

Network Infiltration:

“The Secrets To Becoming a
Welcomed Member of The Most
Exclusive Networks in The World.”

A Black Paper From SovereignMan.com

PREFACE

I must admit that I feel a little strange writing this text. I consider myself to be an investor and entrepreneur; not a networking guru... I spend most of my time scouting for business and investment opportunities around the world, and about an hour or so each day writing my daily letter at sovereignman.com about the things I see on the ground.

But given the numerous requests I received in my daily e-letter to write about my own experiences and how I have become well-networked with interesting and influential people around the world, I decided to take some time off from my usual activities to put this text together.

(Please note, I wrote this report *very* quickly, so don't send the grammar police after me.)

NETWORK INFILTRATION

As the saying goes, “It’s not what you know, it’s who you know.”

People say it for a reason-- it's true. If you think about your own life you can probably cite numerous examples. Where did you meet your husband or wife? Come up with the idea for your best investment? Land your job? Find your house? Learn about your favorite vacation spot?

Chances are, there are some important events in your life directly tied to the influence of another human being... and it's a wonderful thing. Human interaction affords us the opportunity to learn from others' experiences without having to go through the same mistakes.

Consequently, it certainly stands to reason that the more people we know, the more we can learn and the more opportunities we will be exposed to.

As we get older and go through life, we naturally tend to accumulate more experiences and acquaintances; our networks grow, even if they just consist of friends and neighbors.

Granted, there is great value in knowing and having relationships with a lot of people—and there are methods out there that teach concepts for what I call *traditional networking*: getting people to like you, getting their friends to like you, etc. These traditional networking models are usually written for salesmen as a way to generate more customers.

This report, however, isn't about traditional networking. It's about what I call **Network Infiltration**. Both types of networking result in an expanded network of friends and associates, but I see traditional networking is an evolutionary process, while network infiltration is a quantum leap forward in the quality and value of relationships and all the associated opportunities.

Traditional networking makes it so when I visit my hometown I know a lot of the people there. Those relationships make me popular and well-liked. I guess you could say I'm “connected” there, but everything I've ever been able to obtain through traditional networking pales in comparison to the deep relationships and rich experiences obtainable through network infiltration.

Just in the last six-months, for example, I have done business with a President and ambassador, lectured on entrepreneurship and free market economics to Eastern European college students, flown a Soviet stunt plane, visited a Hollywood celebrity at his home in LA, and made several lucrative, invitation-only private investments.

It's been an interesting and profitable six months, made possible by my network.

At this point you might be thinking, "Easy for you to say, you're Simon Black... and I'm stuck in a cubicle..." Put those thoughts out of your mind. I firmly believe that absolutely anyone with his head on straight and heart in the right place can master network infiltration.

The purpose of this report is to outline the strategies and tactics for becoming a Master Network Infiltrator.

Pay attention, take action, and the next six months of your life might just be the most interesting and profitable you've ever experienced...

My Story

I dislike talking about myself and my background. I'm a savagely private person (hence the pseudonym) but I'm going to open up a bit here.

At some point in the rearview mirror of my life, not too long ago in a land far, far away, I was an instrument of war for Uncle Sam. Though my job description at times fell in the 'interesting' and 'exciting' categories, I reached my breaking point with the US-led invasion of Iraq.

At that point, as gung-ho as I had been in the past, I knew that I had to find something else to do with my life than be an expendable pawn of a corrupted and misguided foreign policy. It probably helped that, at the time, I happened to be reading these two books called "The International Man" and "Crisis Investing."

I was a pretty sharp guy in my early days in the military; I started a small business on the side as soon as I was commissioned, and by the time my discharge paperwork had been processed several years later, the business had done quite well.

And so, 5-years ago, with a stash of savings and passive income tucked away, I set out on an adventure.

I started in Panama... first meeting some successful young attorneys, real estate agents, and developers. They introduced me to their friends, their friends' friends, etc., and eventually I was having drinks with some of the wealthiest people in the country.

They let me in to their deals, cut through the bureaucracy, and opened a lot of doors for me that turned out to be incredibly interesting and quite profitable.

