

JOE SWEENEY'S
7 NETWORKING SECRETS

Generate More Leads. Make More Sales. Close More Deals.

Joe Sweeney is the New York Times best-selling author of **Networking Is a Contact Sport**. He's an internationally-known speaker and investor in multiple private equity companies.



Joe's passion is studying human behavior. He has used the fields of **sports, business, and military** as his laboratory to better understand why certain people outperform others. He is especially devoted to helping and mentoring young athletes and executives to develop all aspects of their career, business, and life.

If you want to land a job, get better results from your current situation or grow your business, **these 7 Networking Secrets will transform your approach.**



You're about to discover many great stories about how Joe successfully connected with star athletes and captains of various industries by using a simple philosophy:

Networking is about giving, not getting.

The winners will be those that know that the true value of any network isn't just about what it brings, but also how you can share your own gifts, and what you can give that makes a difference in the quality of life for everyone you meet and serve.

Now, here's Joe Sweeney with his 7 Networking Secrets...

SECRET #1

It's Not About You...

Where did I learn 'networking'?

I didn't go to college to learn networking. I didn't take symposiums to learn networking. I learned networking growing up in a family of 12 people. One of the things I learned growing up in a large family was that if you didn't learn to get along with others, and if you didn't learn to watch out for each other's back, you weren't going to be a happy camper. My parents goal and objective seemed simple: to have a baby girl. Well, I have to say they are the most persistent people I've ever met.

They ended up having nine straight boys until the tenth child was finally a girl.



It was a typical Irish Catholic family. I was the youngest of the nine boys, and one of the things I've learned is that in order to be a happy camper, you needed to watch other people's backs. Even though I had to be a natural networker earlier in life, it's still something I do every single day. I'm the ninth boy born in our family, and I had to fight for food and had to fight for attention. My 'Aha' moment in life really occurred in 1966 when my third oldest brother, Tim, was vying for a position on the Notre Dame football team.

Our family was visiting Notre Dame at the time, and I happened to stroll into the office of the head coach, Ara Parseghian. For those of you who don't remember, Ara was the finest football coach in the country at the time. Not only was he on all the football and sports magazines, he was on the cover of Time magazine. In our living room at home, we had a picture of that Time magazine which was framed, and we would look at that picture often. I can't tell you what compelled me that day to run up three flights of stairs to Coach Parseghian's office, but I sure got an impromptu appointment from his secretary.



I walked in, had a nice conversation with the legendary football coach, and I asked him at the right time if he would give my brother Tim a scholarship. When I felt my business was complete, I walked down and ran into my six older brothers who were waiting for me at the bottom of the stairs...

They asked where I was and I told them I was up at Coach Parseghian's office asking for a scholarship for Tim.

They didn't believe me, so I escorted them into Coach Parseghian's office and they met the legendary coach.

What really hit me (and my 'Aha' moment) was walking back and having my brothers high fiving me! What I realized was that **networking is a place where you go to give and not get.**

At that moment, it became crystal clear how much better you feel by helping others and thinking of others, instead of yourself.

Why is networking such a timely issue today?

If you look back over the last several years, we've had economic ups and downs. Regardless of what business/industry you're in, we have all have been impacted by the economic swings.

Any time that we have an economic downturn, we have a tendency of pulling in. What I want you to do is reframe what you're doing and what you're experiencing, because now is the time where you really need to **expand and reach out.**

I think all businesses today are looking at their bottom lines. I'm currently on 7 boards of directors and we've gone through line by line with each company that I'm involved in trying to figure out how to cut costs. That's a good temporary solution, but in order for companies to really prosper, we need to focus on the top line and that means getting out, **expanding our network** and **really connecting with our customers again.**

SECRET #2

The 3 Things Your Product or Service Needs

Why is this networking process so important?

Why is it so important to **ask, listen, act**, and then **believe** and **receive**? It's the formula for success. When you study the formula for success (whether you are selling a product or creating a service), all of us are looking for three things...

We want to create a product or service that is:

- **highly desirable,**
- **uniquely obtainable** and
- **economically irresistible.**

If we're all honest with ourselves, we'll admit that we don't often have all three.

That then creates the question: **How might I obtain all three of these?** Well, my answer is networking and getting really close to your customer.

If you get close to your customer and **ask good questions, participate in active listening**, and then **act on this**, you'll create a product or service that's highly desirable, uniquely obtainable and economically irresistible.

Think about your business, the products and services that you offer, and ask yourself this question:

How do I create my formula for success?

How do I create my product or service to make it highly desirable, uniquely attainable, and economically irresistible?

SECRET #3

4 Simple Steps... (but simple doesn't mean easy!)

In order to help you gain clarity and direction, we've developed a networking process that sounds very simple to do, but that doesn't mean it's easy to execute. It's sort of like losing weight. Losing weight is really easy. All you have to do is exercise more and eat less. If it were so easy, why does a third of our population have an obesity problem?

These concepts, as simple as they are, are difficult to execute.

Here are the 4 steps (and 4 quick stories) that will help you:

Step #1: Ask

When you ask, you've got to ask with a mindset of giving. Ask creatively, ask persistently, ask outside the box, and most importantly, you have to figure out how to make asking fun.

