

HOW TO NETWORK TO WIN FUNDS FOR YOUR BIODIVERSITY CHARITY.

1. Identify some really inspirational and intriguing project or problem as the basis to request meetings. Although it must be genuine, this need not be the only or the main project for which you seek support; the job of this first proposition is to stimulate relationships and conversations.
2. Find a list of well-connected people within the geography you have access to. This will be far from your final list, so it does not need to be perfect. Such lists are regularly published in all kinds of media. The board of a well-respected business group would also serve. Figures associated with some high profile science, cultural, or environmental organisation should be added to this.
3. Write to a number of central figures on that list requesting just 30 minutes of their time to seek ADVICE. Make it clear you are not soliciting funds nor will you seek any second meeting. You cannot break such a commitment, but your contact can in due course waive it – and usually does. One in four of your requests on average will be met.
4. In the ensuing conversation, spend the MINIMUM time detailing how wonderful your project or organisation is and the MAXIMUM time listening to the advice offered. At the right point in the meeting you will seek your host's guidance as to other figures with whom you might meet. They may demur that they cannot easily think of anyone. You will in response offer them your own list as a prompt. Almost inevitably this will stimulate a stream of thoughts as to further figures which you might approach.
5. These further names will enlarge your contact list and you will make further overtures. Where possible use each friendly and successful conversation as a stepping stone/ introduction within your next set of meeting requests. However be careful to observe any sensitivity in using someone's name. In each conversation try briefly to find some subject of shared interest beyond the business actually discussed. This makes for a better, more rounded relationship. Moreover it is just polite, more 'human' and plain fun.
6. If you do this widely and well enough, you will soon establish a pool of well-placed champions, advisors and door openers with whom you can now work to move forwards on your donations strategy. You should be able to tell from each conversation who is interested in helping your organisation and in what way.