

ROTARY MEANS BUSINESS PRE-EVENT PRIMER

The following is taken in great part from what my Eastern Tier Champion, Rob Gallagher, developed in 2016 to prepare Rotarians for RMB networking events in his area of District 7390.

Thank you putting yourself into this RMB networking event. We are committed to creating an environment that produces real and tangible results for participants through this event.

The reality is that the manner in which each of us participates will determine the results achieved. The purpose of this communication is to set you up to generate the maximum number of results for you and your business. Here is your chance to make connections with potential new clients/customers; possibly meet a new supplier; connect with someone who knows someone you need to meet; or if you are searching for a new job or career make a connection that will help.

Right off the bat I want to highlight the fact that networking is a series of activities, not just one event. That is why your participation in this event will actually last for about a month. After the initial event, there will be a Rotary Means Business Post Networking Event First Steps Letter designed to encourage you to continue with activities needed to create multiple strong contacts that can powerfully refer your business.

One such activity might be to follow up after the event with an email NOT to everyone but only to individuals you made connections with explaining in more detail what your business does and what sets it apart from similar businesses using the contact information spreadsheet provided the day before the event.

How will the evening go? Knowing what to expect will help you be fully engaged without wondering if you are missing something. The evening is going to start at 5:30 PM. When you come in, we will have a table with nametags for you to fill out.

From 5:30 to about 6:00 we will have networking time while you have drinks (wine and beer will be available) and paid for as indicated in the pre-event RMB newsletters. I encourage you to have BRIEF conversations with as many people as you can. As human beings, it takes us six seconds to determine if we like someone or not. We spend the remainder of the first minute in conversation with someone to see if our instinct is correct. Challenge yourself to meet someone new every five minutes during this time.

At 6:00, the club president(s) or president(s) elect will welcome everyone to the event. This will be followed by participants reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and the Four Way Test. After which, the hosting club leader(s) will turn the meeting over to the Tier Champion who will make some administrative and substantive comments. After this, the Tier Champion will explain the purposes of the networking exercises (The Circle and the Cocktail Party).

During the Circle, the major sponsor will have up to five minutes, the hosting venue or special sponsor up to three minutes and event sponsors will have up to one minute to talk about their businesses and each of you will have roughly 30 seconds depending on the number of attendees to give your elevator speech/pitch (see the Crafting an Elevator Speech info paper on the Pics & Docs Pages of the RMB link on the district website's home page www.rotary7390.org).

This essentially boils down to stating your name and Rotary club then what your business, project, or cause does and what makes it unique, i.e., differentiates you from your competitors or in other words who is your perfect client and why people should do business with you and end by restating your name and the name of your business.

Also, realize that if you exceed the time allowed, there is a good chance people will not want to connect with you. Furthermore, your body language and the tone, texture, and the inflection in your voice will affect how folks perceive you. In essence be brief, be bright, and finish. While in the Circle, you also will identify the main people you want to talk to during the Cocktail Party that follows.

During the Cocktail Party phase, we will be mingling like we were at the beginning; however, the mingling is very intentional and purposeful. Seek out the people you feel a connection with and set up an appointment to get together to start a business relationship or just to exchange mutual referrals. Of course going forward as you meet people within your circle of contacts, you will be able to refer them to connections made during the RMB networking event.

These conversations should be brief, less than five minutes. Beware of a major networking event pitfall, which is spending all of this time with one person or worse with someone you already know. The evening will end at 7:30 after a brief period of acknowledgements.

Let's look at who is going to be at the event. There are three types of people who will attend the meeting. The first group is guests of Rotarians who are potential members or family of Rotary. They are coming to promote their business or nonprofit and consider if joining Rotary could be of value to them. If you are in the first group, I want to be the first to welcome you, and I am looking forward to meeting you tomorrow. The second group is Rotarians from clubs across the district coming to promote their business or nonprofit. The third group is a very special group of Rotarians who are attending as "Door Openers". These amazing and influential people are not there to promote anything; rather they are there to connect people from the first two groups with people in their circles of influence. Talk about an act of selfless generosity.

What is the best way for me to be at this event? In general, the best way to be at the event is both selfish and selfless at the same time. The success of this event will arise from generosity. Keep in mind the Four Way Test. As you listen to each person talk about their business or nonprofit, I urge you to focus your mind on who in your circle of influence (in your phone contact list) could benefit from connecting with the person who is speaking. Is there a way that this person could be beneficial to me? What if we partnered up; can my products or services work in harmony with theirs? How can I get to know this person better?

Tomorrow please arrive early. BRING BUSINESS CARDS AT LEAST 30. ALSO BRING A PEN OR PENCIL.

I am looking forward to meeting you tomorrow night.

Tier Champion

Rotary District 7390