



Are You Falling Into This Green Networking Trap?

By Carol McClelland, PhD

While I participated in a group brainstorming event recently, I had a unique opportunity to observe a networking dilemma that traps a number of our members.

- **Are you one of them?**

The Setting

Thirty people attended the idea party. About ten people had the opportunity to give a two-minute description of who they are, what they do, and what they wanted to brainstorm. Each brainstorming round was four minutes long. Scribes recorded the ideas so the person could listen to the ideas without having to write them down.

- **What would you say if you had two minutes to describe yourself to a group of intelligent, creative people who were there, ready and willing, to help you?**
- **How effective do you think you'd be?**

The Key to Success

How each person presented their two-minute description was a distinct predictor of their takeaway results.

Those who gave a crystal clear description got more ideas and more of the ideas were useful and actionable.

Those who were unable to give a crystal clear description got muddier results. They received ideas, but those ideas weren't necessarily usable or relevant to their situation.

The reason for the difference? When people don't understand what you are striving for, they can't help you.

- **What kind of results would you receive based on your two-minute description? Would you get targeted ideas you can use or muddy ideas that you can't act on?**

It's important to note that this same scenario happens in every networking exchange you have. The clearer you are about who you are, what your goal is, and what you are looking for, the better your results will be.

The Bottom Line Discovery

- Take time to get as clear as you can about your green vision.
- Prepare for networking opportunities ahead of time.
- Evolve your pitch as your situation evolves.

The Benefits of Your Clarity

- You'll receive better tips, suggestions, resources, contacts, referrals, and job offers.
- By better I mean on target, directly relevant to your needs.
- You'll put forth the image of being clear, concise, passionate, and enthusiastic about your interests.

How to Prepare for a Green Networking Exchange

Long before you arrive at your meeting or talk with someone by phone, spend time thinking through the following questions.

- What's the best way to describe who you are in this situation?
- What's your big vision of where you are going in the green economy?
- What are you going to ask for in this situation?

Here is an example of how you might prepare for your next networking event. Keep in mind, your description of yourself, your vision, and your goal may be completely different than this examples. Use this as a guide to get you started. Don't feel restricted by this format.

- **I'm currently working as a salesperson in the pharmaceutical industry. I'm talking with people as I explore green careers.**
- **When I was young I worked in construction. Now I find I'm passionate about the green building industry and exploring options within that green industry.**
- **I've done some research on the green building industry. Can you answer a few questions I have?**
- **OR, I'm interested in talking with people in these areas x, y, z within the green building industry. Can you refer me to contacts or professional associations within these areas?**

Try your main points out to a trusted friend or colleague to make sure they hear what you are trying to say. If they are confused, take time to learn what's confusing. Keep editing your description until you feel comfortable with how you are presenting your situation.

Green Career Expert, Carol McClelland, PhD, is the author of *Green Careers For Dummies* and Founder and Executive Director of **Green Career Central**, an online resource center with easy-to-use tools, coaching programs, and training events to help professionals, students, and career counselors make sense of the green economy. Download our current free report to help you navigate the green economy at www.greencareercentral.com

Green Career Central – An Online Resource Center

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