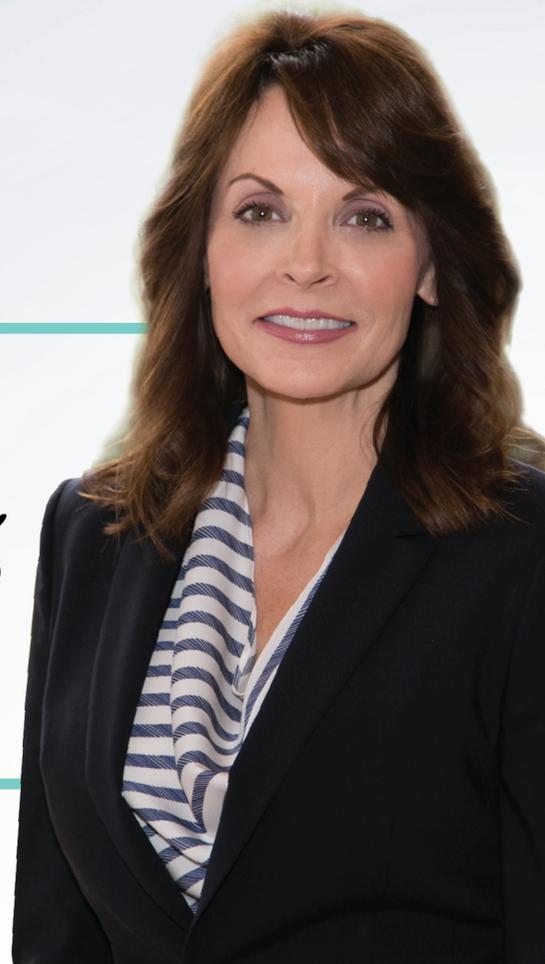




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**GROUP**  
*Coaching Calls*  
*with* **DEBBIE**

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**Alyssa:** Alright. It's time to go. Good morning everybody, or good afternoon, depending on where you're at. My name is Alyssa Granlund and I'm going to be your host today. I am a coach at Excelleum and Debbie has asked me to share with you my thoughts and experiences on networking. It's a pretty popular topic right now, and always, in business. And since it was a big part of my success as an agent, she just wanted me to share with you some best practices that I did and how it all worked for me, in case you want to add this to what you're already doing.

So, the overview of what we're going to cover today is, we're going to talk about where to network, first of all. We're going to talk about how to start your own group, if that's something you're interested in. I'm going to share with you some resources that are available to you from Debbie and in the Excelleum Inner Circle that are going to help you with your networking. And we're going to talk about networking best practices. Then at the end, I'm going to leave some time for Q&A, if you have any questions at that point. Right now, everybody is muted, so that we can keep the line quiet. But when the time comes for questions, if you would like to ask a question, all you need to do is hit \*7 to unmute. You can ask your question, and then I'll just ask you to mute again, \*7 again. And at the end, if we have time, I'm going to share with you a little bonus thing, and it's going to be about how to activate your power of charm and charisma; how to get that activated for you.

Alright, so networking is one of the best ways to get ahead and to make long-lasting contacts to advance our career. For most agents, 65% to 80% of our business comes from our personal relationships. And so, the more personal relationships we grow, the more sales we can generate, if we stay in touch with people. There are many ways that you can network and there are many reasons that networking is beneficial. It allows you to learn from your peers, it allows you to improve your personal profile out there. It'll help you generate business for home sellers and buyers and investors. All of these things are obviously invaluable in any real estate career.

So, I started working in real estate in 1989. I was pretty young; I was 23 at the time. I worked as an individual agent, and then I also worked as a part of a partnership. I grew a big team and I was a broker for a large office. I had over 200 agents that I managed. These are all top producers; this is our flagship office of our company out of 58 offices. So, it was a really cool office and a lot of big producers. I've also created training and sales programs, and throughout all of my career I was coaching other agents and helping other agents.

But when I first started out, I was pretty young, and prior to real estate, the only experience that I had was that I was a professional singer. That's all I had done prior to real estate. So I did not have any business experience. Zero. Zero business experience. And so, my confidence when I first got started was pretty low in the business. I felt like people weren't going to be interested in working with me because I was young and because I had no experience and blah, blah, blah. There are all kinds of limiting beliefs that we put in our way. But in my days, these were pretty true. So, my confidence was low. But to make things even more complicated, my husband was an agent, my in-laws were agents, and my parents were agents.

Now, you probably think, "Well, that would give you a head start in the business." And yes, it was very helpful, but not to generate new leads, or to generate leads at all, because everyone that I knew already had a real estate agent. So, I needed to figure out what to do. I had two issues. Number one, I was young and I felt I had a lack of experience and confidence in my abilities. And number two, I needed to

meet new people.

So, I started a networking group, and it was a networking group of my peers. The reason that I did that is because I felt that the people who would be interested in working with me or who would have confidence in my abilities would be people who are my own age. So, I found other young women that were in sales positions or trying to get their own businesses off the ground, and got a core group of people together to start our networking group. And it was awesome. I will tell you that had the biggest impact on my business, was this networking group that I put together. It was responsible for between 25 and 35 sales a year for me, just from the networking group.

