is nothing gained. When you get a cold shoulder, smile, move on and say to yourself, "Next?"

HAVING YOUR INTENTIONS MISUNDERSTOOD. Approaching someone of the opposite sex to begin a conversation may seem more like flirting than networking. This is more of an issue for women than men. Women have an equal place in the work arena and need to make professional connections the same as men do. Women in business can no longer afford to hold back when there is opportunity at hand.

Neither men nor women will have their motives misinterpreted if they present themselves professionally in their attire and if they keep the conversation focused on business issues or topics that are not personal or private.

Whatever your stumbling blocks, face them before the next networking event and devise a personal plan for getting past them. Once you do, you will find yourself connecting with confidence and courtesy on every occasion and the results will be reflected in your bottom line.

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Tips on Working with Contractors

by: Peter Vekselman

Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Peter_Vekselman

If you're in the process of overseeing your first property renovation you're in for a real treat as you get a crash course in working with contractors. While most are professionals who are dedicated to doing the best possible job for you, there are some prima donnas out there waiting to take advantage of your naiveté.

Here are some steps you can take before you hire a contractor to ensure that your first contractor experience is a positive one.

Have prospective contractors fill out an application. It may seem silly, but by having a prospective contractor take the extra step of getting an application and filling it out, you can assess how serious that contractor is in working for you. If they won't take the time to fill out an application in order to win a bid, what makes you think they'll take the time to follow up with more important details, like showing up at the worksite?

Get references and check them. Your contractor will probably offer to provide you with references when they bid on your rehab project. Most will have good references, but you need to know as much as

(Continued on page 3)

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President's Message: by Terri Neely



Hi Everyone!

I would like to begin by thanking all of you whom attended the trade show and Maintenance Mania in February. Tim Furlong, the national speaker for the free education portion has had amazing reviews so we hope to be able to bring him back to you again! It was a great event full of fun and valuable networking. It was nice seeing how many of you really got involved which is so important for our organization. Keep it up! Get-

ting involved and staying involved will impact our organization immensely!

March is Legislative Month. Take this opportunity to find out about local and national issues that affect you and your business. Our website, www.Wa3hq.org, has a page dedicated to legislative issues and is an amazing resource for you. We are continuing to update it so check back often.

This month, Alice and I are traveling to Washington DC for the NAA Capitol Conference which promises to be a week full of information that we can then bring back to you. Stay tuned for my next message!

EO Message: by Alice Ehn

Check out the two new pages on the website. The local legislative page is now available to all WA3 members. It will include pdf files of all the local ordinances that must be followed for rental housing in the counties, cities and townships that our members work in. We are working hard to make this as complete a listing as possible so if you know of an ordinance in your area and we don't have it listed, please let us know or send over the information and we will get it uploaded as soon as possible.

The second page is for your renters. It is a renter resource page where they can find help on courts, insurance and social agencies that might help when they need it. This page is also a work in progress. Let us know if you think anything needs adding to help your renters. Better yet, if you have an employee that would like to help upload the information, we sure could use help.

Finally, we have national speaker Lawrence Berry coming in March with a comprehensive class on Emergency Preparedness that is a MUST. You will walk away with everything you need to train your staff to know how to handle any emergency situation BEFORE IT HAPPENS. Go to the website and get registered for everything coming up. See you soon!!

New Members:

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Deadline: 15th of the month for next month's publication to newsletter@wa3hq.org. Submit all materials to Alice Ehn, Executive Officer

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CHECK US OUT ON THE WEB: www.wa3hq.org

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Contractors (con't):

possible about a contractor's work ethic before you sign on the dotted line and commit to spending several thousand dollars on a project. When you call their references ask specific, pointed questions about the quality of their work. If they have a tendency to not show up for work, or worse-disappear in the afternoon, it can significantly impact the profitability of your project.

Get all bids in writing. I know you'd like to be able to do business with someone based on a handshake and a smile, but the reality is that memories fade and a good faith agreement can be misinterpreted by you or the contractor. A contractor is only human, and by taking the time to get all agreements in writing, you'll have clarity in the event that a disagreement crops up later.

Work with licensed and insured contractors. Licenses and insurance are common business expenses, but too many contractors are running around without the necessary licenses and insurance. You may be provided with license numbers and promises that they have insurance, but I highly recommend that you take what you're told with a grain of salt. As the owner of a property, you are ultimately responsible in the event that there is an accident or a fire. Make sure that their insurance information is accurate, and that their coverage is in force before letting them begin a job.

