

# The Networker

## CHAIR'S CORNER



By Andy Armanino, CPA

This is my first column as MSNA board chair and I am looking forward to regularly communicating with you.

Our association comprises firms with talent, knowledge, resources, and offerings that we can all benefit from to grow our practices. It is our goal to engage our member firms and truly leverage the association to drive more referrals, compete with the Big Four, and participate in sharing best practices to help drive profits and achieve success. The achievements of a voluntary membership are essentially the result of a team effort involving our member firms' top leaders. It requires us to be engaged in the effort and understand the process. We are fortunate to be a part of an association with an array of talent and expertise that every one of us can tap into for advice, ideas, and assistance.

Whether using our association's available communication channels, such as the website discussion boards; the quarterly newsletter, *The Networker*; the activity update, *The Moore You Know*; or participating in special interest group initiatives and attending conferences, there is an enormous amount of knowledge to be gained from the collective wealth of members. I also find using a phone (remember that?) is an effective approach.

Over this past year, I am sure many of us faced new challenges. As we look internally and externally to manage, grow, and lead our practices with strategy and vision, we need to consider solidifying our client relationships; recruiting, developing and retaining staff; and planning for the next generation of leaders. There is no one right way to achieve success; however, there are a lot of wrong ways. Every day, leaders, partners and professionals face challenges involving clients, staff and competition.

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### Organizational Development

#### Transforming Your Accounting Firm into a Real Business

The leaders of today's accounting firms are becoming increasingly aware that they must transform their professional service firms into *real businesses*. Often, this epiphany surfaces when the enterprise faces a significant crisis, regardless of whether it is externally or internally driven. But make no mistake: the business environment in the new millennium has shifted forever.

### Marketing

#### Is Telemarketing Still an Effective Lead Generation Tool for Professional Services?

Believe it or not, telemarketing can still be an effective tool for developing new business if conducted properly. Referred to as executive telemarketing, the key difference today is that the calls are being made to businesses, and are done so by educated professionals familiar with the industry and service.

### Technology

#### 201 CMR 17.00: Security Standards That Will Make You Hot

As of March 1, 2010, Massachusetts-based firms and those that maintain records on its residents (regardless of the state they're based in) will be required to meet increased information security standard known as *201 CMR 17.00: Standards for the Protection of Personal Information of Residents of the Commonwealth*, which will force many firms into their next major wave of technology management investments.

### Business Development

#### Making Your Network Work

Take advantage of every opportunity to increase your network of contacts. By sharing ideas, leads, contacts and opportunities, everyone prospers. If you network properly, nobody feels pressured or used, because you are not selling, you are telling. You are not asking for favors, you are giving valuable information.



The Networker is the official newsletter of Moore Stephens North America, Inc. • [www.msna-inc.org](http://www.msna-inc.org)

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## MSNA Welcomes New Canadian Member Firm

By *Steven E. Sacks, CPA*

You haven't lived until you've been in Edmonton, Alberta in the middle of January. It was here in 2009 when Jack Cooper, immediate past managing partner of MSCM; Jim Carr-Hilton, managing partner of Dale Matheson Carr Hilton LaBonte; and I visited Mowbrey Gil, LLP — our newest MSNA member firm — to promote the benefits of the association. To say we endured frigid weather would not do justice to our experience.

But despite that, our meeting and exchange of ideas were fruitful, and resulted in the firm applying — and later being accepted for — association membership. For a number of years the firm desired to join an international affiliation. In fact, it had been approached on a number of occasions, but the fit and feel did not seem right. Meeting with MSNA representatives, however, the firm's senior leadership group felt it had a lot in common. According to senior partner, Gregory Mowbrey, "We felt the need and desire to join an international affiliation due to Edmonton, and in particular, Alberta having such an international presence because of the resource rich province in which we live." The rapidly growing global economy, and with it the increased competition, also compelled the firm to look outward. "With our clients ever increasingly dealing in the global economy, we needed to ensure they were cared for in the same manner they were accustomed to at home," explains Mowbrey. "We wanted to still be able to control the process and ensure our clients were in good hands with respectable top-end firms. Moore Stephens fit that bill very well."

While Mowbrey Gil, LLP Chartered Accountants & Business Advisors came together in 1999, its roots go back to 1974 with a predecessor firm. Terry Mowbrey, the CEO, started a firm that year, and it grew to be one of the largest independent firms in Western Canada. The firm broke up in 1984 and Terry continued on with Mowbrey & Associates. In December 1993, Gregory Mowbrey joined his father at the firm after articling with an International Chartered Accounting firm. The firm experienced some growth and shrinkage for a few years until August of 1997, when Terry and Gregory set forth to "grow" the firm.

