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INSIDER: Show Up: Unlocking the Power of Relational Networking
Maria Arauz, MBA Candidate
INSIDER: Show Up: Unlocking the Power of Relational Networking

Maria Arauz, MBA Candidate

As a real estate agent, you’re likely familiar with networking—but how can you stand out when everyone else is familiar with it, too? In his book, Show Up: Unlocking the Power of Relational Networking, author David France provides personal stories and applicable advice to help improve your networking strategy. His recommendations may change how real estate agents make and cultivate connections.

THINK POINT #1: Know Yourself

“Just be yourself!” Useful advice, right? Not really, if you don’t unpack it. Before even thinking about building a network, France suggests asking yourself, “Who am I when disconnected from my profession?” “What gives my life meaning?” “What is my greatest fear?” Knowing who you are outside of your professional identity will help you create deep professional connections. By understanding yourself and your own needs in a more complex way, you are able to empathize better with others and, as a result, add value generously—giving more than what you expect in return.

This approach leads to authentic relationships and natural connections, strategies that concentrate on adding value to others over time, and on creating mutually beneficial relationships, regardless of professional industry. These strategies are the opposite of very common behaviors: only engaging in one-off interactions and dismissing people who don’t fit an immediate need, which proves much less productive in the long haul.

THINK POINT #2: Ways to Build Natural Connections

You may have heard that you should study the people you will meet in advance, but did you know you can use hashtags to find out who they are? Before a conference or networking event, France shares that you can learn who will be attending by looking at who is using conference hashtags or active on an event’s social media page. When you spot these attendees, you can learn more about them via LinkedIn, Twitter, and other websites. The people who consciously make themselves known before an event might just be the kind of people you want to meet. This is one of the ways you can build authentic relationships and natural connections.
Another strategy to build strong connections is used when meeting a speaker at an event. In short, France advises asking the speaker's advice, and then doing what you’re told. This strategy entails asking an intelligent, short, and burning question you’ve been struggling with that matches the speaker’s expertise. When you receive their advice, ask if you could send a follow-up after you apply their idea. This strategy creates a more memorable encounter and first impression than simply praising the speaker or asking for a selfie. If done right, it may trigger the speaker into caring about the work you do. After you apply the advice, send a follow-up explaining how you did it or how you modified their idea to fit your situation. Showing flexibility, willingness to grow, gratitude, and critical thinking are effective ways to connect with an influencer. This strategy and using hashtags are two of four ways France shares that can help you build natural connections.

**THINK POINT #3: Push Your Networking Boundaries**

As the title of the book suggests, you should show up—but where? France advocates that attending diverse events outside of your own industry broadens your spectrum of connections. In turn, having a diverse network will increase your chances of encountering unique opportunities. For instance, by attending The Venture Café, a weekly entrepreneurship networking event, France, who is a violinist, formed connections that led him to apply and be selected for the international Waypaver Delegation and later to apply for and win the Vanguard Fellowship, naming him one of the Top 40 Urban Innovators Under 40.

If you consistently push your boundaries and work to broaden your sphere of connections, over time, you will run into opportunities that others would only be able to describe as luck. For real estate agents this may mean, for example, attending chamber of commerce, city council, or school board meetings where you’re likely to meet people who are involved in the community. Granted, in some instances you won’t be able to naturally connect with anyone, but these less-than-ideal situations are negligible compared to the opportunities that may arise from showing up.

**THINK POINT #4: Craft the Perfect Cold Call Email**

Cold call emails are another way to build relationships and expand your network. You can follow a few principles to write persuasive emails that will elicit a response. The first is to *not* talk about yourself. France notes that you may be tempted to try to prove that you are worth a reply, but sending an introductory email about yourself will not get your message across. Instead, show authentic interest about the reader and his or her work by making the message about them. This approach is more likely to grab the reader’s attention.
THINK POINT #5: Stand Out Through Your Follow-up

Following up is an important and often overlooked aspect of relational networking. Aside from connecting virtually to people you meet, you should also focus on future follow-ups. These follow-ups will make the difference between staying top of mind or not. France shares several tools he uses in his follow-up, one of which is creating a relationship document. Its purpose is to organize the information of significant people you meet. You can include, for instance, event and city specific information, a person’s passions, who introduced you to them, and what value you can bring to them. This is a live document that will evolve as your relationship with each person grows and that will help you create personal messages when following up.

Conclusion

All the aforementioned points represent a few of the many applicable tips from France’s book that you, as a real estate professional, can apply today to boost your networking strategy. Building a strong and diverse network by showing up will increase your chances of encountering unique opportunities that will help you achieve your goals, including finding and closing deals. Be it by knowing exactly how to look for contacts for an upcoming event or building a relationship document, France’s advice will help you stand out from the rest and harness the real power of relational networking.

Recommended Reading

France, David (2017), Show Up: Unlocking the Power of Relational Networking. Independently Published.

About the Author

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Maria Arauz earned her Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Towson University. Her past work experience includes roles for companies such as Procter & Gamble and Dell. Maria is currently pursuing an MBA at Baylor University and plans to further her career in the technology industry.