We're going to talk about how I did it and just some best practices, and how you can do it too if it's something that you would like to do. It is really, really super fun. Right now if you've had any networking experiences, I'm going to ask you to just kind of set those aside for today and just hear me out and hear what I have to say and see if there's a way that you could maybe apply this to you in your business.

So, to get started in networking, first you need to decide, are you going to join an existing group that's already going, or are you going to start your own? Now, the reality is you could do both. We're going to talk about both of them individually today, and then I would recommend that you start with one, and then you could always move on to adding a second group if you want. And we'll talk about pros and cons of both.

So, first of all, if you're going to join an existing group – we'll start with that – let's talk about where you could find some good networking. So, anywhere that you can go that brings together potential clientele could be great for you. This could be online. I prefer in-person, but there are some online things that can work. And this can be things like charity events, business training, sales training, social media training, where it's in-person, where you're getting with other business owners; conferences, seminars. There are a lot of different places that you can go, besides just your standard networking group.

There are also though lots of networking groups that you can look at. There are Business Networking International – BNI. That is a great group that you could check out. You could try to find a BNI group, and I'll talk a little bit more about that in a minute.

You could find community interests; community involvement groups are great. A lot of agents do Habitat for Humanity or some type of a home building group, some type of a volunteer group. Those are good. Anyway, so community involvement. You could sponsor a local Little League team or school events, where you could get into a leadership position and get to know people. That's a way that you can network.

You can also maybe get involved with other groups that are already in process, like your local Chamber of Commerce. Now, the cool thing about a Chamber of Commerce is that they have a lot of events that are already set up for you. I know that agents do shy away from this a little bit because of the competition, thinking that there are a lot of agents who will be at the meetings. And it's true, there are agents that do get involved in Chamber. But what I'm going to tell you is that the thing that I've seen over the years in networking is that real estate agents will get involved in things and they'll sign up for things like the Chamber or other networking groups, but they don't show up. They'll go once or twice, three times maybe. And if they don't get business, then they quit. They quit going because they feel like it's not worth their investment.

And so, what I'm going to say is that if you do decide to do a Chamber or any type of a group, if you join a group, do it for the long haul. Don't go just once or twice and if you don't get anything, quit the group, because it takes time to cultivate relationships. And even if there are other agents that are in the group, it doesn't matter, because you are going to attract the people who like you and who want to work with you, and you're going to get your own tribe within that. So, even if there are other agents, it really doesn't matter.

I think Chamber is great. Chamber has a lot of wonderful events. They have monthly lunch-and-learns, they have special subgroups that you can get involved in, where you can become either a volunteer or an expert. For instance, there are Young Professionals groups in a lot of different chambers, where they're looking for more experienced salespeople and more experienced people in business, maybe my age, whatever, in their 50s, that want to come and speak. So that's a great place for you to get in front of younger people. Or if you are younger, it's a great place to get involved and start to build your network with other young professionals.

Also, Chamber offers community events. One of the best things about Chamber if you are involved in Chamber is to look at being a part of the Ambassador Program. What the Ambassadors do in Chamber is they welcome all of the new Chamber members. That is a wonderful place to be, because anybody that's coming into a networking group is nervous. And so if you can be that hand up to help them to get involved, that's going to be a great connection for you and could turn into a wonderful networking opportunity.

The other cool thing about Chamber is it gives you credibility. When you're in a Chamber, you look and absolutely are kind of a pillar in the community. So, Chamber is really great for that, as far as raising your profile.

Now, the other cool thing about Chamber is that strict attendance is not required. There are some groups where you have to attend. Chamber is not that way. The problem though when we don't have a strict attendance is that we may not show up. So, I'm going to say if you decide to do it, be strict with yourself and decide on one or two Chamber events that you are going to consistently go to, because that is how you will get traction and how you'll build relationships and how you'll start to see the referrals occur for you in Chamber.

Let's see here. The next thing would be a BNI group – the networking groups that are already set up. Now, BNI is wonderful. The only problem with BNI is that they only allow one person from each industry in the group. So, they'll allow one real estate agent and one commercial real estate agent in the group. And the problem is that most of the time that real estate agent spot is taken, because it's a great group to be a part of and there's a lot of referrals that are given because BNI is very strict. You have to bring, I think, two referrals to each meeting, or at least have given out two referrals to each meeting. And you have to attend. If you don't attend, you have to send a sub in your place. So, it's a high level of commitment. It's also expensive. Chamber is a little less expensive than BNI. BNI is about \$600 a year or so. So, it can be expensive, but if you can get into a BNI, it is golden. And here's the way you can get in.

Like I said before, BNIs require a sub if you can't attend. So, what you want to do is you want to find somebody who's in BNI; it doesn't matter what industry they're in. Chiropractors are big into BNI, insurance agents, some mortgage bankers. If you can find somebody who's in a BNI, you can just ask them, "If you ever need a sub, I would love to go in your place", because they don't have to send a sub

that's in the same industry. You can still go, and then you can check it out and see if you like it. You can sub as much as you want, and it doesn't cost anything for you to do that. And once you become kind of known as a sub, people will call you and want you to show up. So you'll start to get involved in the group and you'll be able to go, even though it already has a real estate agent. Now, once you become a sub and you start to get to know people in BNI, then as soon as there is a real estate opening in a local group, people will put your name in. So, then you'll get a chance to be the person that gets that coveted spot in the BNI. So that's how you would join an existing group.