Two people — one whom eventually became partner — were hired to join the seven existing people. In December 1997 three more people joined the firm, two of whom eventually became partner. In March 1999, Richard Gil joined the firm, bringing with him his high-end tax specialization and knowledge. It was then that the firm changed its name to Mowbrey Gil to better reflect the diverse services, including tax that the firm was now able to offer.

Over the past 10 years, the

Mowbrey Gil staff has grown from 15, when Gil joined, to approximately 60 staff as of December 2009. This growth was achieved organically, without any merger or acquisition. Some years experienced larger growth than others, but the firm was always growing. Mowbrey Gil is currently one of the largest independent firms in Edmonton and throughout Alberta. There is a high percentage of staff with professional designations, which allows the firm to attract and provide more complex and value-added services.



*Terry Mowbrey*

*Richard Gil*

*Gregory Mowbrey*

The firm, like its clients, is very entrepreneurial. It understands and faces the same issues and challenges

*“We wanted still be able to control the process and ensure our clients were in good hands with respectable top-end firms. Moore Stephens fit that bill very well.”*

—Greg Mowbrey

*Litigation Support*, which includes investigative and forensic accounting; and *Mowbrey Gil Business Solutions*, which includes various advisory services, software assessment, and human resources consulting.

The firm also has a burgeoning First Nations practice that addresses economic development issues through traditional

that its clients do. The firm offers a wide variety of services through its three operating units: *Mowbrey Gil, Inc. Chartered Accountants*, which offers tax, assurance services, non-resident services, corporate finance, and estate planning; *Mowbrey Gil Business Valuation and*

and value-added services.

Mowbrey Gil joins Dale Matheson Carr-Hilton LaBonte in providing MSNA with a strong presence in Western Canada. Along with Toronto based-MSCM, our Canadian members will be enormously helpful in the association’s long-term efforts to raise the visibility of MSNA in Canada, as well as showcase its international strength — this last point which cannot be understated. “By allowing Mowbrey Gil to offer our clients the resources of member firms in other jurisdictions, this only enhances our ability to offer our services to larger private companies that are growing beyond our borders,” says Gil. Terry Mowbrey, CEO, sums it all up: “We are just being proactive — soon enough our clients will demand a more international presence. They just don’t know it yet.”

We welcome the Mowbrey Gil, LLP into MSNA “family.” Visit the firm’s website at [www.mowbreygil.com](http://www.mowbreygil.com) or call **780-461-3800**. 



## MOORE BENEFITS

*MSNA has negotiated a number of vendor discounts as a benefit of membership. A sample of these programs include:*

### ProStaff Software

ProStaff Software offers a 20% discount to Moore Stephens members. To learn more, contact Karis Koehn at [karis.koehn@taylorsoftwareinc.com](mailto:karis.koehn@taylorsoftwareinc.com) or at **816-686-4274**.

### Dell

Moore Stephens members are eligible for discounts on Dell products up to 30% off of published retail prices. To receive your quote, contact Thomas Lin at [Thomas\\_Lin@dell.com](mailto:Thomas_Lin@dell.com), or call **800-571-3355 x9461831** and mention Moore Stephens North America.

### Quickfinder

Moore Stephens members can purchase the *1040 Quickfinder Handbook* and the *Small Business Quickfinder Handbook* for \$33 each. To order, call Shelby Zwaan at **888-611-5922**.

### W.B. Mason

MSNA has arranged for a discount and rebate program for members who purchase office supplies from W.B. Mason. To learn more or to register your firm, contact Andy Considine at [andy.considine@wbmason.com](mailto:andy.considine@wbmason.com) or at **508-436-1323**.

### CCH Audio Seminars

Upcoming and archived webinars on various technical issues are available to MSNA members at 20% discount. To view the webinars, visit [www.krm.com/cchmsna](http://www.krm.com/cchmsna).

# Transforming Your Accounting Firm into a Real Business

By Suzanne Lowe

What do the following scenarios have in common?

- The CEO and CMO of a regional firm began providing partners with new measurement tools and processes to help them correlate their marketing decisions with the firm's strategic plans. They also incorporated their key metrics with the firm's accounting department, so that their metrics had financial credibility.
- A global professional and financial services firm built and implemented new marketing and business development connections that improved optimal value delivery for clients. The program also served to simultaneously grow individuals' professional competencies.
- The new chief sales officer of a regional professional firm developed new marketing and business development integration tools that accelerated the process in which practitioners connected marketing to selling and selling to client service. These frameworks and new cultural norms are driving strong revenue gains, even in a difficult economy.
- The CMO and CFO of a global public professional service firm teamed up to dramatically improve the cost effectiveness of the company's marketing expenditures.