In time, this same formula was repeated on five other continents, as well as in circles that are generally considered to be 'impenetrable': political elite, Hollywood, large corporations, modeling agencies, etc.

Each of these networks presented some incredible opportunities that enriched my life, both personally and professionally.

In fact, when I step back for a moment to make an accounting of my entire life, I can literally point to specific individuals who had a strong hand in particular successes--someone who introduced me to a large investor, someone who told me about an incredible property deal, someone who taught me the ropes in a foreign country, someone who came to the rescue when things got hot...

Even now, as I look out the window of my condo overlooking Shanghai's Pudong business district, I am reminded of this same principal; I'm living in a beautiful, spacious 1-bedroom flat that's attached to a 5-star luxury hotel... so along with the fancy address, I get 24-hour room service and about 200 people that cater to my every whim. Life is pretty good.

And how much am I paying for this amazing place? Actually, not that much—about 50% less than the lowest discount online rate... and I'm getting a great deal simply because of who I know.

Defining terms

I always like to be clear and define terms. A true network is not an organization like the Chamber of Commerce or NAMBLA, but rather a loose, informal grouping of like-minded individuals and entities who share a mutual respect, trust, as well as some core characteristics: wealth, power, fame, knowledge, passions, or even some sort of professional association.

Examples of networks might be 'New York City restaurants' or 'Hollywood elite' or 'Professional dancers.' Each of these networks is comprised of members—the members can be individuals (a famous chef), entities (a Hollywood studio), or even smaller, more specific networks ('Tango dancers').

Each of these networks has a small percentage of members that are highly influential—the movers and shakers of a network. I call these powerful members 'nodes,' and collectively they form the center of gravity of a network.

Let's look at a practical example:

Professional football (yes American football...) could represent a network. There are literally thousands of members of the network— players, teams, officials, coaches, agents, executives, sports reporters, advertisers, etc. But of all of these members, there are a handful of highly influential people and entities that are centers of gravity within the network—these are the nodes.

In our professional football example, a node could be an individual—a famous player, a winning coach, a flamboyant owner, a shrewd agent, the NFL commissioner, etc.

A key node could also be an entity or organization—last year's championship team; the player's union; the Hall of Fame; etc.

Each of these nodes is clearly a cut above the rest of the network members in terms of power and influence—they dominate their respective areas and maintain close relationships with other nodes.

If you understand the concept of *nodes*, then the art and science of infiltrating a network will be easily acquired. Doing so is not complex, there are simply some very basic principles that must be adhered to.

Before telling you how to do it, though, I am going to make a few assumptions and clarifications:

1) This is NOT Simon Black's quick start guide to internationalization and expatriation. This paper is strictly about **Network Infiltration**.

2) Everyone is a grown adult (in maturity as opposed to the legal limit), completely responsible for his/her actions. If you are the type of person to blame everyone and everything else for failure, you will get nothing out of this report.

3) Everyone is willing to take action. Do not expect to sit on your hands and let the world come to you just because you have a great idea. Nobody owes you anything. If you want results, you have to take action, and in some cases you may have to invest in the relationships.

4) At the end of the day, infiltrating the best networks in the world will give you one thing... OPPORTUNITY. What you do with that is up to you and you alone. A lot of people have a poorly conceived notion that if they could just get next to the right person, their entire life will turn around... as if another human being somehow possesses divine powers, or that a strong network is a panacea for a string of poor decisions.

Get real. If you downloaded this report to learn how to meet a wealthy investor that will bail you out of a bonehead mistake, you have already wasted 5 minutes of your life by reading this far.

5) I designed this paper to be short and actionable, to give you practical insight on how to infiltrate any network without any verbose pontification. Do not expect any Dale Carnegie, self-help, NLP, philosophical offshoots-- this content is practical and very tactical. If you want to learn how to generate more customer leads and grow sales, go buy a copy of *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. If you want to take a quantum leap and rub shoulders with the A-Team of any network, keep reading.

