

# Networking for Results

THE POWER OF PERSONAL CONTACT

## Interview with The Business Card.

In this week's edition, noted networking expert Dr Gnu (A.K.A. Michael Hughes), interviews marketing specialist B. Card.

Dr Gnu: First off, can you enlighten our audience on your background and how you came to be known as The Business Card, one of the powerful marketing resources?

B.C.: Interesting question Dr G. It all started back in the dark ages. Hunters and skinners didn't have a means of staying in touch. I started out as a slate slab, etched with their mark and cave coordinates and the rest, as they say, is history. Homo sapiens now had not only the ability to separate himself from primates but could identify the competition. Granted, they couldn't carry many, but without pockets it didn't much matter.

Dr. Gnu: What do you see as the turning point in the growth of your marketing power?

B.C.: I would have to say the printing press. Once it was created, everyone had access to my potential. Even though most people still couldn't read, the small size, lightweight design and low cost combined to become an instant winner, even with only drawings to describe the holder's value. I quickly became the personal marketing resource of choice.

Dr. Gnu: Moving into today's world, what do you see as your biggest marketing asset?

B.C.: In one phrase, I'd say *staying power*. In some circles I'm known as the "Viagra of Personal Marketing". When I'm used effectively, I can act as a long term reminder of both personality and potential value. Even months after an initial contact, I can stimulate memories of enthusiasm, trust and professionalism. In fact my newer, electronic format has the ability to be used in a myriad of keeping-in-touch options.

Dr. Gnu: So with all this going for you, is there a downside for you?

B.C.: Unfortunately there is. I can think of two main issues that derail my chances for marketing success. Firstly, I'm often put into play without creating the proper foundation. Without solid personal or professional context, my information is perceived to be of little value. Building a sense of connection first, delaying my arrival until I've been invited, or stimulating a request for my appearance will avoid this shortfall.

Secondly, I can't tell you how many times I've been relegated to a bottom drawer without so much as a second glance. It seems there's a built-in resistance to following up on all my hard work. I can't stress strongly enough that time is of the essence if I'm to leverage my marketing power, especially if I've been properly introduced. I can, and do, have an incredible impact when implemented within twenty-four hours of receipt.

Dr. Gnu: One final question. What are your thoughts on the social networking phenomenon, its impact on face-to-face networking and the use of the Business Card?

B.C.: As Mark Twain remarked "Rumours of my death are greatly exaggerated". The increased connectivity created by the technology explosion has only served to heighten the importance and value of personal contact. Even with my many electronic formats, I accept that a personal exchange has maximum power and impact. With so many opportunities facing us, we rely more on personal contact as differentiator and respect even more its power to accelerate relationships.