

# Solve Anything with Dr. Mark

Career Advice  
for the  
Working Class

## Effective networking

**Q:** I have a small three-person tailoring business and am attending local Chamber of Commerce meetings to build business, but other than giving out my business card and collecting the same from others, I find it a waste of time. Is there a science to this or can you suggest a network that might be a better fit for me?

**A:** Like most business people, you'd rather be providing your service or selling your products than developing relationships. It may seem hit or miss, but it isn't. Dr. Ivan Misner is the founder of Business Network International, with more than 5,000 chapters worldwide ([bni.com](http://bni.com)) and is the most successful referral organization in the world. Misner has studied networking for more than 20 years and says that effective networkers either consciously or intuitively apply what he calls the VCP Model.

### According to Misner:

**Visibility is the first phase of growing a relationship.** If you are out of sight; you are out of mind. Visibility is where you and another individual become aware of each other, perhaps because of your PR and advertising efforts or perhaps through someone you both know. You may become personally acquainted and work on a first-name basis, but you know little about each other. A combination of many such relationships forms a casual-contact network.



## Q&A

**Credibility is the quality of being reliable, worthy of confidence.**

Once you and your new acquaintance begin to form expectations of each other—and the expectations are fulfilled—your relationship can enter the credibility stage. If each person is confident of gaining satisfaction from the relationship, then it will continue to strengthen. Credibility grows when appointments are kept, promises are acted upon, facts are verified and services are rendered. To determine how credible you are, people often turn to third parties. They ask someone they know who has known you longer, perhaps done business with you. Will she vouch for you?

**Profitability is the phase of the relationship when it become mutually rewarding.** Do both partners gain satisfaction from it? Does it maintain itself by providing benefits to both? If it doesn't profit both partners, it probably will not endure.

Relationships, especially ones that lead to mutual profitability, take time, so try not to be impatient. The more impatient you act the more you will turn people off. Sometimes you have to kiss a lot of toads before you find a prince. Don't focus on "what's in it for you," instead focus on "what's in it for them." Keith Ferrazzi who is the brand when it comes to business relationships advises you to be generous and resist the temptation to keep score.

Check out Misner's new book, "The 29% Solution: 52 Weekly Networking Success Strategies" and Ferrazzi's "Never Eat Alone." I read both and they have become bibles for me. I just have to work on the 20 pounds I've gained.

**Ask Mark** • Mark Goulston, M.D., is a Santa Monica-based business psychiatrist, executive coach and author of "Get Out of Your Own Way at Work." Ask him questions at [mgoulston@markgoulston.com](mailto:mgoulston@markgoulston.com).

## CAREER BRIEFS

### Maxed out

**F**or many, it's normal to feel frustrated and exhausted at the end of the workday. Others, however, endure stress levels so high they struggle to achieve satisfaction in their careers and even their personal lives. In fact, a study by Northwestern National Life found that 40 percent of workers reported their job as "very or extremely stressful," and 25 percent reported their job as the top stressor in their lives.

### Sick seat

**N**ot getting a lot done at work? You can blame it on your office chair—and possibly be right. A study by researchers at the University of Texas School of Public Health in Houston has found that desk workers increase their productivity if they receive ergonomic training and use a proper chair. The study examined the effects of using a highly adjustable office chair and found that it can reduce musculoskeletal symptoms such as fatigue, pain and stiffness, leading workers to be more productive throughout the day.

### Tech time

**D**espite the rocky job market, the hiring outlook for IT employees remains positive, as 35 percent of IT employers are planning to increase the number of full-time, permanent employees through December, according to a CareerBuilder.com study. "Attracting and retaining skilled workers in the IT industry continues to be a challenge, as 45 percent of IT employers cite that they have positions for which they cannot find qualified talent," says Eric Presley, CareerBuilder.com's chief technology officer.