Step 1: Find the Network, Node and Entering through the Open Door

I'm not a terribly patient person; I like to achieve what I set out to do very quickly, and this is why traditional networking models don't work for me—they are the equivalent of working your way up the corporate ladder... clutching and clawing rung by rung just takes too much time.

I'm interested in taking a quantum leap in the quality and value of relationships, as well as enjoy the rich experiences and profitable opportunities that come with those relationships.

Don't get me wrong though, network infiltration does require effort and, frequently, money (especially if you're trying to crack exclusive networks). It isn't easy, but it can create experiences and opportunities that traditional networking could NEVER deliver.

Gaining trust and access to a network is an investment. Like all investments, you should be judicious.... Bold, but judicious. The bottom line is, you can infiltrate any network, but it requires commitment.

Because of this, it is critical that you choose your target network carefully. By carefully, I mean you need to make sure the network shares your interests and that you genuinely want to spend time with the people in the network.

TIP: If you're having trouble identifying the network you're interested in, you might find it easier to start with an individual. It's often easiest to identify a specific individual who you're interested in, and then determining which networks they are in. That network then becomes the target network. Often, the individual you are thinking of will be a 'Node' in the network... a center of gravity.

It's also critical that you consider what you will bring to the group. At the end of the day, your acceptance by the group is going to be determined by the value you bring to the table. [I'll discuss this more later and give you specific tactics to help you become a valued member of even the most exclusive groups.]

Whatever network you are trying to infiltrate, chances are there are plenty of other people who want to do the same thing; after all, people want to be around other successful people with the same interests. High-level contacts are accustomed to being approached all the time—cold calls, emails, fan clubs, etc. These are conventional tactics that rarely deliver results.

If you want to be on the inside, the first thing you need to do is probe the network to find which *node* has an open door... then do whatever it takes to go through. Normally, this will require some sort of investment on your part.

Let's go back to my football example to give you an idea of what I'm talking about.

The first thing we need to do is identify the nodes and figure out which node maintains an open door with the outside world. Again, a node in this case might be a team, a handful of individual players, an owner, the NFL commissioner, etc.

Which of these nodes has an open door to the outside world? Generally, teams and players both have open doors—they both seek charity, sponsorship, and endorsement deals, and they routinely work with organizations on these types of deals.

Tip: Open doors are simply ways that ‘Nodes’ within a network typically interact with the outside world. Often, this is done through the normal course of doing business. The Open door is typically the only reliable way to enter a network and often involves “paying to play”. It’s absolutely critical that you understand that **paying to play is an investment**. In my case, the best investments I’ve ever made involved getting through the open door.

Granted, the open door to the NFL is going to require you to invest in the relationship, which could range from a \$25,000 speaking fee to \$10 million stadium naming rights.

Ideally, the investment you make gives you multiple opportunities for interaction with the node, increasing the chances of building a relationship. Let’s look at a few more examples of this:

A lot of people revere legendary speculator and author Doug Casey. Doug is the chairman of Casey Research, one of the finest financial research and publishing companies in the business, and their publications have a large and fiercely loyal following. Doug personally has a huge fan base, and there are a lot of people that want to get on his radar.

About two years ago, his company offered an exclusive product for subscribers—an insider’s investment club called the Casey-50 that had the promise of extraordinary investment opportunities. It wasn’t cheap—the Casey 50 cost around \$30,000 and at the time was the most expensive product in the financial publishing world. Not only was it expensive, it was exclusive—only 50 members would be admitted.

Naturally, for anyone who wanted to get on Doug’s radar screen, paying entry into this club was a great way to do it. In this case, Casey Research was the node in a small network of successful speculators and financial writers, and their open door was buying membership in the Casey 50.

Of course, entering through the open door via The Casey 50 didn’t guarantee permanent access to the network, but it provided the opportunity. What those 50 individuals did with the opportunity was up to them. If they had been armed with the tactics in this report, they certainly gained a lot more than the great investment advice shared with the rest of the group.

Tip: Physical presence is an absolute must; you cannot make an impression or demonstrate that you are serious by sending a post card or email. Go where your network goes—whether that means a private club, conference, award ceremony, etc.

