



NETWORKING SUPERSTAR BLUEPRINT

Turn ordinary conversations
into *extraordinary* opportunities

Introduction

We all know that dreaded moment, when someone asks, “What do you do?” and you have no idea how to sum up who you are and what you do in short form.

So most people do one of two things:

1. Freeze and say hardly anything, out of paralysis.
2. Ramble on, sharing as many details as you can come up with, only to realize the person you are talking to looks bored and disinterested.

This problem may make you feel annoyed, anxious, or prompt you to avoid networking situations altogether-- a huge missed opportunity!

This blueprint will help you LOVE the “What do you do?” moment. Because, with a little strategy and preparation, you'll be able to turn ordinary conversations into extraordinary opportunities- such as premium clients, ideal partnerships, and more. Wouldn't that be nice?

Here's a brief overview of what you'll learn in the following blueprint:

- Why answering, “What do you do?” with a one-sentence statement will lead to networking magic, and how to create yours.

- What a sound bite is, and why you will use them throughout your networking conversations.
- A blueprint of the entire networking conversation, beginning to end, including what your networking partner's questions really mean (not always what you think!).

Ready to Make Networking Magic?

Okay, let's get started!

Step One: Craft Your One-Sentence Statement

Have you ever felt like networking conversations get awkward quickly? Like from the moment you say your professional title or business name?

The reason this often happens is these titles don't accurately describe what you really do- help a specific group of people get a specific result.

Because of this, saying your **professional title**- like "I'm a coach," or "I'm an energy healer," can create more confusion than clarity. Plus, the person you're talking with will have their own any associations (accurate or not) about what your title means.

Answering "What do you do?" with your **business name** can provide a similar effect, bringing up associations with used car salesmen, or old ideas of network marketing, when the first thing out of someones mouth was, "I'm from company X, and I'm going to win your business!"

This is why, in most cases you do **NOT** want to answer with your professional title or business name, like:

"I'm a coach."

OR

"I'm a life coach."

OR

"I work at Company X."

To be ready to answer “What do you do?” in your full glory, you must craft a one-sentence statement.

Your one-sentence is a succinct statement that effectively describes who you are and what you do.

It will not describe:

- Everything you do
- Your full value (*one sentence, and even a whole of book couldn't do that*)
- All of the details of your work, or your ever-evolving business

What it will do is *start a conversation*. What it will also do is help people quickly identify if they might be an ideal client, an ideal partner (think: referral partner), or even know a friend who you might help.

In your one-sentence statement, you'll share WHO YOU WORK WITH (audience) and the RESULT YOU HELP THEM ACHIEVE (ultimate result). See the framework below:

One-Sentence Statement Framework

*“I help [**audience**] get/achieve/experience/feel [**ultimate result**].”*

One-Sentence Statement Examples:

- “I help coaches get more clients.”
- “I help busy mothers get in the best shape of their lives.”
- “I help post-college graduates find their ideal career.”

Now, it's your turn. Write your one-sentence statement using the framework below:

I help _____ [get/achieve/experience/feel] _____.

Remember, your one-sentence statement is simply meant to START the conversation.

So, it doesn't have to be flashy, or explain every detail about your work. As the conversation- and your relationship- grows, there will be time and space for you to share in greater depth. But, for your initial exchange of dialogue, less is definitely more.

Ok, you might be thinking, “I see how this could be helpful, but what happens next? What about when they ask me another question, and I don't know what to say?”

Take heart, people are more predictable than you might think!

Step Two: Be Ready for the Follow Up Questions

Most people will ask you one of the following 3 questions, after you respond with your one-sentence statement.

1. How do you do that? (*most popular*)
2. How did you get into that?
3. How long have you been doing that?

Now that you know people will likely be asking you one of these three follow-up questions, you can be ready. But read on, because what you think you should answer, may not in fact, be the most effective approach.

Let's take a look at each question in more detail...

1. How do you do that?



SUPERSTAR TIP

The HOW in this commonly-asked question can be misleading, and make us think people want to hear about our PROCESS or our TRAINING. However, the details about *how* we work can be hard to absorb and in general is not as interesting for others as it is for us. :)

Instead focus on BENEFITS/RESULTS or your SIGNATURE SYSTEM, and keep it brief, to encourage a back-and-forth conversation.

With this question, it is more effective to highlight the *benefit* not the process. With that in mind, let's look at some example responses to “How do you do that?”.

