



# FINISHMASTER™

## IT'S JUST *SMART* BUSINESS!

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BEST PRACTICES NEWSLETTER

### Shy Guy Networking Tips

Networking can be a struggle for shy people. It can feel insincere and manipulative. Networking is avoided for reasons like lack of self-confidence, fear of rejection and sense of unworthiness.

*Here are some tips for success...*

#### Start Small

If you are intimidated by approaching people you don't know, begin by seeking out familiar faces with common ground. Try your college or high school alumni network.

#### Stop Apologizing

Inexperienced networkers often apologize when asking for an individual's help because they see networking as an imposition rather than relationship building.

#### Be Yourself

Many introverts think they have to act like an extrovert in networking situations. Do make an effort to be more outgoing than normal, but don't be artificial.

#### Ask for Introductions

Shy people attending conferences tend to find one person with whom they spend all their time. This defeats the purpose of networking. Kindly ask your friend to make introductions on your behalf.

#### Be Prepared

If you're afraid you'll freeze up or get tongue-tied in a social setting, prepare yourself in advance. Think of ice-breaker questions.

### The Best PR is FREE PR!

Promoting your business doesn't have to be expensive. There are many effective public relations activities that are free.

**Ask your customers for testimonials.** If you don't, you're passing up some of the best PR you can get. If customers were happy with your services, ask them for a testimonial to include on your website. If they don't have time to write one, write it yourself and ask them to approve it. Your satisfied customers will give you some of the best PR if you let them.



**Treat customers like friends.** If you see a customer at a sporting event or at the grocery, say hello. Ask how their vehicle is doing. If you can remember their name that is even better. Customers may not recognize you, but they'll be impressed that you recognized them. If they're with someone, they'll likely introduce you to them. They'll continue with a story about the repair and your shop. Now, everybody around your customer will have heard who you are and that you run the best body shop in town. The free PR you just initiated is priceless.

**Share your knowledge.** Technical colleges and high-school training centers need skilled technicians and managers to help develop and validate curriculum. Associating yourself with one of them will pay off in PR. You will be introduced to faculty members and students who will remember you and appreciate your help. Additionally, you will meet the collision repair industry's newest young apprentices, perhaps your next star technician.

**Align with I-CAR.** Open your collision center to host training. I-CAR will advertise your collision center in its schedules and publications, promoting your business and your commitment to training. I-CAR can provide you with free training coupons to make your collision center available to it, which adds an additional benefit to the free public relations.

**Network! Network! Network!** Successful networking means building intimate, sincere relationships based on mutual generosity, not duplicity. No one can achieve their career goals on their own. They have to network their way to success. Become involved in professional organizations such as a Chamber of Commerce or Kiwanis. Get a *LinkedIn* account, a social networking site for business professionals.

Public relations opportunities are everywhere. Think outside the box. Don't pass up any opportunities. The one you let slip away just may have been the one with the most profitable return.

**Our Business Is Making Your Business Better**