Attorneys, though often highly litigious, value-detracting, scum-sucking Neanderthals, can serve a useful purpose—they are in the business of knowing people (and then suing them). A good attorney has a little black book that is more valuable than his entire practice. A great attorney doesn’t need one.

Highly influential attorneys are often nodes in a network, whether it's a particular industry like Wall Street or Hollywood, or an overseas location like Nicaragua or Singapore.

When I'm visiting a foreign country for the first time, particularly a small country where I don't know anyone, I want to get networked as quickly as possible... and to do this, I find the node who has an open door. Sometimes I can squeak by with a luxury real estate agent, but more often than not I find the most well-connected attorney I can.

Since there's not exactly a friendly referral service available, I have to figure this out on my own. Here's what I do:

I always book a room at the nicest hotel in town. At a minimum, this suggests that I have money and should be taken seriously. Then I will literally pull out the yellow pages equivalent and start calling various law firms in town.

I explain to the receptionist that I am a foreign investor and am interested in meeting with some of the partners and associates at the firm about making investments in the country.

This is the first interview. If the receptionist is an idiot, I hang up and move on—bad receptionists indicate that the firm doesn't care about initial impressions, and that they are probably poorly networked. If the receptionist understands me, I should then be transferred to one of the firm's attorneys. This is their second interview.

- If the attorney's English is anything less than excellent, I take a pass. It may sound like I'm just being an 'arrogant American,' but English proficiency is a strong indicator of international experience; plus, it is simply the language of business around the world.
- I ask a few basic questions about the firm's experience with investment transactions—if the attorney gives me the audio version of 'deer in the headlights,' I take a pass.
- Most importantly, I usually say something like, "OK, let's meet at your office on Thursday at 3pm. I'm staying at (insert fancy hotel). Please send a car at 2:30 sharp." If he starts giving me directions or tells me to take a taxi, I take a pass. Again, this isn't a matter of arrogance—VIP treatment is a strong indicator that the firm is well-connected and experienced. If they don't have their own car service, they're not a top-tier firm.

I will usually meet with at least 3 law firms, and the meeting is their third interview. In smaller countries, normally at least two attorneys will attend an initial client meeting, at least one of whom is a partner. If the firm kicks me down to its lowest entry-level associate, it is an indicator that they are not experienced dealing with foreigners, and I end the meeting quickly.

Assuming that I end up with the right people, I steer the meeting towards their own experiences and insider knowledge... what do they think about the real estate market/stock market/local politics/etc. Who do they know in the government? What relationships do they have with law firms in other countries?

If I find them to be intellectually and philosophically aligned, that goes a long way with me.

Then I tell them a bit about myself... that I am an international investor and entrepreneur considering some opportunities in the country. I make broad statements about significant accomplishments from my life, but leave out most of the details to keep them interested. Everything I say is 100% true, but as I've found in the past, less is more. This entire process is designed to **differentiate** me from the crowd and is absolutely critical to Network Infiltration. I'll discuss this in greater detail later.

Most importantly, I then offer to leave a nominal retainer on the table as a down payment on future services. Ordinarily this ranges anywhere from \$1,000 (Nicaragua, Egypt) to \$5,000 (Ukraine, Cayman Islands), and serves nothing more as a token indication that I am very real and very serious.

You would be surprised how far a few thousand dollars, when combined with the proper set up as described above, can go-- usually within a few days the partner has invited me over to his house for dinner where he introduces me to all of his other friends—the bank president, the local assemblyman, etc., each of whom is an additional node in the network.

To be clear, I am drawing a big distinction between the value that an attorney adds for contacts, and the value an attorney adds for legal advice. Some people out there are absolute crooks, or simply incompetent. Just because he's well connected and powerful doesn't mean his legal advice is sound. But in this case, I know what I'm paying for—access to the network.

But let's say you're not trying to make contacts in a small country somewhere—rather you are trying to break into a particular industry. Consider the country music industry as an example—untold thousands of people descend on the scene year after year hoping to realize their dreams of becoming a singer/songwriter.