Like this: I help my students [clients, customers- choose the language that suits you!] become masters of client attraction, through a blend of savvy communication skills, an effective mindset, and fearless self-expression that serves their audience...which attracts not only ideal clients but raving fans.

NOT like this: I use the process of coaching and NLP, and...oh do you not know what NLP is? That's NeuroLingustic Programming, it's really cool. Also, I'm a certified hypnotherapist and I have studied energy healing. So when someone works with me, we usually meet 30-minutes a week for 3 months, unless they do my premium program, which is 45-minutes a week over 6 months. *(You get the idea, lots of details, doesn't really showcase you or tell them the value of your work).*

Like this: My executive coaching clients include change makers from Fortune 500 companies. We focus on growing mastery in three primary areas- One of those

areas is effectively managing their team, so productivity and company morale rises, and turnover problems- which can be very expensive- dramatically decrease.

PRO TIP! Notice how the previous example mentioned a three-step process, but only shared one. This demonstrates the art of seeding curiosity. Mentioning the three steps, but sharing them all outright, gives the other person the opportunity to get curious and ask, "What are the other steps?"

NOT like this: How do I do it? Well, I trained at the [X] institute and bring all of the skills I learned there. Not only that, I'm certified in 8 other kinds of trainings, which also add to my professional toolkit. There are many transformational change processes that I leverage when working with my clients, which makes the work even more powerful.

NOTE: Training can be interesting to hear about, in short form, but notice how the example above took the focus away from benefits/results, so the answer comes off less personal and more technical. They are also speaking about their clients and results in a fairly general way. For instance, what is the transformation, exactly?

Are you getting ideas on how you can answer this question for your own business? Great, let's move on to the next question!

2. How did you get into that?



SUPERSTAR TIP

There are probably many different versions of this story you could tell, so pick the one that best answers the question, while showing your credibility or expertise in the area where you help. Win-win!

Your response to this question can tell how you got started AND build credibility simultaneously. *Check out the examples below to see what I mean...*

Like This: I'm a former professional actress and musician and after years of feeling pulled in multiple directions with my work about what to focus on and how to express myself, I realized my coaching business could house all of my passions while allowing me to help people in a meaningful way. Since then, I've helped hundreds of coaches and creatives achieve freedom and focus through their business.

NOT like this: Well there are a lot of things that inspired me to do this work. I thought I might get into this kind of work when I was a kid. But then, when I was twelve, I thought, I want to do something else. But then, after some soul searching in my twenties, I thought, no I will do that. Except I didn't get into it right away. I got distracted by my relationship with my first husband... *(You get the idea, lots of details, unfocused, not necessarily showing this person off!)*.

Like This: I had the exact problem I now help my clients solve. You might not expect this by looking at me, but I was overweight- by over a hundred pounds- feeling unhealthy and unworthy of good things, and I had tried all kinds of diets and weight loss plans...but nothing worked. Then, after lots of trial and error, I lost a hundred twenty-five pounds- by healing my mindset first- and lifestyle and eating habits second.

NOT like this: I'm not really sure. I grew up in a family of social workers, so therapy seemed like the obvious path. *(Yikes! If you aren't excited about what you are doing, or how you got into it, how can you expect others to be?)*.

What version of your story best positions you as the expert that you are?

Alright, let move on to the last question!

3. How long have you been doing that?



SUPERSTAR TIP

This question can bring up vulnerable feelings, particularly if you are just starting out in a new business or new focus area. So, remember, you control where the focus goes!

As with the answers to the other follow up questions we've covered, having a concise answer, while showcasing the best of you will play to your advantage. Read on for examples and to build yours...

Example (seasoned business owner): Over the past 5 years, I've helped hundreds of creative entrepreneurs achieve greater freedom through their business and work. (Sometimes short and sweet is powerful!)

Example (new business owner): After a lifetime of studying effective communication techniques, and working as a professional actress and musician, I merged my skills to help creative people in helping professions stand out from the crowd, and attract more of their ideal customers, so they can do the work they were born to do.

