

TRANSCRIPT
PODCAST #3: NETWEAVING

VOICE-OVER: Here is this week's Raising The Bar podcast for Business To Business Magazine with Business Development Coach Robin Hensley.

ROBIN: Is relationship building a part of your strategy for achieving your goals?

Hello, I'm Robin Hensley and this week we will be talking about a win-win approach to relationship building that can propel you far beyond traditional networking.

In earlier podcasts, we talked about goal setting. How many of your goals depend on the good will and support of others you know or you are yet to know? If you are like me and the people I coach, most of your goals will have a relationship component. As simple as this sounds, it is often the relationship piece that causes the most difficulty. That is because many people confuse relationship building with networking. If you have ever attended an event and spent the evening wandering around marketing with the vague idea that your ideal client must be here somewhere, then you know what I mean. What I am suggesting is something entirely different. It is called NetWeaving.

NetWeaving was first introduced by Bob Littell in his book, *The Heart and Art of NetWeaving*. In it, Bob gives us a framework for repositioning relationship building to a pay-it-forward model.

The expression "pay it forward" simply means that a person offers a debtor the option of paying the debt forward to a third person instead of paying it back. Debts and payments can be monetary or be by good deeds. In this case, we're talking about good deeds. Benjamin Franklin was already using the pay-it-forward concept in business as early as 1784. Robert A. Heinlein wrote about it in his book, *Between Planets*, published in 1951. So pay-it-forward is nothing new but its application to business building through NetWeaving may be brand new to you.

You already know that networking is primarily driven by the idea of building or adding to your own network. NetWeaving is based on the concept of helping others build or add to their network for their benefit. NetWeaving is simply connecting people and positioning your self as a resource to others. This is usually done on a totally gratuitous basis, with the expectation that what goes around, comes around. It's a win-win for the people who are connected or for whom resources and/or information is provided and it's a "win" for the NetWeaver who is the "matchmaker" or strategic connector. The NetWeaver does not only derive "business" benefits

from his or her NetWeaving. There is the added “feel-good” benefit that only comes from helping others when one has no hidden agenda. That does not mean, however, that your role as NetWeaver cannot increase your chances of benefiting from the process in the long run. I call that “enlightened” self-interest. And, as Bob Littell explains it, you may have been NetWeaving for much of your life without having a name to put to it.

Bob goes on to explain that there are two key elements to NetWeaving. The first is learning to become a Strategic Connector of others. That is, putting people together in win-win relationships. The second is learning how to position your self as a Strategic Resource for others, literally becoming the go-to person for making things happen. One added benefit to you as a NetWeaver I haven’t addressed yet. That is the immediate return on your investment in the form of elevated and enhanced prestige and reputation. Being known as someone who wants more for others is a powerful magnet back to you.

Now that you’ve got the basic idea, let’s talk about how this works in practical terms. Let’s say you want to help someone else achieve his or her goals. The process starts with information. In traditional networking, most conversations take place on a very superficial level. Talking about the weather, sports or the day’s events doesn’t take the conversation deep enough for you to make a real difference in the other person’s results. With that said, you will have to lay a foundation for the questions you will ask to encourage the other person to open up to you in a business context. So, before plunging into this new territory with someone, you may want to briefly explain to the other person the NetWeaving concept, and then move into asking one or more of the following questions. No need to write them down now. You can download a transcript of this podcast at btobmagazine.com.

For the purpose of this exercise, I want you to imagine you are a person seeking my assistance as a NetWeaver. The questions I will ask are designed to help me better understand your business and how I can help you. How I listen to you will determine how I will proceed. In our conversation, there are three questions I will ask myself.

- First, is there someone I know who would benefit from knowing or meeting you?
- Second, could you provide information and/or resources to someone else I know?
- And third, have you impressed me so much that I need to get to know you better, and if you continue to impress me with your exceptional quality, make you a part of my own Trusted Resource Network?

OK. Now I will begin our conversation.

- First, tell me how you make your money. I don't just mean what your business does, but how do you actually create revenue in your business?
- What does a best prospect for you or your business look like?
- Tell me the story of how you landed your biggest account or your best client or customer. Your response will give me more insight into how you make a sale or create a client. Telling a story will help you more clearly articulate a process you may never have thought about in quite that way and your story will help me connect with you and retain the information.

Next, I will ask you:

- What is your most burning problem, need or opportunity in a business, family or personal context that I might be able to help you with?
- What is your Strategic Advantage? As I am attempting to sell you to someone I know, or at least open a door for you, how do I describe you in terms that differentiate you from others doing the same or nearly the same thing?

Depending on the conversation, I might go on to ask:

- What is the most valuable introduction or connection anyone ever made for you and why?
- What are the names of some people whom you would most like to meet?
- What are your key interests outside of work and is there someone who would be an interesting contact for you in that area?
- What do you consider to be some of your most valuable information resources and sources you count on?
- How can I help you?

As you become more adept at asking your own questions and facilitating your own connections, you will naturally advance from dabbling in making things happen to becoming a world class NetWeaver.

Finally, let's wrap up what we talked about in this week's program.

- First, relationship building is an important strategy in achieving your goals.
- Second, networking produces only limited results for advancing your business.
- Third, paying it forward starts the magic of what goes around comes around
- Fourth, taking relationship building to a new level through NetWeaving will advance the goals of others and bring you both tangible and intangible rewards



- including just plain feeling good about your role in someone else's success. Your increased prestige and enhanced reputation are an extra bonus. And
- Fifth, listening is as important as asking. Going deep with others you want to help will help you help them. Listening hard will help you make the best connections.

As Bob Littell reminds us, "Good things happen to people who make good things happen". You can learn more about NetWeaving at www.netweaving.com where you can also purchase Bob's books, *Power NetWeaving: 10 Secrets to Successful Relationship Marketing*, which he co-wrote with Donna Fisher and *The Heart And Art of NetWeaving*, which we talked about earlier. Paying it forward himself, Bob donates 100% of the purchase price to Junior Achievement, The Pay It Forward Foundation where he co-chairs the steering committee, as well as any non-profit that wishes to use the book for fund-raising purposes

Until next time, I'm Robin Hensley.

VOICE-OVER: You have been listening to a Raising The Bar program on NetWeaving with Business Development Coach Robin Hensley. For a full transcript of this program, stop by the Business To Business Magazine website at btobmagazine.com.

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