They all employ the same tactics... go to gig after gig, sometimes stalk industry insiders, and wait around Starbucks to be 'discovered.' My suggestion? Make an appointment with the most high-powered lawyers you can find in Nashville, leave some money on the table, differentiate, and let them do the matchmaking.

Step 2: Differentiate

Once you have gone through the open door by establishing contact with a critical node in a network, your chances of being noticed have improved dramatically... but they are still not guaranteed.

Successful men and women meet new people every day. What sets you apart from everyone else?

The most important part of getting noticed in network infiltration is **differentiation**. You absolutely have to find several ways to differentiate yourself from everyone else. Personally, I believe this principle holds true in other aspects of life as well—in business, wooing members of the opposite sex, building an investment portfolio, etc.

When you do what everyone else is doing, you're only as good as everybody else... and as such, you will be treated just like everyone else. The goal is to get on the inside—so when you communicate with the node, you have to differentiate yourself from everyone else.

What makes someone different? Hey, at the end of the day we all put our pants on one leg at a time, and no one is a unique and special snowflake... but attitude, skills and experience count. I list below a couple of sure-fire ways to differentiate yourself from the crowd and make your target network attracted to you.

TIP: You're not necessarily trying to demonstrate that you're different from other members of the group. Rather, you're trying to show that you are different from the general public. In fact, in some cases differentiation is done to show that you are similar to members of the network.

1) Confidence

You might think that in order to be a successful networker, you have to be outlandishly gregarious, over-the-top people person... or a prototype alpha-male.

This is a total myth.

Some of the most well-networked people I know have incredibly subdued personalities, and I can think of several who are certified wall flowers.

The most important thing you can do when trying to infiltrate an exclusive network is be real. If you try to adopt a fake personality in order to be accepted, people will see through you in an instant.

Confidence sells-- people believe in those who believe in themselves. No one wants to be stuck in a room with other people who feel like they don't deserve to be there. Stop wondering if you're good enough. Know you are, and start acting like it.

Don't make apologies because you don't have the same measures of success or fame; everyone has been on this earth for some period of time and has acquired certain

skills and experiences. Your own skills and experiences may not be the same as other members of the group, but they are nonetheless just as valuable.

You must act without arrogance, but in such a way as to suggest that you view yourself as a peer, not a groveling fan. It is not a question of success or experience; it is a matter of attitude. If you act in this way, you will be viewed as a peer by the node.

From time to time I remind myself of the story of Sen no Rikyu, a 16th century Japanese tea master; Rikyu was born into a lower class of society during a time which class structure played an important role in society.

In fact, lower class peasants and merchants in feudal Japan were actually required to bow at the presence of a passing samurai, which made up the ruling class. Any impertinent peasant who refused to bow very quickly had his head lobbed off by the samurai's wakizashi blade.

Though he was an outsider who barely knew how to hold a sword, Rikyu was accepted and respected by the warrior class because of his unparalleled mastery of the Japanese tea ceremony. He rose to prominence and eventually became a close advisor to Toyotomi Hideyoshi, one of the most powerful and revered feudal warlords in Japanese history.

I like Rikyu's story because it underscores this important point-- remaining genuine and confident in the mastery of your own art, no matter how trivial it may seem, engenders respect from others.

Lacking confidence and trying to suck up by playing a fake will get you decapitated.

2) Exotic Titles

Titles can sometimes go a long way in differentiating yourself from the masses—MD, JD, CPA, etc. are all helpful (assuming you're not in a room full of doctors, lawyers, and accountants). Exotic titles are better, though. Honorary Consul, Baron, Chief, and 'His Excellency' open more doors. Believe it or not, you can pay for these too.

3) Interesting Experiences

Having some interesting stories to tell can be another big differentiator between you and everyone else. Interesting people like other interesting people, so be prepared to tell your stories with confidence and enthusiasm. Remember, 'interesting' stories are atypical and don't involve boring drivel about things that everyone has done or knows about. Talk about things you've done that nobody really knows about, or things that people fantasize about.