Whether it's accounting or another professional services sector, these scenarios signify the maturation of the professional and business-to-business (B2B) services marketplace. In the economic models of yesteryear, a collegial group of like-minded practitioners could hang out a shingle — "John Doe & Associates" — and enjoy a satisfying career, untroubled by volatile economies, discerning clients or technological shifts.

The leaders of today's accounting firms are becoming increasingly aware that they must transform their professional service firms into *real businesses*. Often, this epiphany surfaces when the enterprise faces a significant crisis: a big economic recession; unexpected competitive

encroachment; the departure of a big client or rainmaker; or the elimination of a service line. But make no mistake: the business environment of the new millennium has shifted forever. Executive managers will need to run their businesses *differently* in order to survive and thrive.

The theme of "doing things differently" presents numerous examples of how professional firms are breaking down internal silos that prevent them from effectively marketing and developing new business. Since the most critical mandates of running a grown-up company are to make meaningful marketplace gains, grow the "right" revenues, and continuously improve the value proposition for clients, the work these firms are undertaking serves as an excellent example of how to transform professional organizations into competitively effective businesses.



**"The business environment of the new millennium has shifted forever."**

## Four Factors for Real Business Transformation

There are four main factors that can guide a professional services firm to transform into a real business.

1. *Diagnose first, verify with facts, and develop solutions later.* Professional firms often feel tremendous pressure to hurry their responses to significant marketplace

shifts. But making organizational changes is hard enough without first discerning — and confirming — the enterprise's real barriers to change. When I started researching and writing for *The Integration Imperative*, I was at first overwhelmed by the breadth and depth of people's opinions on why their marketing and business development functions weren't as effective as they could be. It was only after grouping their thoughts into logical categories that I was able to see a set of patterns, verify them with facts, and envision potential solutions.

2. *Remember the combination of structure and culture.* Savvy executive managers will deploy both structural and cultural initiatives as the springboard for change. Transforming a professional firm into a real business will require an overarching look at the organization's structure (frameworks, tools, processes, protocols or policies). Structural changes may be required in the areas of formal business planning; resource and budget allocation; and measurement. Transforming into a real business may also require a dispassionate look at the enterprise's culture — its informal customs, norms and standards — and unabashedly redefining them. Real businesses aren't afraid to redefine the meaning of "the way we do things here."
3. *Think about functions.* Professional service firms sell their people, whose collective brainpower serves as the product that clients eventually consume. This focus on people, while understandable and laudable for so many reasons, has prevented many leaders from thinking about their firms as businesses. Tomorrow's successful professional enterprises will harness people according to the functions required to gain market share and compete effectively. Real businesses do this well, including reconfiguring reporting relationships, functional accountabilities, reward structures, or even equity sharing models; while informal professional partnerships often don't.
4. *Reconfigure, on three dimensions.* Transforming a professional organization into a real business will require executive managers to address their firms along three dimensions: left-to-right; bottom-to-top; and diagonally.

- The *left-to-right dimension* is manifested in a firm's processes. In what ways could professional firms improve their management of the handoffs in selling and other processes?
- The *bottom-to-top dimension* addresses the way professional organizations develop their individuals' skills. Many firms take only partial responsibility for growing their people's skills. In what ways could they improve the competency growth of every person, so that each individual (regardless of seniority or function) becomes more effective at growing the firm's market share or enhancing its value proposition for clients?
- The *diagonal dimension* is manifested in a firm's management of its support structures. Professional firms rely heavily on what I call the "Friendship Model of Marketing," where a pleasant, but ultimately unreliable network of personal relationships accounts for a firm's marketplace progress. In what ways could these enterprises formalize their support functions' "diagonal" sharing of accountabilities, for example, between marketing and IT, or finance and human resources? How about between nonrevenue-generating administrative functions and revenue-generating practitioners?

*The bottom line:* the services marketplace is maturing, and many recognized professional service firms, especially accounting firms, appear to recognize this shift. Are you ready to transform your professional service firm into a real business? It will soon be a competitive imperative. [MSNA](#)

#### About the Author

Suzanne Lowe is the president of Expertise Marketing LLC, and the author of two books for leaders and marketers at professional service firms: *The Integration Imperative: Erasing Marketing and Business Development Silos — Once and For All* — in *Professional Service Firms and Marketplace Masters — How Professional Service Firms Compete to Win*. Interested readers may contact Suzanne at [slowe@expertisemarketing.com](mailto:slowe@expertisemarketing.com). For more information see [www.expertisemarketing.com](http://www.expertisemarketing.com).

