

Youth Entrepreneurship Guides



Why smart youth entrepreneurs develop a network: Creating connections off-line and following up

The missed opportunity

A typical student, Nancy, was invited to attend a leadership panel session. It was a big event as only a few students from each school in the district were selected. She had a great time, met several new students, took good notes...and forgot all about the session one month after it finished.

If you've ever had the opportunity to attend a leadership event or conference, chances are great you gained some great skills and ideas and met some good students.

But chances are even greater...that you didn't stay connected with the students after you left.

Why would you want to develop a network?

The most successful people in the world are not only smart, hard working and dedicated to what they love doing...but they also maintain a network. It's not just what you know but WHO you know and who knows you.

This goes much deeper than the surface level of how many Facebook friends or social media buddies you have. It's about how many of them are willing to help you. Or better yet, how many of them you have shared resources with.

For example, you probably come across announcements for summer programs, scholarship opportunities, events, festivals or a host of other activities that other young people your age are interested in. How often do you share this information with people outside of your three closest friends?

Most adults don't practice this habit. So it's probably not shocking if you don't either.

However, if you start sharing these tidbits with your friends in your network, you will soon gain a reputation as a "in-the-know" person.

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And guess who will probably receive information back from others about opportunities that may interest you!

Warning:

It's not always a direct favor that comes your direction. In other words, if you tell Friend A, B and C about a free summer week long camp - they might not be the ones directly to share an opportunity with you.

However, it will come! Because you are establishing yourself as a valuable resource and setting yourself apart - in a positive way - from other young people

Get started!

So I encourage you at your next event to reach out and gather the contact info of three students you didn't know prior. You will want to share your contact information as well. However, make sure it's approved by your parents first.

The real challenge will be ...once you get home..you have to follow through. Make sure you update your social media accounts, reach out to them via email or take some specific action step that will help you stay continually connected.

Here's a sample contact info gathering to get you started:

Name

Email

Facebook

IM

Cell Phone