What if you don't have anything particularly interesting under your belt? Or the last thing you can remember was during the Carter administration? Get on a plane and give yourself an adventure. Travel experiences in unusual places always make for

good stories—go to Burma, Cuba, Iran, Mongolia, Yap Island, Suriname, the Republic of Tonga, Antarctica, etc. Don't go to Paris and expect that to count.

4) Success

Being successful is utterly common in certain networks and helps to differentiate members of that network from the general public. If you're trying to break into a network of successful people it's very useful (and sometimes critical) to have some successes under your belt.

Of course, like the Tea Master to the Samurai, your success can be in a completely different area than other members of the Network. In fact, my experience tells me that it's to your advantage to be equally successful, but in a totally different area than other members of the network. In this way, you can demonstrate that you are similar enough to belong, but different enough to be interesting.

Tip (with a warning): A great way to differentiate yourself is to carry an aura of mystery about you. Frankly, even bringing this up is dangerous because if you cannot pull it off, you'll appear untrustworthy or arrogant rather than fascinating. But, IF you can do it, people will naturally be drawn to you.

5) Unique, useful skill sets

Having unique skills is core to differentiating yourself from others for a variety of reasons; first, it obviously sets you apart from everyone else. Second, your skills could end up being quite valuable to the rest of the network... this not only gets you noticed, it puts you in high demand.

Frankly, I think everyone should be developing new skills throughout their entire lives—learning languages, improving financial literacy, learning how to change oil, basic farming techniques, etc. But you should also spend some time determining what are the outstanding needs of your network, and then learn the skills that satisfy those needs.

Beyond being useful, having a skill can be interesting. For instance, one of my friends is a great Salsa dancer. If you've ever tried dancing salsa you have no doubt it's a skill. To me that makes him a more interesting person. It also so happens that this guy has also studied *ninjutsu* for years. A salsa-dancing ninja? Now that is interesting!

Step 3: Add Value

For many networkers, the goal of making new contacts is solely to hijack each individual of whatever value they can provide without any intention of returning the favor. I call these people 'insurance salesmen'—they might put on a good face, but in the end they are only interested in generating leads for their business, selling something to the network, and moving on.

This approach doesn't work in the long run, and the critical nodes that you have invested in will run away from you like a scalded dog if they get the impression that you are trying to sell them something.

Regardless of the strength, success, and power of the particular node you are communicating with, s/he has a problem... most likely many. The more problems you are able to solve, the more likely you will be able to add value.

I look at value as the currency of karma-- If you bring value to the table, other people who add value will be attracted to you. If you remove value from the table, people who add value will shy away from you.

It's almost hard to find people providing real, honest value anymore, whether it is in the form of labor to produce a good, or in the form of ideas that create efficiency.

I clearly remember reading an article one day, it might have been in *Businessweek* or one of those magazines, during late 90s. At the time, the NASDAQ was succumbing to irrational exuberance, spiraling to new heights every day that we have never seen since.

The article in question was a collection of interviews of the 'brightest young minds in America;' each of them had a common vision-- go to Stanford, drop out after 2 years, start a dot-com, and take it public.

I remember thinking to myself back then that the market had to be in a bubble-- because CEOs (and future CEOs) had absolutely no desire to create value for other businesses or consumers. Rather they simply wished to do the minimum amount necessary to suck out a few million dollars for themselves.

This model made a lot of people very, very rich. Until it didn't anymore.

At the end of the day, individuals and organizations who aren't producing anything of value get left behind or go bankrupt. I believe this lesson applies very firmly to network infiltration: if you are looking to get connected simply to gain from what you perceive other people can give you, then they probably aren't going to let you in to their circle.

Demonstrating value can take a lot of forms; primarily, every interaction you have within that network must show that you (a) respect the network and it's members, (b) are respectable yourself, and (c) that you can be trusted. One of the best ways you can do this is to be a problem solver.

In the normal course of a conversation, find out what problems your node has which might reflect your particular strengths. Then suggest, very casually, how easily you could help solve the problem.

Adding value by solving a problem could involve just about anything—introducing them to a friend of yours, planning a group trip, reviewing their investment portfolios, participating in a charity event, helping them lose weight, cutting through bureaucracy, etc. Offer assistance in areas where you have strengths and the node needs assistance.