## Is Telemarketing Still an Effective Lead Generation Tool for Professional Services?

By *Brian Swanson*

The approach to marketing has changed with the emergence of new tools, such as social media websites like Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. One has to wonder whether the marketing and lead generation tools of the past are still relevant in the new electronic age. Recently, I was asked whether the “old standby,” telemarketing, was still considered to be an effective lead generation tool for accounting and law firms. Can telemarketing, if structured properly and effectively, still be an effective tool for professional service firms?

First let's define what telemarketing means in this context. When we speak of executive telemarketing we are not talking about professional business to consumer telemarketing. We are speaking of something very different. This type of telemarketing has a bad reputation, and for good reason. It is characterized by someone from an organization calling to solicit donations or subscriptions from you right in the middle of dinner, or the middle of the weekend when it's the last thing you want to discuss.

Executive telemarketing is vastly different from the description above. It refers to the process of a company calling a C-level prospect in another company to educate it on service offerings, discuss its situation and offer assistance in the future. A key difference is that the calls are being made to businesses and are done so by educated professionals familiar with the industry and service, and who are able to professionally represent their organization.

### Executive Telemarketing in the Marketing Mix

The executive telemarketing process is as effective a lead generation tool as any other components of the marketing mix. In fact, I would argue it is more effective than many traditional lead generation tools because it provides the opportunity to interact directly with the prospect. No other lead generation tool I can think of, including e-mail marketing, direct-mail marketing, social media marketing or pay per click advertising provides the opportunity to engage the prospect in a conversation about the issues and challenges it is facing. Those other tools provide a flow of information, delivering a message to the prospect, but

do not provide a forum for interactive communication. Now these methods may eventually lead to a phone call, especially if the prospect has an immediate need, but the initial flow of information is still one-sided. The interaction component is critical and sets executive telemarketing apart from any other tool to generate leads.

Despite the fact executive telemarketing allows for interaction, it cannot be a successful tool if the process guiding the effort is flawed or ineffective. All too often the process breaks down and becomes ineffective when expectations are not set or the wrong professionals are brought into the process. The following briefly describes the main roles executive telemarketing and the sales people should play in the process.

**Telemarketing.** The role of the executive telemarketing professional is to identify qualified prospects from a prospect list. This person essentially opens the opportunity by asking pointed questions to uncover issues, problems, challenges or opportunities. The goal is to document as much information as possible, so when the conversation ends, this person can share the details with others in the firm. Although this sounds quite straightforward, there are a number of areas where issues arise, which ultimately reduces the effectiveness of the process. These include:

- *Improperly Vetted List.* Having a thoroughly researched list is important to the process. It is quite embarrassing and destroys credibility when you call a company and don't have a name, or don't have the right name for the prospect you want to speak with. Often what happens is the gatekeepers identify the call as a “cold call” and put it into a general voicemail box or offer to take a message. When this happens the call is lost because it is impossible to know if the message you are communicating will get through. So it pays to research a list, and even have the company website and regulatory filings available (when applicable).
- *Skill of the Professional Calling.* The person making the call is as important to the process as the sales person or partner who delivers the proposal. If you have someone who is not comfortable on the phone, whose voice is

monotone or appears to be reading from a script, you will no doubt experience less than optimal results. No one wants a call where someone is reading to them. In many instances this is the first time a prospect is interacting with your firm, so it is imperative the impression left be a good one. You heard the adage: you never get a second chance to make a first impression. Well, it applies here: the person making the calls has to have the necessary skills. You should ensure you have a qualified professional making the calls who has both the technical knowledge and sales skills.

- *Improper Follow-Up.* Following up is the trickiest part of executive telemarketing. How many times should I call? Should I leave a voicemail? How many voicemails should I leave? These are questions that must be addressed prior to the start of the calling effort. Define the process exactly so the professional making the calls knows how to handle each situation. In our experience, we generally call once every seven to ten days, and no more than three times per month. This includes voicemails, leaving messages with secretaries, etc. Doing more than this may convey the image you are desperate for work or don't respect the executive's time.

**Business Development/Partner.** The role of these professionals is generally to follow-up with the prospect based on the information provided from the executive telemarketing professionals. Their job can vary from discussing technical issues, scheduling appointments, or simply engaging the prospect in a conversation about his or her situation to further qualify the opportunity. It is important to note, once the lead has been handed off, the telemarketing team generally does not become involved in the process again. The function of this group is to take the lead from the opening stages and nurture it to a close. This requires a skilled sales professional who understands the sales process and has experience in the area. Although this sounds quite straightforward, there are a few broad areas where trouble can arise. These include:

- *Technical Professional Selling.* If your firm distributes leads to the professional who is technically savvy on the services being sold, but has weak sales skills, there may be a problem. Often, the most technical person is not the best sales person. Despite the best intentions and vast knowledge in the area, the professional is unable to make a connection or get to the point where the firm is invited to submit a proposal. Why? The answer is simply

that sales and technical knowledge in accounting, tax and consulting require different skills sets. If the person following up on the leads does not have the correct skills it will reduce the chance of success.


