

Getting to Know (Like and Trust) You

By [Stephen E. Seckler](#)

Earlier this year, I participated in a speed networking exercise through my business networking group ProVisors. The mantra at ProVisors is *Know Like Trust Refer*. This exercise was one of the many ways we have invested time in ProVisors meetings in trying to learn more about each other so we can get to know each other on a professional and personal level.

The goal, of course, is to get to know each other in a way that makes us feel comfortable giving referrals. While most of us seek out competent professionals when someone we know have a need that we cannot fulfill, in truth, it is much easier to identify someone we like and who we trust.

Since by definition, a competent professional has a skill set that we lack, often our decision to make a referral is not based on our professional assessment of that individual's skill. Do we really know that someone is a good CPA if the Internal Revenue Code puts us to sleep?

Getting to know more about people on a professional and personal level is the way to build our network and ultimately our referrals.

What I really like about this exercise is that it lays out in a long list, potential areas inquiry.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive and in some instances, you will have to gauge whether it is appropriate to probe into people's personal lives. Asking people about their hobbies or where they vacation is relatively neutral. Inquiring about their religious beliefs or even whether they are married and have children may be a little more sensitive. Also, it is unlikely that you would actually ask many of these questions when you meet someone in a business setting. Rather, these are things to get to know about people in our networks.

In short, this is an excellent list of questions to stimulate creative thinking about how to get to know other professionals. While that deepens our relationships with people and gives us clues about how to be helpful, ultimately, our businesses will grow as well.

SPEED NETWORKING DRILL DOWN RULES AND SAMPLE QUESTIONS*

In business and in relationships, remember that the most important thing is trust. (Life's Little Instruction Book) - H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you'll do things differently. - Warren Buffett

RULES:

- You will be assigned Randomly into Breakout Rooms with 5 people per Room.
- Step 1: One person volunteers to take the hot seat. They provide just their name, company, and profession.
- Step 2: Each of the remaining people ask questions of the person on the hot seat one question at a time. The questioners will “drill-down” to learn more about the person being questioned. The “drilldown” should last roughly 4 minutes per person. The questioners can choose from the questions that follow on pgs 2-3 or come up with others that will encourage answers that allow you to get to better know the person on the hot seat. PLEASE keep your own time and DO NOT GO OVER!
- Step 3: Repeat Step 2 until everyone has been asked questions. Be sure to allow everyone to participate as the questioner for each “hot seater.”
- We will switch groupings, using the Zoom random Breakout Rooms feature. You may get put in the same group with someone. Just dig down deeper please.

CAVEATS:

- Do NOT filibuster. This is NOT your time to give a 5 minute speech. This is the time for you to answer the questions concisely so the folks asking the questions can learn what they want to about you so that they may begin (or continue) to “know, like, and trust” you in order to be able to refer to you.
- Do NOT be afraid to interrupt the person answering questions if they go on too long. This is about what the Questioner wants to know, so do NOT let the “Deponent” get away with hogging the floor.
- Do be considerate. Each person using too much time eats into the next person’s time.
- If we can all do this quickly enough, we might be able to get in three rounds, even if the third round might be only 3-4 minutes per Deposition, I mean Interview.

Sample questions to use in the drill down exercise (these are suggestions – DO NOT limit yourself to these):

RESUME / BACKGROUND

- What is your business/practice area/industry focus/periscope level of clients served/how you add value?
- What is your Sweet Spot?
- Do you have any past professions?
- What other businesses have you worked for?
- How did you choose your current profession? Current company?

PERSONAL

- Where were you born? Where did you grow up?
- Where do you live now?
- Do you have a family? Siblings? Spouse? Children? How many? How old?
- Who are your heroes? Who are your villains? Get “Political” only at your own risk.
- Tell us about your favorite birthday story.
- What Religion are you? What is your favorite holiday tradition?

BUSINESS

- What resources do you call on to meet your client needs?
- Who routinely calls on you and brings you in to serve their client needs?
- What do you see as your primary business challenges?
- What is your typical or ideal client?
- Describe a recent success?
- Describe a recent failure?
- Does your practice focus on a particular industry? Which one?
- Tell us about the last project you headed up.
- What is one of your most important traits?
- What are you currently working on?
- Have you collaborated with another ProVisors Member? On what?
- What type of professionals would you like to meet?

EDUCATION

- Where did you go to school (college; law school; etc.) and what degrees do you have?
- What did you study in college and how did (or did not) that get you to where you are now?
- What did you major in?
- How did you choose your major?
- How many times did you change your major?

HOBBIES & INTERESTS

- What hobbies or sports do you like to watch? Are you interested in? Do you still participate in?
- Where is your favorite vacation spot?
- What is the best movie you have seen in the last year?
- What is your favorite TV show to binge watch?
- What do you like to do when you are not working?

MEMORIES & INFLUENCERS

- Who has been the most influential person in your life?
- Who is the person who has had the biggest impact on your career?
- What is the best thing that has happened to you in the last 12 months?
- What TV show or movie from your childhood has had a profound effect on your profession, life philosophy, or world view?

GIVING BACK

- What charity do you support and why?
- How do you give back to your community?
- What is the first act of charity you can remember as a child?
- If you have \$1 million to donate, to which entity would you donate it, and why?
- If you could do one thing to change the world next year, what would it be?

MORE ABOUT YOU

- What is your greatest strength and why?
- What is your biggest weakness? How have you tried to overcome it?
- What is your favorite saying or quote?
- What do you do on your commute to work?
- What was your favorite childhood toy or activity?
- What is the story behind your name (first, middle, or last) or nickname?
- What is unique, surprising, or unusual about you?
- Share one principle or phrase by which you live?
- Besides friends, family, pets, and good health, what else are you grateful for?
- What did you want to be when you were a child?
- Why are you not doing THAT today?

RANDOM

- If you woke up tomorrow as an animal, what animal would you be and why?
- If you could live anywhere, where would it be and why? What is your favorite color?

- If you could meet anyone in history, who would that be?
- What three items would you want on a desert island?
- What three songs would you want to listen to on a desert island?
- What three wines would you want to drink on a desert island?
- Name one material item that you want, but do not currently own.
- Is there any reason, other than the money, that you do not own that yet?
- What is the craziest thing that you have done (that you can tell a ProVisors Group)?
- Describe one of your best/worst days.
- What is something that you would like to be remembered for?
- What do you want it to say on your Tombstone, once you are gone?

JUST FOR FUN

- What was your first or favorite concert experience?
- What was the first musical record/album you purchased?
- What is your favorite movie line and what does it mean to you?
- What is your favorite song and why?
- What was your favorite Halloween costume?
- If you could be a fly on the wall for any moment in history, what would it be and why?
- If you could have dinner with any historical figure, who would it be and why?
- If you could meet one fictional character, who would it be and why?
- If you could change places with anyone, who would it be and why?
- What was the dumbest or most embarrassing thing you did in high school or college?
- What would be your theme song or walk-up song?
- What should I have asked YOU that would have gotten a GREAT answer, but I missed it?

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