The other thing you could do is you could start your own BNI group, and for a BNI, you have to have been in your industry for two years. You can't do it as a new agent. But if you've been in real estate for two years, you can start your own group. All you have to do is get a group of people together, and there's a framework that you have to work in, in order to get a BNI going. But that also could be something for you to look at. The nice thing about doing it that way is that you get a framework that you can work with, and you have some coaching and some help to get the group going. But I will tell you that it is a big job. And so, you'll want to have some helpers, some other people that are going to be part of your core group, if you go that route, to start a BNI. There are some other groups too – Networking International. There are a few groups like that out there that will help you get it going, that have a fee. So, that would be another thing to look at.

There are some other groups too. There is a group that I was heavily involved in that's called eWomen Network. And it's not just for women; it's for anybody that wants to network and help women to succeed in business. That one is not very expensive and you pay each time a luncheon fee to do that. And there are chapters all over the U.S. I started a chapter of eWomen Network here, where I live – in Minneapolis, and was able to grow that to about 200 members. It was a lot of work, but it was really good. And so, that's something you could look at. If there isn't an eWomen Network in your area, you could start one up, or if there is one, I would recommend you checking it out. You can go to two of their events without being a member.

So, those are a couple of options for you. And then there also are lots of local networking groups in everyone's area. You just need to do a little Google search to see what is out there. So, you might check women's networking groups or men's networking groups or whatever. Just try to find something and go check it out. I haven't had great luck with networking on the Meetup groups. That's one thing that people think about doing, is going on Meetup and seeing what you can find. The problem with that is that usually those Meetup groups are pretty small – four people or something like that. And what I found is, a lot of times the people that are doing Meetup – it's free, so they don't really have any money to spend on a group, so they aren't necessarily our target market, people that we want to work with. So anyway, look for a group that has a little bit of an amount to enter to be in the group, because those people that are willing to spend money on their business are probably good prospects for us, people to get to know.

Alright, other things we talked about – volunteer groups and charity programs. Also, don't overlook networking with, or being involved in activities maybe at your kids' school, if you have kids – being a part of the carnival or being a part of some of those events. Don't take on a huge job, but take on a job where you're going to be able to meet people. One of the best jobs at any type of volunteer event would be being the greeter, being the person that gives out the name tags, because then you get to meet everybody as they come in. And that's what we're trying to do, is just get to know people.

So, those are some ideas. Now, I mentioned online, and here is what happened to me. So, I have a unique kind of dog. I have a borzoi, which is a Russian wolfhound. That's kind of a unique dog; there are not a lot of them in the U.S. So, there are a lot of groups online of people that have borzois, and I belong to a bunch of different groups where we talk about our dogs and share stuff about our dogs. I became part of the online group first, and then I got involved in the offline group here locally, where I live, and there are about 40 people in that group. That has been a wonderful group for me and I've gotten some business out of that group. So, you do want to look at things that you have a passion about and see if there's a way that you can get involved in groups that feed your passion and also help you to expand your network. Because we're always trying to add people to our network. So, think about things like that that you might be able to be involved in. And that's an example where I took the online piece, but then turned it into offline, and it was really good.

Now, some other special interests. I have a client that is a sportsman and he wants to sell ranch and sporting properties. In his case, it made sense for him to join a gun club and a hunting club to do his networking, because then he was meeting people that wanted to buy those types of properties. So, think about that too. Do you like to golf, or do you like to play tennis, or mahjong, or bridge? My mother-in-law was a bridge player. She did a ton of business from bridge. She was a Life Master, so of course everybody kind of was in awe of her. And so, she ended up doing just a ton of business, and it was high-end business too – that was really cool – because she was really involved in this bridge club. But the trick was, she showed up every Wednesday. I think she actually went twice a week to her bridge club. And that's how she really built those relationships. Some other options might be Chamber, Kiwanis, Golden K, Rotary. There are all kinds of places that you can go, but you just need to decide where you might want to go.

Now, the advantage of joining an existing group is that much of the work has already been done for you, such as building the name recognition, creating the policies and procedures, and most importantly, getting people in the room. In some of the existing groups, you could also receive referrals from other chapters of existing organizations around the country too, which is kind of cool. So, there are some real pros to joining something that's existing. But there are also some pros to starting your own group. So, we're going to talk about that next.

One of the things with starting your own group is that it can be less expensive when you start your own group, because you get to decide on the cost structure. So, for my group that I started, my first group, we had 16 members; 16 up to 20, but it was a group of 16 that were the core members. And like I said, all of them were young women, and we did low dues – they were \$25 a year. I took that money and I used that to do printing. I would print a little itinerary for us every week, because we met weekly for breakfast.

Now, that group stayed together for a long time – 10-12 years, and we're all still friends. We had kids at the same time. We had bridal showers, kids together, baby showers, all that. So it was really good. Sold all of them houses, plus I sold all of their friends' and families' houses. And I recruited a gal into the group that was a car salesperson, and she was such an amazing salesperson that I actually recruited her to become my loan officer. And when that happened, my business really mushroomed. I had this loan officer who was brand new, but who was a real bulldog and was out there getting tons of business. And so, we took off. We built a whole bunch of business together, and that was huge. So, it's amazing the connections that you make in these types of groups.