- *Consistency.* Define how often the sales professional should follow-up with the prospect. I have personally been involved in situation where it took five phone calls before I got the "interested" prospect on the phone. It was not that he or she was not interested, but the person was busy with quarterly and year-end work. Remember, consistent and professional follow-up at every stage of the sales cycle indicates your interest in their business, but respect for their time.

The key thing to remember is that the program is only as good as the structure and professionals implementing it. Unlike many other lead generation tools, executive telemarketing is highly fluid and requires the appropriate set of skills across the process.

Looking at executive telemarketing in terms of the larger marketing picture, I don't believe a firm should rely solely on it as a means of generating leads. It needs to be part of a larger plan that incorporates both push and pull methods. Some prospects will

respond better to executive telemarketing than direct-mail marketing. Others will not respond to the executive telemarketing but may come to you through your social media outlets because they prefer to communicate using the Internet rather the phone. Appealing to the prospect through as many mediums as possible makes the most sense for any company seeking to generate leads.

### Is It Still Effective?

Executive telemarketing is still an effective lead generation tool. Remember the name of the game is balance. Use all the tools at your disposal to find the most effective one for your firm. Once you have identified it, continue using that method until the results tell you otherwise. 

### About the Author

Brian Swanson is the director of marketing and business development for Daszkal Bolton LLP, located in South Florida. In this role, he focuses on implementing the firm's strategic marketing plan through both traditional marketing and lead generation strategies. His experience also includes website marketing, employing search engine marketing and search engine optimization. Brian can be reached at [bswanson@daszkalbolton.com](mailto:bswanson@daszkalbolton.com).

## 201 CMR 17.00: Security Standards That Will Make You Hot

By *Trey James*

Ask any accounting firm why the door to its server room isn't closed and you'll get an all-too common response, "It gets too darned hot in there." And, with the ever-increasing pressure being placed on CPA firms by the state regulatory controls, it's sure to get a lot hotter.

As of March 1, 2010, Massachusetts-based firms, and those that maintain records on its residents (regardless of the state they're based in), will be required to meet increased information security standard known as *201 CMR 17.00: Standards for the Protection of Personal Information of Residents of the Commonwealth*, which will force many firms into their next major wave of technology management investments. With the passing of this legislation, you can be certain that other states will follow closely behind.

Here is a primer on what you need to do to adhere to regulation 201 CMR 17.00 to prepare for the following:

### Duty to Protect

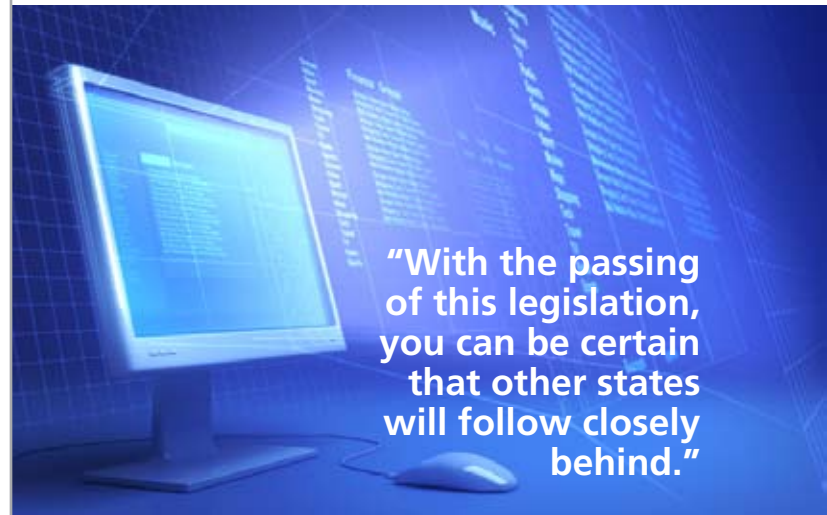
With many of our current security management activities being reactive in nature, we will soon be required to *proactively* ensure the safety and security of private information.

201 CMR 17.00 stipulates that we have a "Duty to Protect" the following:

- *Personal information.* This would include a resident's first name and last name, or first initial and last name in combination with any one or more of the following data elements that relate to such resident: (a) Social Security number; (b) driver's license number or state-issued identification card number; or (c) financial account number, or credit or debit card number.
- *Records.* Any data that is written, drawn, spoken, visual or electronic.

The firm must designate one or more employees to design, implement, and coordinate maintenance of a comprehensive written information security program.

