

What to do with your Business cards Top Tips from Simon Leek of Southwest ICT

It's amazing the number of business entrepreneurs I speak with at networking events who want more out of networking but continue to do the same, ineffective, thing over and over. Eventually they leave a network group because of the low level of return when compared with the time invested.

Put the business cards collected in a 'proper' database

Entering business cards into a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database ensures that your follow ups are simpler to do and more likely to be actioned. A CRM system will provide the following service:

- **Create automatic workflows**
Think about a workflow that should take place when entering a business card into a CRM system. An example here might be to automatically create a follow up call in your diary 7 days after the event.
- **Personalised email handling including your branding.**
Just enter the contact, choose a pre-built email template, add additional comments particular to the contact and click send. Quick and simple to do.
- **Build multiple 'target lists'**
For example, create a list called "My Exeter Networking Contacts", add relevant contacts to the list, set up and schedule a list of emails to be sent at **predetermined times (just like this one!)**.
- **Note taking**
Record every conversation with each contact, the date and time the conversation took place and add a reminder to call them at a future date. Read back over past conversations to refresh your memory.
- **Categorise contacts into target areas**
Who in your system is in your 'inner circle'? who is an 'advocate'? What are their dis/likes? Are they a detail oriented person or do they like to hear only the headline stuff? This kind of information can help you tune your sales message to the individual you are addressing.
- **Keep a list of RBO's (Relationship Building Opportunities)** and their potential value. Add every whiff of an opportunity to your database. You'll never forget to follow it up. It'll keep you focused on what counts. BUSINESS

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