Anyways, back to the cost. You get to decide on the cost structure, so that's really nice. You can decide if you're going to charge an annual fee, or you're going to charge a meeting fee. It depends. What we did is we charged a small fee, and then people came and they paid for their own breakfast. So that was it. And it was great. The other thing that's a benefit about starting your own group is that you can select the people to be in the group that are in your target market, or that are really go-getters. You can decide who the members are going to be in your group, and that's huge. The other thing is that you have to figure out a format that you want your group to be.

So, here's how I recommend you kind of get this whole thing started, if you want to do it on your own. First of all, get two or three people together that are in your current circle, people that you want to be founding members of the group. And again, you want to be careful, because you want to make sure that the people that you invite to the group are people who are really motivated and who really want to be a part of a networking group. The other thing that I did is I was very candid with the people that were in my group and said, "This group is going to be about generating leads for each other. That's our focus." That was the type of group that I wanted; I wanted leads, so I wanted to be very clear on that.

Where I see a problem is that sometimes agents will, or people in general will want to start a networking group, but they want it to kind of masquerade as something else. So they say, "Well, I'm going to start a charity group", and then they're going to hope that they're going to get referrals from that. And that can work for sure, no question. But it's not going to be as effective as a group of 10 or 12 likeminded people that want to generate leads. That's what I think is going to be the most effective group for you.

So, when I say, sometimes the first person that comes to mind might not be the perfect person, here's an example. I had a friend, an attorney, that I thought would be a really good fit, so I invited her to be a part of the group. But what I found out is that she wasn't really out there generating leads. She was kind of working for herself. She was under the umbrella of a firm, but she felt like she was an independent person. The truth was, that business that was coming to her was being handed to her from the firm and she really didn't have the motivation to go out and to get business. So, you want to make sure that the people that you bring in the group, that that's their deal, that they're out there trying to generate tons of business.

So, people to look for, people that are great fits to start off with are insurance agents, chiropractors, loan officer, real estate agent, of course, and I had an interior designer. She was awesome. At the time when I first started, we had a cell phone sales person. That is so funny, because you had to buy your cell phone from a dealer back then. So, just be on the lookout for people who like to network. Actually, even network marketing people are good – so, people who might sell, say, Amway or something like that. I know sometimes they get a bad rep, but those people are networkers. They know how to do it. Or Melaleuca or something like that. Not that you want a whole group of that; that will turn people off. But a couple of those key people are good to have in the group.

So, once you get your founding members, what you want to do is have a meeting with your core group – three or four of you, and then each of you brainstorm some of the other types of people that you would like to have in the group, other industries you'd like to have represented, like maybe a personal banker, or maybe a business banker, or a financial planner, or could be an attorney. I just found a lot of times, attorneys and also people that own a brick and mortar, they typically aren't that interested in kind of bird dog and in trying to get business for people, because they are running their shop, whatever it is. I don't know, for some reason those didn't ever stick. It was always more people that were working on

commission. So anyway, get that group together, and then you guys decide on three or four people that you would like to bring to the next meeting.

Now, what we did, and this is up to you how you want to do it, but what we did is we focused on a couple of different types of members. So, one week we said, "Let's try to get some personal bankers to the group next week, and then we'll see which one we want to invite to be a part of the group." So, the personal banker would be able to come and network and get to know people, and then we would decide which one we think seems like the best fit for us, that is really kind of a go-getter. And then we would extend an invitation to that person. So we focused on the different industries to bring people in.

The one thing that you don't want is a group filled with people that you already know. So, try not to do all the work. Try to bring in one or two key people, and then have each of them bring in one or two key people to get your group up to whatever size it is that you would like it to be, so that it keeps expanding with people that are motivated, but that are new connections for you.

Then you're going to want to decide, are we going to limit the group to one member per professional specialty, like only one financial advisor, one realtor, one loan officer? That's fine if that's what you want to do, no problem. You probably will be able to get your group to about 20-25 people, maybe 30 max. That's about the size of the group, but that is a really good size group, as long as people attend. So, decide on that, first of all, what you're going to do. If it's going to be a large group – if you're going to try to get it to be 200 – then you're not going to be able to limit that. Or if you want to keep it smaller, then you can limit it. So that'll be one of the decisions you need to make.

And you're going to want to decide on where you want to have the meetings. Now, that's another benefit of starting your own group, is you get to decide where it's located and what time it's going to be and what the group is going to be focused on. I mean, you get to make a lot of great decisions. So, you'll need to decide if it's going to be a breakfast meeting or if it's going to be a lunch meeting. I can tell you some of the big groups, lunch meetings are better. It's easier to get people there for lunch, but you'll have to decide what's right for you guys. And then decide your time and your place. You'll want it to be centrally located for all the founding members, but of course as the group matures, the location and the day could change. But you just want to make it easy for everybody, for your core group.