This program consists of identifying and assessing internal and external risks to the security, confidentiality, and/or integrity of any electronic, paper or other records containing personal information.



This written plan must —

- Be managed by one or more employees
- Provide regularly scheduled employee training
- Actively monitor compliance
- Include properly upgraded and maintained systems (i.e. network, software, storage, etc.)
- Provide for locked facilities with monitored access
- Include telecommuting policies that address access and transport of private data
- Require third-party vendor access procedures and requirements
- Provide an inventory of all paper and electronic records, media, devices, etc.
- Include documented procedures for post-incident responsive actions



## Computer System Security Requirements

Paraphrasing section 17.03 of 201 CMR standard: *“Every person that owns, licenses, stores or maintains personal information about a resident of the Commonwealth and electronically stores or transmits such information shall include in its written, comprehensive information security program the establishment and maintenance of a security system covering its computers, including any wireless system, that, at a minimum, shall have the following elements”:*

- Complex passwords that contain greater than seven characters and ideally include multiple special characters (such as: \*!()\$#@)
- Access enabled for only active accounts and automatic blocking after multiple failed attempts
- Restricted access to data based on job function requirements with disciplinary measures imposed for policy violations
- A 128-bit (or higher) encryption of portable devices containing private data (USB drives, USB memory keys, corporately connected PDAs/smart phones, laptops, etc.)
- Backup tapes must be encrypted; otherwise the use of armored guard or similar service is required
- Monitoring and access logging of networks and systems for unauthorized access
- Up-to-date patches and protection definitions on firewall(s), anti-virus, and anti-spyware
- Restricted physical access to systems containing private information, and written access procedures that log access by all parties

If you don't currently shut the door to your server room because “it gets too hot in there,” or the servers are located in a public area, such as a hallway or copier/production room, you will be required to comply with this legislation by either relocating the servers to a secure location, or retrofitting the existing location with adequate security and cooling. Most servers have an internal self-protection function that automatically and forcibly shuts them down when they reach a certain temperature, so proper cooling will be an essential concern.

Unless you can accommodate the janitorial schedules, you'll need to be comfortable with the server room not being cleaned, since now your cleaning crew will need escorted access to the server room by an authorized employee.

Pose these questions to your technology personnel:

- Is our firewall updated to the most current patch release?
- How many of our PCs and/or servers are running the latest security patches?
- Are our PCs and servers running the most current security definitions for anti-virus and anti-spyware?
- Is our wireless access encrypted using WPA2 or better?
- Are our tape backups encrypted and stored offsite in a secure location?
- Do our auditors store client data on USB sticks (or USB drives)? If so, are they encrypted?
- Do we have a written security policy?

Should the responses you receive fall short of giving you confidence, it may be time to get a head start on 201 CMR 17.

If your firm is based in Massachusetts, you'll be thankful to know that the original compliance deadline of January 1, 2010 has been extended until March 1, 2010. Given that accounting firms have a limited amount of free time in the first quarter, the added grace will come in handy. **MSNA**

### About the Author

Trey James is the co-founder and CEO of Xcentric, located in Alpharetta, GA, which specializes in IT solutions and certified networks for CPA firms. He brings nearly 20 years of experience that successfully blends executive, strategic, technical and operational roles within regional and local CPA firms and leading IT consultancies to the profession. Trey has been recognized by *CPA Technology Advisor* magazine as one of the “Top 40 Most Influential People in the Accounting Industry.” He can be reached at [tjames@xcentric.com](mailto:tjames@xcentric.com).

### They Said It...

“The best executive is one who has sense enough to pick good people to do what he wants done, and self-restraint enough to keep from meddling with them while they do it.”

— Theodore Roosevelt

# Making Your Networking Work

By Arnold Sanow

Every time you meet another person there is an opportunity to do business. Everyone prospers through sharing ideas, leads, contacts and opportunities. The purpose of networking is to give and get information. If you network properly, nobody feels pressured or used. You are not selling, you are telling. You are not asking for favors, you are giving valuable information.

By going to business card mixers sponsored by the local chamber of commerce, starting or joining networking clubs, and generally letting everyone in the world know what you do, you'll be well on your way to getting more clients — and having fun at the same time.