PRO TIP: *Even if you are starting out in a new field, or a new approach, remember the experience you do have. I once asked this question of a music teacher who was feeling really "new," since he had always taught for an employer, and was now branching out on his own. When I said, "What experience DO you have?" He mentioned how many lessons he taught, and the answer was staggering. He had taught 10,000 lessons! Something worth mentioning that answers, "How long have you been doing that?" You bet! What experience do you have, that you might not be giving yourself credit for?*

NOT this: A reeeeaally long time. (She says with an exhausted look on her face. Doesn't give you the impression she wants more clients).

NOT this: Not long at all! I actually just decided to give this a try when I woke up this morning. *(An exaggeration obviously, but gives the impression that you may not have put a lot of thought into your venture, and doesn't emphasize your experience).*

Congrats!!

You've now learned about the 3 most popular follow up questions after "What do you do?" and you can be prepared with incredible sound bite answers that represent your value and true awesomeness, without confusion and without breaking a sweat!

Now, before we move forward to up your game in the rest of the networking conversation, let's review a few important things:



SUPERSTAR TIP

Notice how all of your responses are relatively short? This blueprint models a principle of speaking in sound bites (*short, concise, phrases*) when you are first building a relationship with someone.

This helps prevent you from sharing more than your listener can process, and it prevents eyes-glazing-over-with-overwhelm-or-boredom syndrome.

By the way, this is the same principle used for effective TV/Media interviews because time is of the essence, so you must get to the point quickly. Speaking in sound bites is key.

So you might be wondering...what happens next?

Well this is the point where the conversation usually takes on a life of its own. Some

conversations will be longer, some will be shorter. Either way, stay focused on communicating in sound bites to encourage back-and-forth dialogue, being curious about the person you are talking with, and being helpful.

For instance, once after the first group of initial exchanges, I was inspired to introduce the person I just met at a networking event to another colleague, who would be a great referral partner for her. She was so impressed by this gesture, that she came back to learn more about what I did, and ultimately became a premium client!

While every conversation is unique, there are common signals- which I call CUES- that will help you know if the person you are speaking with is a potential client, a potential referral partner, or something else. Knowing your CUES is important because these signals help determine what you do next.

Know Your Cues

What happens if two people hit it off in the initial conversation, and then no one takes a next step? Nothing. It's kind of like dating. If you go on a first date with someone, and both people really like each other, but no one makes a move, nothing happens.

Okay, maybe not actually nothing. Often both people create stories in their heads about what happened, like "I guess they didn't really like me." We don't want this situation to happen to you, as you meet your soul mates in business, and this is why CUES are so important. They help clarify your next move, and they are huge part of what turns ordinary conversations into extraordinary opportunities.

In acting, a cue is your prompt to do something. Maybe the lights going up is your cue to walk on stage. Or someone talking is your cue to exit stage right.

In networking, you have several important cues, especially when it comes to growing a relationship with, or possibly enrolling an ideal client. If you notice these CUES, it will be your sign to take an important piece of action.

Top CUES to look for:

1. Heightened emotions (potential client)

2. Interest in a partnership
3. Interest in referring you to a friend/colleague

Let's work backwards, as the second and third cues are often easiest to spot.

The Referral Cue

If someone says, “I have a friend who could really use your help” or something of that nature, that's your cue to take a next step. It might sound obvious, but you'd be surprised how many people, especially people afraid of being pushy or “salesy,” simply don't follow through when interest is expressed.

Ask about the friend, and see if there is a way you can connect with them.

Can this person introduce you over email? This is a great way to get connected and start a conversation.

If they are not comfortable with that, how else can you connect, to potentially move the relationship forward with that person's friend?

The Partnership Cue

Another cue might be someone's interest in partnering up.

Maybe the person you are talking to isn't an ideal client, but they are interested in introducing you to a whole group of ideal clients! One example is someone leads a Meetup full of your ideal clients, and the person you are talking to thinks you'd be a great guest presenter.

Again, you have to follow that cue, by asking what needs to happen next for you to get in to speak. If you don't follow the cue, nothing may result from the conversation.

Here's another example of a partnership cue. Let's say you're a health coach and the person you're speaking with is a massage therapist.

You chat and the massage therapist is really on his health A-Game. But in chatting, you see something that would provide extra value to his clients is support with eating to reduce chronic inflammation (one of your specialties!).

This is a strong Partnership CUE. This person isn't in need of your services on a personal level, but you could add value to their audience. With this particular example, it could work both ways too. You could come up with fun ways to include massage in your programs, or a complimentary massage as a bonus to your clients when they sign up to work with you!

Your next step?