Let's see here. I want to go through a list of things that I would like you to think about in your first meeting with your core group. First of all, I want you to decide your group's purpose. If your group is going to be a lead generation group, then we need to be really clear on that, because when we bring in new potential members for the group, we need to share with them that we want this group to be a lead generation group, that's really the core focus. That way they can self-eliminate, I suppose would be the word, if they are not going to be people that want to do that. Because there are lots of people that don't like that, and that's fine. But for me, I really feel that it's important to have leads coming in. So, what's the purpose? You guys all decide.

Next, you're going to want to talk about how you're going to communicate with potential members, how you are going to invite people to the group. And how many – what is the goal, how big of a group do we want? The next thing that I'm going to say is that you guys plan when you're going to have your first event. So, set a date, and then decide on the venue. Decide on who is in the group. Together you're going to want to say, "Are we going to vote, or are we just going to let anybody who wants to join join, or how do you want to do that?"

Then you'll invite your members, and then you're going to want to talk about with your core group what your agenda is going to be for your meeting. So, there are lots of different things that you can do. And to begin with, probably you're going to want to spend time where everybody does their one-minute elevator pitch, you go around the table. Depending on how many people you have, that could take 15-20 minutes, to do the one-minute elevator pitch. But once you get to know everybody, then that would be boring. We don't want that.

What we did in our group was, we all knew each other pretty well. So we talked about the leads that we had received during the week from other people in the group. Our goal was to get two leads a week for the other members. And so we would share what happened and how we dealt with it and who the lead was. And we would thank the person that gave us the lead. And what happened there was we were able to showcase some of our expertise then, because I would talk about, "Patty referred a first-time home buyer to me and we've been out looking and we've been in multiple offers, we've been through three multiple offers. But we're getting close, I know it." You can talk a little bit about what's going on in the market, talk about your expertise.

Then also, we would highlight one or two members each meeting where you would give a more in-depth presentation. And so, when it came to the real estate time, I would talk about market stats and market conditions, just something that I thought people would want to know about real estate. And each person would have a chance to do that; another way to share our expertise. So, you'll want to decide what your agenda is going to be.

Also, you're going to want to talk about your attendance policy, because that's really important. Like I mentioned, when you go to Chamber, it's not mandatory that you attend, but because of that, a lot of times, you could go a month without attending any meetings. If you're going to network, we want you to be really strategic about it and we want you to be going and networking every week or every month or every other week, whatever it is that you decide is going to be the schedule, and that you show up. So, what do you want the attendance policy to be for your members?

One thing we did is if they didn't come two times in a row, then we would ask them what's going on, in a nice way, but, "Do you want to be a part of the group, or should we be on the lookout for somebody else?" We were very clear with that; we really expect people to show up, because if people aren't attending the group, then you're not going to have people to network with.

Anyway, that is how I would say to get your group started. I know it's a lot, but it's actually pretty simple. You just have to get your core group together and then decide what it's going to be. And then you need to spread the word about your group. Then the other thing you'll probably want to decide is how you guys are going to keep in touch. Is somebody going to man an email lists? Are you going to have a Facebook group? How do you want to do that? What makes sense?

Okay, so next I'm going to open up the line here real quick. If anybody is interested or has any questions about all of that, why don't you go ahead and unmute with \*7, and I'll answer questions before we hop into the next portion of our call? So hit \*7 if you're interested in asking a question.

**Michael:** Hey, how's it going? My name is Michael Amory.

**Alyssa:** Hi Michael.

**Michael:** So, my question is... I'm 30 years old. We started a networking group that was compiled of people under 40, and we had about seven people. Long story short, we kind of just dissolved, I think due to repetitiveness and everyone being new to the business and not having a lot of networking experience under their belt. So, I guess my question is, with that, do you have any basic advice, other than what you've said? I know the direction helped a lot, talking about the meeting attendance and agenda, but what was your experience like generating leads as you started off? Was that slow and then as you put some time and effort in, you saw more come about, or how did that go?

**Alyssa:** Yeah, that's a good question. So, when I think back, I think originally what happened was I did business with the gals in the group, and helped them and their spouses to find homes. And I think once that happened, then of course confidence level went way up on what I could do, and then I started getting introduced to all of their peers and their friends and stuff like that. So that's probably what happened first of all. But I think it sounds like in your situation... Were you running the group, or who was running the group?

**Michael:** Yeah, I was running the group. I guess, just to sound more clear, it was really hard to... I sell real estate. Everyone talks to me about real estate 24/7. So I guess I just don't think about suggesting the cleaning lady. Or my friend does financial advising. I don't sell financial advising, so it was hard for me to get him leads first day. Do you know what I mean? What did you do to educate people?

**Alyssa:** Yeah, exactly. That's a really good point. The thing that I did, and that I forgot to mention here today, that's a big part of networking is not necessarily just the group meeting that we go to, where we've got the six or 10 people there. We need to also set up one-to-ones with the people in the group where we go meet for coffee for an hour or something, and really get to know them and their business. So, this is a really good point that you bring up.

And I'm not dissing you or anything like this, but a lot of times when we go to these groups, we come at it from a place of, "What's in it for me? How do I get more business? How am I going to get a lead from the group?" That's sort of how we go at it. What I would suggest is that instead, you go at it like, "How can I serve these other people that are in this group?"