As an example, I would steer a conversation with a node towards politics and the economy, and discuss how I believe rising taxes and exchange controls are coming to the United States. The node might respond with something like “Yeah I have been thinking about that for a long time, I really need to park some of my savings in a foreign bank somewhere.”

To this, I would casually reply, “That’s a sharp idea... (shrug my shoulders) well, if you’re interested, I can get you in touch with a few banker friends of mine in Hong Kong that can probably help you out.”

This exchange would demonstrate significant value on my part, as well as highlight my strengths to the network. The idea is to not be too pushy or overenthusiastic. If you are too enthusiastic about helping out, you will most likely be regarded as just another service provider, a glorified caddy. Overenthusiastic helpers are the same as groveling fans, and the relationship with the node will never blossom.

You have to bring up the idea of assistance like you would with your neighbor—it has to come from a position of strength, peer to peer. If it seems like you are intentionally trying to ingratiate yourself by doing favors, this approach will not work.

Monitor your attitude—be casual about providing assistance, especially at first. Your offer to lend a helping hand should be as nonchalant as offering them a cup of coffee... one lump or two? want me to put you in touch with my friends in Hong Kong? It’s the same attitude. You have to make them feel like helping them out is completely effortless for you.

The node may or may not accept your help. If they do not accept, don’t push the issue, you will find another opportunity later. If they do accept your help, you had better come through. This is another key element of adding value-- reliability.

Quite simply, always do what you say, and don't make promises that you cannot keep. This may be among the hardest principles to stick to, especially for a motivated, risk-taking entrepreneur... but if you expect to impress upon someone your ability to add value, they have to be supremely confident that you will be able to deliver.

Flexibility is also a crucial attribute that goes a long way in demonstrating value. I define flexibility as the ability to operate without a guaranteed outcome. It is the hallmark of a risk-taking entrepreneur and says to the nodes in your network that you can (a) keep up, and (b) are fully capable of taking care of yourself. Nobody wants any unnecessary burdens just because they are dealing with you. This is especially crucial at the beginning of a relationship.

Tip: One of the biggest differences between those that live extraordinary lives and the rest of the population often comes down to one simple thing: Those that live extraordinary lives are willing to act without guaranteed outcomes. Taking action without 100% certainty that 'X' will happen suggests that you are both flexible and capable of taking risks.

Lastly, do not ever ask for anything in return. Focus on adding value, not squandering it. Humbly wave off their gratitude—remember, helping them out is no big deal, it's effortless for you.

If you have appropriately applied these two principles—differentiation and adding value, the node will regard you as a very interesting and helpful person who is in his peer group... in which case the chances are quite high that you will hear these magic words:

“I have a friend you should meet.”

Step 4: Seek additional nodes in the network

At this point, you have made initial contact with a critical node through the open door, differentiated yourself from the rest of the people vying for attention, demonstrated that you are a peer, and taken steps to add value. The node has built up a degree of trust and respect for you, so much that he is willing to introduce you to others nodes in the network.

Now the process starts over, except that the open door has been provided to you by the initial node. You will need to differentiate yourself and add value to the new node just as much as you did with the initial one—it will be easier this time because, simply by introducing you, the initial node has vouched for you.

In a relatively short period of time, you will be able to meet several different nodes in the network; with each introduction, it will be easier and easier for you to differentiate yourself and add value simply because so many people in the network already know you. You will have become a known entity and a *bona fide* member of the network.

Step 5: Use your bullet

As you eventually become a member and associated with several nodes, you will have built up substantial credibility with the network. They regard you as interesting, valuable, and even powerful within the network because of your close relationships with other nodes.

These relationships are investments, and they require maintenance. Once you are on the inside, you cannot disappear indefinitely... you need to demonstrate continued presence and sustain the ties that you have built.

Maintaining your position also requires you to follow the principles of value karma—be a creator of value and people will be attracted to you. The moment you start asking the network for something is the moment that you will begin to lose position and status.

What? I can't ask for anything from these highly valuable networks?