## Creating an Effective Network

There are 10 key ingredients for effective networking:

1. *Set networking goals.* Determine the types of people you want to meet, how many you want to meet, and what functions you are going to attend.
2. *Be specific.* While networking, be very specific about the type of person you want to meet. For example, as a speaker and a trainer, I look for meeting planners, training directors, human resource directors, personnel directors and others. These are the people who hire people like me.
3. *Develop a "16-second" sizzler.* You should be able to tell others what you do in 16 seconds or less. If you go on much longer than this, people tend to lose attention.
4. *Get involved.* Go to meetings of the rotary club and other civic and fraternal organizations, church groups, trade and professional groups and others.
5. *Increase your visibility.* Speak before groups at every opportunity. Write articles for trade publications or newsletters. Become an officer in your club. All these add to your credibility and motivate people to seek you out.
6. *Make contacts.* Whether it's a business or social situation and you want to meet someone, just do it. Take the risk; what do you have to lose? The more



people you know the more opportunities will come your way.

7. *Ask for help.* If you don't ask for what you want, you won't get it. Find the person who can help you... and whom you can help. Then ask.
8. *Keep in touch.* Some people are great at networking. They have no trouble meeting people, but when it comes to following up with them they drop the ball. We recommend staying in contact with clients and those in your network at least once every two months. Call them, invite them to lunch, send articles relevant to their business, play golf, send them a copy of your newsletter, and so on. Whatever you do, stay in touch.
9. *Always have your networking tools with you.* Make sure you have your business card and promotional material handy. I also recommend you put your picture on your business card. At the end of the day, you'll be remembered.
10. *The more you give, the more you get.* When someone gives you a lead, referral, new business or an idea, make a special effort to return the favor as soon as possible. In addition, always send a handwritten thank-you card. MSNA

### About the Author

Arnold Sanow, MBA, CSP, is a speaker, seminar leader and author of five books, including *Get Along with Anyone, Anytime, Anywhere... 8 Keys to Creating Enduring Connections with Customers, Co-workers... Even Kids*. You can reach Arnold at [speaker@arnoldsanow.com](mailto:speaker@arnoldsanow.com) or on his website at [www.arnoldsanow.com](http://www.arnoldsanow.com).



**Here is a compilation of some of the best practices that I have picked up from my presentations and workshops on "Working a Room":**

- Know who's coming to the event, check the RSVP list (and their relationship with your company), and plan ahead of time who you want to meet.
- Practice your commercial and put it into play.
- Prepare several conversation starters — trivia and humor can work.
- Prepare small talk questions about family and work.
- Use FORM as a guide to ask open-ended questions.  
F = *Family*  
O = *Occupation*  
R = *Recreation*  
M = *Message*
- Keep your guest engaged with questions (have several planned ahead of the event).
- Always carry (and give out) your business cards.
- Wear your name tag on your right shoulder (make sure you dress appropriately to be able to wear it — especially important for female clothing).
- Dress professionally even if it's a holiday party.
- Make a point of introducing yourself to five people you do not know.
- Set a goal to get at least 10 business cards and write a thank you note to those individuals the next day, e.g., Thanks for coming. It was nice to meet you.
- Practice an effective close for your conversations.
- Offer a follow-up meeting and set up the next appointment.
- When you arrive, immediately start talking with guests.
- Introduce yourself to as many guests as you can.
- Play the host and greet people at the door.
- Acknowledge a guest's business associate or spouse.
- Offer to get a beverage for your guest and tell them the food that's available.
- Repeat your guest's name.
- Ask guests' opinions about things.
- Get guests to talk about themselves.
- Keep engaged in the conversation by nodding.
- Talk about how your company is helping businesses similar to their business.
- Thank guests for coming.
- Find a common interest.
- Compliment your guests.
- Keep your conversation light and cheerful.
- Focus the conversation on the guest, not you.
- Know when and how to move from one person to the next — truly work the room.
- Look for guests who are alone and approach them with a smile.
- Ask guest if he/she is alone at the event.
- Introduce guests to each other.
- Have small teams — pair up with your peers to meet guests.
- Introduce your fellow employees to guests.
- Circulate against the flow of the room.
- Re-connect with guest you do know.
- Do less mingling with co-workers.
- If you see too many employees together, suggest they mingle with guests.
- Eat with guests not your co-workers.
- Invite other guests to your table and stand to introduce other people at your table.
- Look for an empty chair where guests are sitting and ask if you may join them.
- Give a firm handshake.
- Be natural and personable.
- Be interested, not just interesting.
- Smile.
- Be observant.
- Soften your voice.
- Look your guest in their eyes.
- Be a good listener.
- Be approachable and open with your body language.
- Don't stand in the same place too long.
- Eat later.
- Don't drink too much.
- Turn off your Blackberry.

## Chair's Corner

Continued from page 1

Not all problems need to be faced alone. If our members can succeed with the support of Moore Stephens, then we all can share in that success. As an example, this year the Marketing SIG is launching a "Lead Generation in a Can" program, which provides all the tools, content, and design to deliver an integrated, customizable campaign around member service lines. Look for more details to come.