If you give leads to people in the group, you'll be amazed at what happens. People will reciprocate. It's that law of reciprocity; people want to help you out. If you go to coffee with people and you really ask a lot of questions, get to know people, try to understand who their ideal client is, how you could best refer them, what is something that they offer that might be free or low value that would be an easy way to introduce them to your friends – that's going to really help you. So, you learn more about them.

The other key and side benefit to this, when you spend that time really getting to know somebody and trying to understand how you can help them, is that they then feel heard, and all of a sudden your profile, I guess, I would say, is raised. They look at you differently. They look at you as somebody who really cares about them and wants what's best for them. And then all of a sudden you're going to be in the back of their mind and they're going to refer you. If you haven't ever read the book, it's a super old book, but *How to Win Friends and Influence People* – that's what that whole book is about. That probably would really help you or anybody else who's struggling with trying to figure out how to refer other people, because that really is the key, is giving first.

**Michael:** Yeah. I'll definitely piggyback on what you said, because we kind of dissolved but kept in close

touch. We didn't have our weekly meetings, but we all kind of send business to each other. One of my buddies that does financial advising actually sent me a client. And from that day forward, he's the number one person I'm able to send referrals to. You're right, that is exactly what happens. He sent me a referral, so then I was like, "I need to get him something." And we've just been going back and forth with it. So if someone gives, you're able to just roll.

**Alyssa:** Exactly. That's right. And another thing you could look at, as far as networking would be, for you to network with vendor partners. What I mean by that is, as real estate agents, we give out so much business to people that do work on homes, like lawn and snow and exterior work and deck and cleaning ladies, like you said, and that type of thing. And so, that's also a group you can network with. They don't necessarily have to be in your networking group per se, but they are people that you could have a one-to-one with, learn about their business, and then ask if they'd be willing to reciprocate. It's the same concept; it's just a little different way of going about it. So for you, I would say, get one-to-ones scheduled with all seven of those guys and check in with them, because each of those people could probably send you two pieces of business this year. That'd be like 14 deals for you, if you nurture those relationships. Okay?

**Michael:** Sweet. I'm with it.

**Alyssa:** Okay, awesome. Great. Thanks so much for asking the question.

**Michael:** Thank you.

**Alyssa:** You're welcome. Anybody else have anything that they want to ask before we move on? Okay. So, I want to talk a little bit about some of the resources that are available to you in the Excellence toolkit that you've got on the Inner Circle that will help you with networking. The first one is, "How To Build Rapport With Anyone Instantly". Debbie has a report. I want you to look for it; it's a study guide: "How To Build Rapport With Anyone Instantly". That is in your resources, and that will be a good read for you if you're thinking about networking or trying to generate business from networking.

Also, there are a couple of scripts I want you to check out. There is a script that is asking for referrals in a social situation, and that is page 47 and 48 in her script book. She also has a vendor script, which I just talked about – the vendor idea, and that in the script book is on page 51. Asking your vendors for referrals, page 51 in the script book. Another report that Debbie has that's really good is, "How To Get More Business From The People You Know". You'll find that in the Inner Circle. And then one last one would be "How To Close 98.2% Of The Prospects That You Meet". And again, that's another one on how to build rapport.

Okay, so now I want to talk a little bit about best practices when you do attend a networking group or if you start your own networking group. One of the things is, be a card taker, not just a card giver. So, always be thinking about ways that you can partner with the people you've met. There's this thing called elicitation, and that is that craft of gathering information simply by getting people to talk, and listening. This is a skill. I know a lot of us as real estate agents are good talkers, but the part where we might actually struggle a little bit is in the listening part.

Here's an example of where it really worked for me, and this has happened to me many, many times in my career, but here's just a short example of where listening got me some business. Like I said, I was a

musician, I was hanging out with the band, we were doing a gig somewhere. And I was talking with a spouse of one of the other people in the band. And he felt a little bit out of it, I could tell, because he was an interior and exterior house painter, and everybody else is musicians. So, he felt out of it. I could tell he was uncomfortable, so I went over to talk to him to try to make him feel more included. At the time, I was refinishing my kitchen cabinets myself, and so I started asking him some questions about how do I do it, what does he recommend, what are the best products, all that kind of thing. So I was really picking his brain. And he loved it. He loved feeling like he was important and knew what he was talking about. So, we had a great conversation, I learned a ton. I was able to get my kitchen done on my own, and it turned out good. And it was really fun to make that connection.

But here's what happened that was interesting: He, a couple of weeks later called me to sell him and his wife a home. The weird thing was that his brother is the top real estate agent in our market. And I was like, "Wow, I can't believe he's asking me to do it", when he has his brother, who could obviously work with them. So, when I got together with them, I asked him, "What was the reason? Why aren't you going to work with Barry? What is it?" And he said, "Well, Barry's busy, and I just really felt like you cared about us. And so, we want to give the business to you."

Now, the only reason I could come up with that he thought that I cared about him was because I spent time talking with him at that party. And so, this is where you want to become a listener and you want to ask questions. It's really, really important. So again, if you haven't read that book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, it's a great book because it teaches us how to make other people feel valued. That's really, really important and helps us to get referrals.