Visit one of their worksites. Wouldn't it be nice if you could somehow magically know ahead of time what the quality of your contractor's work will be? Fortunately, by visiting one of their worksites you can gauge the quality of their work and see how vigilant they are about keeping work areas clean.

Before visiting one of their worksites, make sure you have permission to go. Find out if they're the general contractor on the job or just a sub-contractor.

Don't pay them until the job is done. One of the biggest perils you can face as a new real estate investor is that your contractor doesn't cause dramatic delays by failing to show up for work when they say they will. Perhaps as problematic is the contractor that will prematurely suck the funds out of a project and then not want to complete the work.

There's really only one way to prevent this from happening. Don't release payment until the job is done. You may be hit by pleas to release payment early, but if you do there's a strong likelihood that your contractor won't show up to finish your project. Imagine that your contractor has already been paid for finishing your job. Then after giving you a hard-luck story, you can't depend upon him to return to finish your job. This could put you in the position of having to pay twice for the same job or having to postpone the process of renting the property.

Obviously, you'll need to release some money for materials or your project probably won't get started. Just be careful that you control the purse strings carefully.

I don't want to give you the impression that most contractors are lazy or unwilling to live up to their agreements, because that's simply not true. The vast majority of contractors are as honest as the day is long, but by clearly defining expectations you can stop problems before they come up. By doing this, you can ensure that your interaction with your contractor is a positive one, and that you're just as happy when you part ways as you were when he first waltzed into your life.

Peter Vekselman has been successfully investing in real estate since 1996. He has completed over 1000 real estate deals, owned a construction company, been a private lender, and owned a property management company. Peter currently works with clients all over the US <http://www.CoachingByPeter.com>

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Education Trade Expo Recap:

If you were not lucky enough to make it to the keynote speaker from the trade show, I thought I would share some of the "quarter turn" tips that he encouraged everyone to try. I've made a few quarter turns myself since the trade show and can happily say that for me, Tim was right. My days are smoother and I am getting a lot more smiles from my co-workers and family. Give them a try for yourself and see if you can enjoy a happier more stress-free life.

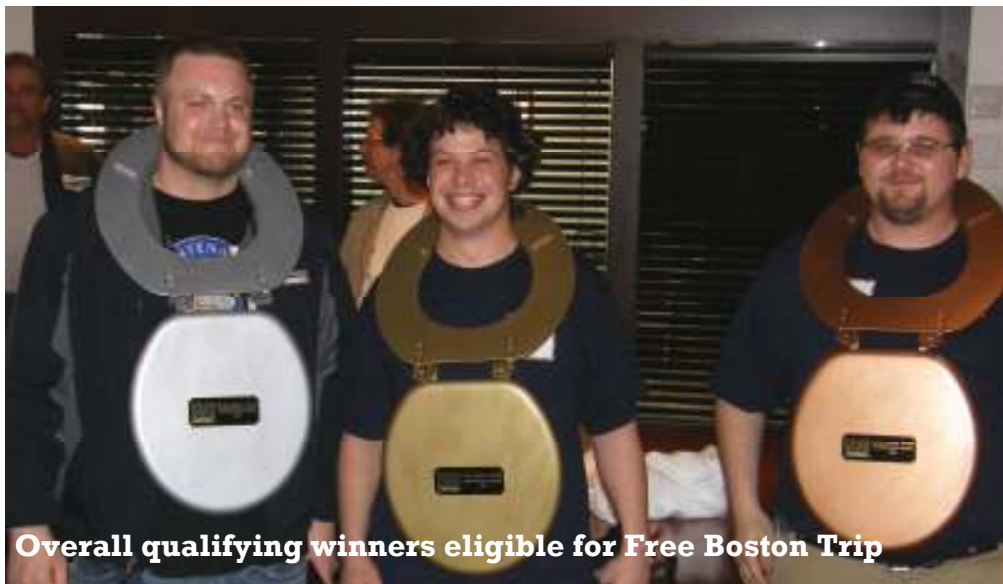
- Sit in silence for at least 10 minutes each day. Crackberry off! Computer screen off! Take ½ day of uninterrupted time each week the same way, you will get so much done. **THIS WAS THE HARDEST ONE FOR ME BUT HAS MADE THE MOST IMPACT!**
- Commit to "Show up" everyday with Energy, Passion & Enthusiasm at work and in your life!
- Give More! Do more than expected!
- Dream while you are awake and be sure to dream BIG!