Years ago, I was asked to attract the finest emcee in the country to come to Milwaukee to host an athletic event. My board of directors asked me to recruit and bring Bob Costas to Milwaukee.

Keep in mind, this is before the internet and Google, so I simply found out that Bob was from St. Louis, and I called his assistant, Pam. Pam kindly rejected my offer to have Bob Costas come to Milwaukee. So I did a little bit of research. I realized that Bob Costas was in love with this delicacy from Milwaukee called a bratwurst, and also the special secret stadium sauce that was made at Milwaukee County Stadium.

So I had this idea of how might I attract Bob Costas to come to Milwaukee.

You know what, I'll let Bob Costas tell you...

*"I have to say that Joe Sweeney, one of the driving forces behind this dinner, was a most persistent and persuasive man. He calls and says, 'Can you come to Wisconsin in early November?' I say, 'Gee, I'd love to, but I'm very busy.' The next day, a **shipment of bratwursts from County Stadium arrives in St. Louis.** I'm trying to resist. I haven't committed yet. The next day, a vat of secret stadium sauce arrives. A couple of days after that, a pleading letter from Governor Tommy Thompson. I'm just about at the edge, and then Sweeney calls and threatens to give Uecker my home phone number. Fine, fine."*



So, what the Bob Costas experience taught me was that **“No” doesn't always mean “No.”** “No” might mean no today. It might mean no at your price or at your tone.... but no doesn't mean no. Another thing that I learned from Bob Costas is that when we put this together, everybody seemed to have won. The participants that evening won. Bob told me that it was one of the finest events he ever attended, and everyone seemed delighted by the evening. So when you can ask creatively, persistently, and ask with a mindset of giving, in the end, everyone wins.

Do you have a client that you are struggling to connect with? What one thing can you do to get yourself in front of that client? (Remember some of the examples from the Costas story, and see if you can make networking fun and try to apply that to your situation.)

Step #2: Listen

When I talk about listening, I'm talking about listening to others, listening to the marketplace, and listening to your gut. People think networking is about talking a lot. **In fact, it's the complete opposite.** It's all about listening. And it's more than just listening... it's about **active listening**. While you're actively listening, make sure you are present for the other person. Remember, God gave you two ears and one mouth. Use them in proportion.

Do you have a tough client or prospect who's asking one thing, but wants something else? (One of the ways to use listening in this example is to circle back and pick up the phone and call that prospect or client to find out what they're really asking.)

Step #3: Act

Many of us do a good job of asking and listening, but we don't act. Part of the reason we don't act is this thing called fear, and I think the key thing about action is that **action cures fear**. There's a book written by Wayne Dyer called *Excuses Begone*, and in the book, Wayne interviews thousands of people and comes up with thousands of excuses of why people don't act, all of which are basically rooted in fear. In the book, he took the thousands of excuses and narrowed them down to the 18 most common excuses used.

What's universally common of all 18 excuses is that **not one of them is true**. So it's really our choice to **live in fear or to live in faith**. When you take action, you improve your connections and relationships.

What 3 things have created fear for you over the past 12 months that have stopped you from taking action? Identify them and create action steps to help you overcome the fear. (For example: If you're afraid to go to a networking event, pick up the phone and call a friend and ask them to go with you.)

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

Step #4: Believe & Receive

You need to develop faith that **when you network and truly give to others, it'll come back**. It's a universal law. I want you to think about when you gave to a client and received far more than you ever expected. I want you to reflect on that. What did you learn from that? What did that experience teach you? If you reflect on these examples, you'll know that networking is **a place you go to give and not get**, and it will pay dividends tenfold.

SECRET #4

Your All-Star Competitive Advantage

The question is always asked in business:

How do we differentiate ourselves from our competition and other people?

I think the answer is through great networking, and it **starts with doing your research on your customer, your client, or your prospect**. If you look around today between Facebook, LinkedIn, and all the information available online, you can obtain some pretty good information on prospects and customers.

The next step is to be able to drill down and **understand what their passions are**, because people will tell you those. If you don't know, you can pick up the phone and ask people, or do some research. It might be that they love wine, art, golf, etc... I think a key step is to send them something that helps resonate with their passions.

People will say: **"In business, it's the little things that mean a lot."**

My good friend Harvey Mackay even takes it a step further and says, **"Little things mean everything."**

That's the critical point to help you differentiate yourself from other people. When you're networking with people, keep in mind that everyone you connect with in every one of your touch points are really asking the same few questions (either consciously or subconsciously)...

They are asking:

#1) Do you care for me? Do you really care for me?

#2) Can you help me?

#3) Can I trust you?

If you approach networking as a place that you go to give and not get, these three questions are all answered with a YES.

SECRET #5

The Networking Flip

Becoming a successful networker is more than just handing out business cards and shaking hands. Powerful networking requires a **commitment to building relationships**, and to learn ways you can **help others fulfill their desires and help them reach their goals**.

The common mindset of networking is: I've got to go get something. How many times have we gone to a networking event or a party and said, "We need to get something. We need to get a business card. We need to get a new client. We need to get new customers," and then we leave the networking event and say, "Boy, this networking thing doesn't work at all."