Another thing: Don't be talking on the phone when you're at a networking event, if you don't have to. Or texting, or whatever. I know a lot of us are not extroverted and we don't want to be there. And I can tell you that personally, I would rather be home with my feet up, reading a book. That is what I like to do with my free time. But networking is important. I know it works, so I go and I do it. But when I'm there, I'm very, very present. My phone is put away. What I do is I just make a deal with myself that if I can have five meaningful conversations, I can leave. That's what you might want to do too, just play a game with yourself about that.

Another little best practice: Paid networking events are better than unpaid ones. People who pay to join a networking group are generally more serious. Unpaid networking groups frequently are people who don't have any money and they're trying to sell stuff to other people who don't have any money. So, try to go to the paid ones. Even if you have paid \$45, if it's a room filled with 50 to 100 people, that's awesome. You're going to find some people that you can have some great conversations with.

If you see another real estate agent at a networking event, it's okay. Just smile, shake hands, say hello, be as friendly as possible. A strong network has other real estate agents in it as well. And there are things that we can learn from other real estate agents, so don't shy away from that, don't feel like they're your competition. Be friendly and kind to other real estate agents if you have them there, because who knows when you might be in multiple offers and that agent has the listing, or whatever?

The next thing is, take the initiative. Be the first one to follow up with the contacts that you make at the networking group. Give them a call. Get permission from the people when you meet with them to stay in touch. That's all you need at first – just say, "Hey, would it be okay if I follow up with you?" Debbie has a great line; she says...

Periodically, I send out valuable information about the real estate market. Would it be okay if I add you to my information loop?

So, that is a great thing to do. Just get permission and then be the one to follow up and have the initiative. The other thing is, like I mentioned before, networking events are awesome, but the power from a networking event comes in those one-to-ones that you schedule afterwards. So what I do is I will schedule a one-to-one before the event and after the event. That way I can minimize my time in the car. And also, I can keep them short.

Too often when I meet with people out for coffee, it turns into two, three hours, especially if you meet somebody you like. I'm not saying that you don't want to have those conversations, but really, I've got to keep it to an hour or less, so that I can be more efficient with my time. So, if I sandwich them an hour before the event and then maybe 40 minutes after the event, they're going to be wanting to get going, and so am I. But we can at least get to know each other a little bit. So, that's a great way to be efficient.

Next thing: Once you get done with the networking event, you've got to follow up. You have to enter everybody into your contact management program. And make sure that you take some notes about the people, because if you network a lot and you get to know lots of people, you're going to forget. You're not going to be able to remember little things they said. I always jot things down on their business card. In fact, on my business card, on the back, I wrote "Notes" and I just put lines on it. That way when I give it out to people, they can turn it over and write notes on the card, which is really helpful. So, you do that too – just write the notes on the card so that you remember, and then make sure you get all that information into your contact management program.

Another thing that really helps with networking is if you have a plan. So, you really want to keep a list of people that you want to meet. Sometimes you can get the list ahead of time of who's going to be there, especially if it's some type of a seminar or something. You might find out that there are some community leaders that are going to be there that you want to get to know or whatever. So, kind of make a plan of who you want to see and who you want to talk to.

You also could maybe want to create your own events. Now, seminars can take a lot of planning. But, for the gentleman who talked to me earlier, one thing you could consider is, you could do a seminar with your financial planner, the two of you. Maybe you could get one more guy with you and you could do a seminar for Millennials that is about how to maximize your investments in real estate, the stock market, and life insurance, or something like that. And you could do an educational event where you get people in the room and all three of you market to your list and bring them in. And that way you get exposed to other people. Those are really wonderful ways to get in front of people. I made a ton of money doing seminars. So, that might be something that you could consider.

Again, you want to have a marketing plan in place. So, if you meet somebody at the event, you're going to want to decide what happens to this person after the event. If they're not in the market for a home, how do I want to follow up with them? Maybe you just want to add them to your drip campaign that you have for your SOI, where you're maybe sending out your monthly newsletter or whatever you're doing. Or if they're thinking about buying a home, then we want to get them into our home buyer drip campaign, if we have one. That starts to feed them information to show them why you are the trusted advisor that they should have and the obvious choice of the person they should work with. So, make sure you have a marketing plan.

You want to give more than you get. What that means is, go into every event looking to help people. Give referrals. If you are a giver, you will get more than your fair share in return. Don't hang out with familiar people too much. And this is common – all of a sudden we see somebody we know and we want to stand by their side, because we just feel uncomfortable or awkward. Instead, make a pact with that person that you're both going to move on and meet new people in five minutes. You can say...

Okay, I've got to go meet somebody new. Two minutes from now, let's push each other to do it. And then let's get together later and talk about how we did.

Again, make a game out of it. Be funny, have fun with it. Keep notes, again, about the people that you talk with. When you keep notes and when you ask questions, what's going to happen is you're going to make some connections. You're going to hear, "Well, I'm painting the inside of my house", let's say. "Oh, do you have a painter?" "Not yet. I'm looking." "Oh, I know somebody." And then you can connect them. Or you might meet somebody later that you could connect back with someone else.

For instance, last week I was at a golf event and I met two younger gals. They were new to the golf club, they didn't know each other, but they both lived in the same city. So I hooked them up and they are now golfing together. They started a foursome of younger ladies. But they are now people that I'm going to market to for real estate, because I feel like I got to know them a little bit and I helped them out. I helped them meet people they didn't know that were actually right in their backyard. So, look for ways that you can connect to people.