Our board, along with MSNA headquarters, encourages and appreciates any suggestions you have that will make our association even better. With the New Year, my hope is that 2010 will result in growth and new opportunities for our firms. I am looking forward to the coming months when we can achieve all this together. **MSNA**

## The Way the Cookie Crumbles

Writer Douglas Adams, author of the bestselling book *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, liked to tell a story about not jumping to conclusions about people.

In April 1976, Adams was sitting in the waiting area of a railroad station, and he had placed a package of cookies and a newspaper on the table in front of him.

A stranger next to him suddenly reached across, opened Adams' bag of cookies, and started to eat them.

Adams said nothing. But he took a cookie from the bag as well. Soon the bag was empty, as both men ate from it.

When the stranger left for his train, Adams picked up his newspaper — and found his bag of cookies underneath it. Rather than a stranger eating his cookies, he'd been eating someone else's!

**The lesson:** Look to yourself first before you assume anything of another person. "Otherwise, you'll wonder why it seems that someone else is eating your cookies," Adams said.



## MSNA WEBSITE TIPS

### Q. How do I get my firm's press releases posted on the MSNA website?

- A. Members should send their press releases to [jlevin@msnainc.org](mailto:jlevin@msnainc.org) and it will be posted on the "In the News" section on the website home page or in the "Member Firm Press Releases" section in the online news room.

### Q. What is my login for the MSNA website?

- A. The default username is **FirstnameLastname** (no space). If you have forgotten your MSNA website password, enter your username (FirstnameLastname), leave the password blank and click login. Your password will be e-mailed to you if you have an existing account. If you do not have an account, you will receive a message that says "invalid user ID." If you receive this message, contact Jessica Levin at [jlevin@msnainc.org](mailto:jlevin@msnainc.org) to create an account. Please note that if you received *The Networker* directly from MSNA then you should have a valid login to the website.

Visit us at [www.msnainc.org](http://www.msnainc.org)

## Using the MSNA Listserve and Discussion Boards

The best way to communicate with fellow MSNA members on technical and practice management questions is to post a message to a specific special interest group (SIG). Questions for SIG members (new threads to the discussion boards) can be sent directly from your e-mail system (e.g., Outlook, Lotus, Entourage). Threads posted via e-mail to a particular SIG will be delivered to the members of that SIG through their email inbox, and will also automatically be posted on the SIG's discussion board on the MSNA website. Members can reply to a message directly through their e-mail client. The response will reach all members of the SIG via e-mail, and will also be displayed as a response on the website discussion board.

To post a new thread, simply compose an e-mail and send it to one of the following e-mail addresses. We recommend that you include your electronic signature on all postings, as well as indicate your name and firm name in the posting.

<b>Assurance Services</b>	<a href="mailto:assurance@forum.msnainc.org">assurance@forum.msnainc.org</a>
<b>Business Valuation &amp; Litigation Services</b>	<a href="mailto:bvlitservices@forum.msnainc.org">bvlitservices@forum.msnainc.org</a>
<b>Construction</b>	<a href="mailto:construction@forum.msnainc.org">construction@forum.msnainc.org</a>
<b>Employee Benefits</b>	<a href="mailto:employeebenefits@forum.msnainc.org">employeebenefits@forum.msnainc.org</a>
<b>Firm Administration</b>	<a href="mailto:firmadmin@forum.msnainc.org">firmadmin@forum.msnainc.org</a>
<b>Health Care</b>	<a href="mailto:healthcare@forum.msnainc.org">healthcare@forum.msnainc.org</a>
<b>Human Resources</b>	<a href="mailto:hr@forum.msnainc.org">hr@forum.msnainc.org</a>
<b>International Tax</b>	<a href="mailto:internationaltax@forum.msnainc.org">internationaltax@forum.msnainc.org</a>
<b>Managing Partners</b>	<a href="mailto:managingpartners@forum.msnainc.org">managingpartners@forum.msnainc.org</a>
<b>Marketing</b>	<a href="mailto:marketing@forum.msnainc.org">marketing@forum.msnainc.org</a>
<b>Not-for-Profit</b>	<a href="mailto:nfp@forum.msnainc.org">nfp@forum.msnainc.org</a>
<b>Real Estate</b>	<a href="mailto:realestate@forum.msnainc.org">realestate@forum.msnainc.org</a>
<b>SEC/SOX</b>	<a href="mailto:secsox@forum.msnainc.org">secsox@forum.msnainc.org</a>
<b>Tax</b>	<a href="mailto:tax@forum.msnainc.org">tax@forum.msnainc.org</a>
<b>Technology Administrators</b>	<a href="mailto:technology@forum.msnainc.org">technology@forum.msnainc.org</a>