- Make at least 3 people smile each day, include yourself!
 - Clear your clutter from your house, your car, your desk and allow new energy to flow freely into your daily experience.
 - Laugh (especially at yourself) and have some fun every single day!
 - No one is in charge of your happiness except you!
 - Each night before you go to bed celebrate the accomplishments and success of the day. If you don't, who will?
- You can find more "quarter turn" tips from Coach Tim at www.myquarterturn.com.



I am really looking forward to passing on some smiles and positive energy with all of you at the next General Membership Meeting on March 22. See you there!

by Amy Khan, Newsletter Chair
CMB Property Management, LLC



Overall qualifying winners eligible for Free Boston Trip

1st Place Qualifying winner of \$500, Garrett Fritz at Arbor Hill Apartments with Wilson White Company (center), 2nd place Qualifying winner of \$100, Jesse Childers at the Landings at Cedar Creek with Van Rooy Properties (left) and 3rd place Qualifying winner of \$50, Shi Schultz at Nob Hill Apartments with Wilson White Company (right).



The winners of each race



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Apartment Industry Mobilization Service (AIMS) Updates:

HUD Agrees to Revise Bed Bug Guidance

In a victory for the apartment industry, on January 17, HUD issued a letter notifying NAA/NMHC of its intent to revise the onerous bed bug guidance document they issued last August.

NAA/NMHC have pressed HUD to rescind the guidance because it was overly broad in scope, inconsistent with best practices for controlling the spread of bed bugs and insufficiently dealt with the issue of property expenses related to remediation. We pressed the issue at a December 20 meeting with senior HUD officials. At our encouragement, two members of Congress also wrote HUD urging the Department to rescind or revise the document.

Section 8 Voucher Program Reform Bill Moves Out of Subcommittee

On February 7, a key House subcommittee approved the latest iteration of Section 8 reform legislation. The bill would make numerous program changes long supported by NAA/NMHC, including streamlining the inspection process, simplifying rent determinations and income reviews, establishing a more reliable annual funding formula and ensuring HUD is responsible for Limited English Proficiency translations.

NMHC actively participated in the bill's discussion, issuing two letters outlining specific program improvements. (NAA/NMHC's letter is available at www.naahq.org)

The full House Financial Services Committee is expected to vote on the measure in the near future. The Senate has indicated that they won't take up the measure until the House approves its bill.

Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Bill Includes Protection for Housing Providers

On February 2, the Senate Judiciary Committee approved legislation (S. 1925) to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which included a number of housing provisions that dated back to the Act's previous reauthorization in 2006.

Of interest to owners of federally-assisted properties, NAA/NMHC worked with a coalition of housing providers to include language allowing property owners and managers who receive "conflicting information" about a domestic violence incident to require third-party verification before extending benefits under the Act. This action restored an important protection for housing providers that was included in the original law but then lost during the regulatory process. (Our coalition letter is available at naahq.org.)

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- Oct: 785
- Nov: 750
- Dec: 722

Units Listed

- Oct: 17,373
- Nov: 17,373
- Dec: 17,728

Property Views

- Oct: 3,356
- Nov: 4,334
- Dec: 1,260

Email Leads

- Oct: 43
- Nov: 44
- Dec: 10

Featured Properties

- Oct: 30
- Nov: 33
- Dec: 33

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- Oct: 0
- Nov: 13
- Dec: 4

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Events and Education:

MARCH:

9 - Expect the Unexpected - 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, Cost \$125. Don't let a disaster or event ruin your career. Be prepared when the unthinkable happens and train your staff where to go and what to say in the critical situation to keep residents safe and protected. Location: Kapnick Insurance Office, Briarwood Circle, Ann Arbor

12 — NALP starts - National Apartment Leasing Professional NAA designation runs every Monday and Wednesday morning for 3 1/2 weeks. Cost to members \$385. You already are a success.....NOW be a certified success.

10 thru 14 — NAA Capitol Conference in Washington DC....all members invited.

22 — General Membership Lunch - Weber's Inn - \$20 or membership bucks. Guest speakers: David Gregory and Mia McNeil from Kelley Cawthorne to give all the news from the State Capitol and the issues important to rental housing.

APRIL:

19 — General Membership Meeting - Weber's Inn - \$20 or membership bucks. Guest speaker: Rick Galardi from the Property Management Association of Mid-Michigan. Topic: What can paint do for you? Power Point presentation to show spruce up for spring techniques and how something as simple as paint and the new HGTV colors can make your property come alive and improve it's curb appeal.

26 — Fair Housing with Kathy Banker, Cost: \$69 member, Location: Kapnick Insurance Headquarters, Briarwood Circle

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