You're going to just ask a lot of questions. Also have fun. If you're at a networking event, try to have fun. If you have fun, the people around you will have fun too. Alright, now, one quick thing about having fun: Don't drink too much. If you're at an evening event, really nurse that drink. You don't want to be that much fun, okay? Save it for after the event with people who aren't your prospects. I know sometimes we might drink a little bit too much just because we're nervous or whatever, but I'm going to say, just really nurse that drink.

And then, show up consistently. Again, this is a common habit that I see agents make. They sign up with great intentions, they attend once, they don't get any business, so they say it didn't work. Just remember that networking is all about building relationships, and building relationships takes time. That's really the secret.

So, some of the things to prepare when you're going to go to the networking event. We just have a couple minutes here. But make sure you bring a stack of business cards – that's important. I've shown up before without any cards – that's a bummer. The other thing is, you could also do a little bit of research. One of our coaches talks about how when he goes to an event, he's got a little note in his pocket and on his note, he says what the average market time is right now, what the average sales price is right now, what the average interest rates are right now. He's just got a few little factoids in his pocket that he reviews before he goes in. And so, when we get that dreaded question always of "How's the market?", instead of saying, "Oh, it's great. Woo-hoo!", like we all do, he says...

You know what? The market is really good. In fact, did you know that in our area, the average market time is under 30 days? I mean, it's wonderful. And this year alone we've already seen 4% appreciation.

Or whatever it is. Just throw out a couple of little factoids, so that you can give them some information, they can see you're a market expert, and it's not that boring, "Oh yeah, the market's great", whatever. One of my agents also turns it around and she says...

Why do you ask? Are you thinking about making a move?

Which I think is really cool. They'll always say, "Oh, no, no, no. I'm not." But you can find out when they might be thinking about making a move. For instance, they might say, "We're not going to move until my daughter graduates from high school." And you might find out that's two years from now. That's a warm lead, right? You want to stay in touch with that person so that you can be their agent.

So, some questions you could ask people, because that's the big thing that I'm about, is asking questions. Here are a few that are good. Number one: "What do you do?", of course. But number two: "How did you get started in that? What was interesting to you in that?" People love to talk about their journey, so ask questions about that. "What's your favorite thing about what you do?" "What do you like best about your job?" "What's your typical day like?" "How did you get into your business?" "How does your product or service differ from that of your competition?" Okay, you guys can make this a little bit more softer. I'm just kind of reading them from a list I have. But really, these are all really great questions, and those six questions probably will be 20 minutes of talking to somebody if you just keep asking kind of follow-up questions, taking it a little bit deeper and really getting to know somebody.

Okay, we've got four minutes. I want a quick run through just a couple of things that I think are really important when you are networking, that are going to help you to be a little bit more charming and help you to have more charisma. And these are all pretty basic, but I think that we forget sometimes these things. And so, I just want to remind you and kind of have you tuck them back in your head.

Number one, eye contact. Eye contact is big. Direct eye contact, especially when you're shaking hands with somebody. This is so common – when people shake hands, they look down. When you shake someone's hand, look them in the eyes. When you do that, people notice. The thing that I do and the trick that I do to make sure that I do it is I look at their eye color. I want to see what color eyes they have. I know it might sound kind of dumb, but it helps me to make direct eye contact with people, and real eye contact. When you do that, you immediately have rapport with people. So, see what you do when you shake hands. If you naturally look down, then train yourself to look up and do that direct eye contact.

Also, don't stare at people when you're doing eye contact. Do the flick, where you simply shift your gaze from one eye to the other when you're talking to them. This gives kind of that look of complete attentiveness, but they're not being stared at. So just kind of look from eye to eye, and that's good.

Another thing, of course, is tilting your head when you're talking to somebody, or listening, because that shows that you are listening and that you're curious. If you tilt your head when you're talking to somebody or when they're talking to you, it does make you appear more curious. And of course, you are curious, but I'm just saying that is a really good thing to do. Of course, nodding your head is really important when you're listening. That's telling people, "I'm following you, I'm thinking about it, I hear you", that type of thing. You're going to want to use your whole body language. So, you want to face the person that you're talking to if you're standing, and lean forward just a little bit, because this makes people feel that you are giving them your full attention, which you are.

And then you want to use vocal reassurances. Active listeners make little noises, like “a-ha” or “ah” or “hmm”. They are engaged. They’re listening to the person that they’re talking to. Those are really simple little things that you can do. Practice them today – the eye contact, flicking, tilt your head, nod, and use your whole body language. Turn toward the person that you’re talking with and respond with some vocal reassurance.

Okay, I know that was a ton of information. I hope I was helpful. If anybody has any questions, you can go ahead and unmute your line – \*7. I’d be happy to answer any questions you’ve got on anything we went over today.

Alright, anybody? Last call. Alright, good. Well, I so appreciate you guys joining me today. And if you have any additional questions, send them in to Debbie and she’ll get them over to me and I’ll be happy to help any way I can with your networking. I hope that you’ll implement a couple of the things that we talked about today, and be on your way to get lots of business from your networking. Thanks so much everybody for joining me! Have a great day!