How about asking yourself questions such as:

How can I ask good questions?

How can I give to others?

How might I serve others better?

The real networking flip, and the secret of real networking, takes place when you change your mindset from networking is a place where you are going to get something to **networking is a place you go to give**.

Let's take a look at one of the greatest networkers of all time: Mother Teresa.



She was a great networker, but **she always networked with a mindset of giving**. On the other end of the spectrum, I think one of the consummate takers in our corporate world is Enron. Mother Teresa has actually been canonized as St. Teresa of Calcutta, and I think some of the Enron executives will still be in prison for some time.

Before you go to your next networking event or your next party, I want you to think about this:
What are three things you can do to service others, to ask good questions, and to figure out how you might be a giver and help others?

SECRET #6

Be the Host of the Party (even if you're not)

What we want to do is help you to **break that mold of negative networking**. You don't want to be chased down at a party by that person with a business card. What's worse is you don't want to be that person chasing people down with a business card...

We've developed a very simple and proven process to help you become a more effective networker. How do we break the mold? At the next party or networking event that you go to, I want you to do something that will totally transform your networking.

I want you to pretend that you're the host.

What does a host do at a party? A host tries to ensure that everyone feels welcome and everyone's taken care of. Even when you're not the host, pretend you're the host and try to introduce people and make introductions. Make everyone feel comfortable. What will happen is that when you pretend you're the host and you start connecting people, there will be an energy that's sent out, and that energy is contagious. People will see this. They will feel this. People will start gravitating to you as the "host" of the party.

I've been asked at times, "Wouldn't the host of the party feel bad if you pretend you're the host?"

I've got to tell you, when I see someone pretending they're the host and introducing people and making everyone feel comfortable, that's a relief to me as the actual host of the party.

Where is the shift or our networking flip?

Take the focus off yourself and put it on others.

That's what a great host of a party does.

I want you to sit down before your next networking event and get yourself in a mindset that you will be the host. It will be your goal and objective to make people feel comfortable, and then reflect on what your takeaways were after that event.

How did that make you feel? Were you a more effective networker by pretending you were the host versus being a guest?

SECRET #7

Find Your Wingmen & Wingwomen

One of the key ideas found in *Networking Is a Contact Sport* is finding the right people to help us achieve our goals and to give us valuable feedback and insights.

All of us need some form of an accountability group in our lives. The term **wingman** is an Air Force term where the lead pilots have a wingman on both sides to watch their backs. In his book *Never Fly Solo*, my friend Lt. Col. Rob 'Waldo' Waldman explains how "no one performs at their highest level without the support of equally skilled partners". We need wingmen to watch our backs and to make sure we're on track.



Leaders of large corporations have something called a board of directors. When they get stuck on an issue, they go to their board to get clarity, confidence, and a road map to move forward.

All of us get stuck at some point in our careers. We need wingmen or wingwomen to watch our backs and help give us gain clarity and be accountable. Find people who seem to play in areas that you find to be work. If you're introverted, I'd ask a wingman or a wingwoman who is an extrovert, someone who could help you connect with others. Again, I think part of the formula for success is to **surround yourself with good accountability partners who really watch your back.**

Have you developed your own board of directors, your own accountability partners?

Here are my questions for you:

#1) Who are your wingmen and wingwomen? (Do you have them? If not, why not?)

#2) Who could you ask to join your inner circle?

BONUS

How To Pass Your Final Exam

I'm going to present a little challenge to you. I want you to reflect for a bit on the ups and downs and the things you've done throughout your career and your life.

If you talk to people who have been there, they will tell you that it's really about the relationships that they've built. It's those special moments in time that they've shared with colleagues, employees, friends, and family.

Great networking can give tremendous meaning to your career and your life.

At the end of your life, I'm convinced we're going to have a final exam. It will be a one-question test. It's not a take-home test and there won't be any do-overs.

I think the final question we're all going to be asked is this:

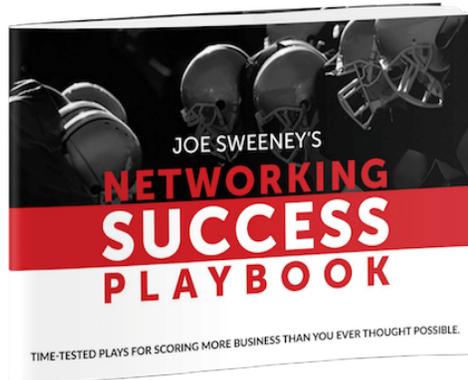
Were you a giver or a taker?

Did you give more to life than what you took?

If you practice these principles, I guarantee you will pass your final test.

FREE DOWNLOAD

Get Instant Access to Joe's Networking Success Playbook



In addition to the Networking Success Playbook, you'll also receive:

- **The Sweeney 22** --> a great way to build relationships and learn more about your prospects
- **5-10-15 Game Plan** --> develop routines guaranteed to increase your business
- **Bird Dog Chart** --> identify who you can help move the needle and vice versa

Available Now at

JoeSweeney.com/Playbook

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