A great next step is a follow up conversation to explore the possibilities. You do not have to have it all figured out to propose the idea of a potential partnership, you don't even need to know that you are for sure going to put a partnership in place. But, if you don't set up a conversation to build the relationship, it probably won't happen. So meet up (by phone or in person), get creative, and explore the possibilities.

The Ideal Client Cue

Now, let's talk about your cue for an ideal client! Sometimes the cues are obvious, like someone says, "I want to work with you. How can I sign up?"

However, other times, it's more subtle. How will you know?

Look for *heightened emotion*.

Specifically, frustration about the problem you solve or excitement that you are someone who provides a solution to this problem. If you get either of these cues, you want to be ready for an offer.

The easiest, most direct offer, especially in the early stages of your business, is a consultation, or introductory session. Be ready to offer this when you get your ideal client cues. Here's an example script for how you can share it.

“It sounds like you could really help you with this. Would you like to set up a 1-1 conversation, separate from this event, where we can explore your next steps to overcome [fill in the problem you help solve]?”

A 1-1 conversation isn't the only action you can take as a result of an Ideal client CUE. There are many others, so it is important to understand that the most important thing to do is take some action that helps the potential client move forward. Do what makes sense for you.

Here are some other examples:

- Invite potential client to a webinar or workshop
- Share a free gift that gets the potential client into your email sequence, and build the relationship via email marketing
- If your programs are well-laid out on your site, you could follow up message with program details, or a link to join or apply for your programs

Any of these approaches can work. To decide, consider what feels right and what might make the most sense for your stage in business. For example, if you are just starting out, a 1-1 conversation is a tried and true way to turn potential clients into ideal clients, because you can talk through their goals and the way your program works, even if your website is in process or you don't have lots of testimonials (yet).

The only thing that doesn't work is not listening to your CUES. If someone could be an ideal client, and you don't take any action, you could walk away with no contact info, but worse yet, knowing you could have helped that person in a profound way.

Stand Out With Uncommon Questions

This guide has prepared you to be ready to answer "What do you do?" because rest assured, if you are networking and meeting new people, you will get asked that.

But, did you ever consider that a lot of people have a negative trigger around being asked, "What do you do?"

This is why you can easily set yourself apart and be everyone's favorite, when you lead with OTHER questions.

Here are ten questions you can ask, besides What Do You Do?

- What kind of business are you in?
- How did you get into your current work?
- What's the biggest thing you're working on at the moment?
- What are you most excited about lately?
- What's the most unique aspect of what you do?
- What's something surprising about you?
- Who are you most looking to connect with?
- What would be the best thing that could happen for you at this event?
- Where else do you enjoy networking? What makes an event a good fit for you?
- Anything I can do to support you?

Can you think of any other fun, uncommon questions to ask?

Follow-up Goodness

Outside of the initial conversation is where incredible relationships- client or otherwise- can really take flight. This is where follow up comes in! I could write a whole book on follow-up (maybe I will), but we can keep it simple for now.

You already got some ideas for follow up in the CUES section. But how quickly should you follow up, and what if you meet someone that doesn't quite fit into one of the CUES categories we previously explored?

Be sure to follow-up quickly while the excitement is still stirring. Of course you can follow up at any time, but why not make it easy? Sooner is better- 0-2 weeks is a good window. Don't get in your head about it, just follow up promptly if you feel inspired to continue the relationship, while the meeting is still fresh in everyone's mind :)

I encourage you to play around with this blueprint and fine-tune your answers to best fit your particular business, audience, and style. Scripts and examples help us get started and learn what's effective; embodying these principles in a way that works for you will truly make you shine.

You've learned a proven approach here. What will make you masterful now is practicing and refining in real-life situations. So, adopt a playful attitude, practice these techniques, and refine your approach as you go. Then, enjoy as every conversation gets easier, more fun, and more rewarding.

Happy Networking!



XO,
Danielle

***p.s.** For more content like this, check out my blog at brandyoubusiness.com*

***p.s.s.** Let's keep the conversation going...connect with me on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)!*

Danielle Louise Ross helps talented coaches and creatives show up as the money-making, world-changing superstars they really are.

A former actress turned writer, teacher, and brand "minimalist," Danielle has coached hundreds of entrepreneurs to attract more perfect clients than ever before- with fewer words, fewer offerings, and more alignment with what they are sharing and selling.

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