Well, you can. But, you need to understand that when you ask for something it diminishes you a bit in the eyes of others. And, just because you avoid asking for favors doesn't mean you won't benefit from your inclusion in the network.

In my experience, once you're in the network opportunities abound. They come organically and in all forms, social opportunities, experiential opportunities, and opportunities to profit financially. You don't need to ask for opportunities because they'll be thrown your way constantly if you've done everything else right. The only real problem you'll have is choosing when and how to use your bullet.

I remember the first time I'd infiltrated my way into a very exclusive network. I'd done everything right and added a lot of value to several nodes in the network. Opportunities were being thrown at me from every direction. People wanted to hire me, others wanted to partner with me, and one wanted to invest in me.

At the time I was lucky enough to have the foresight that my next step was very important. I was excited that so many people who I had great respect for were coming to me with opportunity. But, I felt like I had just one bullet and if I fired it, I'd better make damn sure it hit the target or all the work up until then would have been in vain.

When you choose to pursue one of the opportunities presented to you, you need to realize that you are cementing yourself in a particular role within the network. For instance, if I'd accepted a very lucrative and interesting employment opportunity offered to me, I would have firmly established myself as a subordinate to this particular member of the network. Other members, seeing me employed by this node, would also begin to see me as subordinate to that member.

Perhaps it sounds crazy, but I can assure you that after infiltrating a network, you have only one bullet in your metaphorical gun. You have only once shot to position

yourself within the network. Once you pull the trigger and commit to an opportunity, your rank will be established.

Furthermore, you need to be very careful only to commit to an opportunity that you are very confident will be an unqualified success. If you choose to partner with a node in the network and it isn't a clear victory for all parties involved, your status will be dramatically reduced and future opportunities will diminish.

TIP: As opportunities come your way, don't jump on the first thing that sounds interesting and profitable. Think bigger picture. Instead of being a highly compensated employee or service provider of a key node in the network, you could be his business partner and confidant. The only difference may be your careful use of your one bullet. Don't waste it!

Back to the beginning

I hope that, if I have only accomplished one thing at this point in the text, it is that you understand the three most important concepts of network infiltration—finding the node with the open door, differentiating yourself from everyone else, and consistently adding value.

These steps can be applied to almost any situation; I would argue that if you are working your way up the corporate ladder, differentiating yourself from other employees and consistently adding value will get you noticed and promoted faster than others. If you are wooing members of the opposite sex, differentiation and adding value will greatly increase your chances of success.

These steps take practice, but they can be learned and applied by anyone. It all starts with selecting the right network. In the beginning, and especially if you don't have a lot of free time and capital, start small... don't go after Wall Street billionaires right off the bat when there's probably a local network of angel investors and entrepreneurs that you can infiltrate much more easily.

Determine which network you can add the most value to initially, and which network can eventually add the most value to you. After all, at the end of the day we want to infiltrate networks to eventually realize a benefit—this is why I consider it an investment when I 'pay to play' in order to get through the open door.

For instance, I paid to play in Managua, Nicaragua with a \$1,000 retainer fee to get through the open door; that retainer created an opportunity for me to differentiate myself and add value with key nodes among Managua's elite. They let me into their deals and cut through the bureaucracy for me, eventually making/saving me over \$50,000. Not a bad return.

The more exclusive the network, the more time and money you will likely have to invest to get through the open door. Start small if your resources are constrained, and it will give you the opportunity to practice the steps. If you are more established and ready to experience a quantum leap, you may want to consider some of the open doors available to you right now.

What you can do right now

Action is the difference-maker. Remember that. If you're ready to take a big step forward, seek an open door as if your life depended on it. When you find it, go in bold and make it count.

While you're seeking the open door, keep in mind there are things you should be doing right now to prepare yourself for when it comes. Network Infiltration requires good preparation to be successful.

Start with answering these questions then taking action:

What is it in your experience or background that makes you interesting?

What can you do right now and in the near future to make yourself more interesting?

What skills do I have that can add value to others in the networks I might infiltrate?

What skills should I start acquiring that would make me both interesting and valuable to members of target networks?