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The best way to secure new business is through networking

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It has been said that in challenging economic times one of the best ways to secure new business or a new position is through networking. Networking often gives you the inside track to opportunities that may be coming available before notification to the general public.

In seeking networking opportunities many executives and job seekers alike are turning to more one on one social venue meetings such as golf outings. Events like these create opportunities for personal contact with potential business clients and future employers. After all isn't it a fundamental principle that businesses and careers are developed through personal relationships, establishing trust, and demonstrating exceptional customer/employer service? When is the last time someone has boasted that they had a 4 to 6 hour, uninterrupted sales call or interview in a corporate office? It is a known fact that many business deals and career starts are brokered on the links.

Many books have been written about the rewards and pitfalls of playing golf for gain. A common theme that seems to be repeated in many of these publications is to have a strategy. So, from a novice who has done some research on the subject, I offer three basic principles for successful golf networking:

First, select your golf partner wisely. Determine who you would like to play a round with and what you hope to accomplish. Once you have chosen a partner, take time before the game to prepare and obtain some basic information about your partner to engage in general conversation. Take time to create bonding opportunities over topics or interests you have in common and avoid jumping right into business discussions at all costs. During the game you will have plenty of time to discuss business when the timing is right and a degree of comfort and familiarity has been established with your golf partner.

Second, know the rules of golf and general golf etiquette. How you handle yourself and different situations on the course will say a lot about how you approach your work. Play your best game and have fun, but be flexible. It is important to make sure you follow your golf partner's lead in setting the pace and tone of your game. Remember it is not whether you win or lose the game; it is how you played and connected with your golf partner that will make a lasting impression.

Lastly, do not finish your golf game with business talk unless your partner broaches the topic. Do follow up with personal contact after the game to remind your golf partner of yourself and your business.

Ready to get started with a golf-networking adventure? Let IREM's Boston Metropolitan Chapter #4 help you get started! On September 14th, IREM's Metropolitan Boston Chapter #4 will be holding its 10th annual golf tournament at Granite Links Golf Club located in Quincy, Mass. Space is limited so don't hesitate to register today by contacting the Boston Chapter #4 office at 617-328-7565.

Want to try networking but don't golf? On September 14th, IREM Chapter #4 will also be conducting a training workshop of "Going Green 201," hosting a trade show, and running a silent auction at

Granite Links. For more information on these events or to register, please visit our website at www.iremboston.org.

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