

Good morning, good afternoon, or good evening everyone!! I hope that all of you have been well and that you are all getting super hyped for our 2016 State DECA conference! I know that I sure am excited for it, especially after spending the last few days with my favorite people (team 66) in the sleepless city of Seattle in order to attend the Western Region Leadership Conference and to plan for our SCDC. While attending the Western Region Leadership Conference, we had the opportunity to take part in multiple various workshops presented by leaders from around the western region (i.e. Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Mexico, MONTANA, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming) as well as one presented by the always joyful California state officer team.

Throughout all of the workshops that I attended, a select few stood out to me including how to boost how to boost your confidence, how to maximize your college experience, and how to own your competition. However, the one that left the biggest mark on me was '5 Tips To Winning People Over' taught by Krista Patterson, the creator and owner of Northwest Paddleboarding. Her workshop was essentially some very enlightening tips on how to create a great network which will impact your future in amazing ways. Please continue reading to hear what all she had to say and how you can make your own winning network.

First and foremost, she pushed the effects that social media has on networking and how easy it is to meet new people. Obviously, you all have your own social media whether that be a Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, or in my case, all of the above. Through social media, you can follow various businesses or professionals in your area or even simply following all of the kids that go to your high school is a great way to build that platform. I mean, you really never know who is going to invent the next best thing since sliced bread or who is going to take over the largest mass marketing company in the western hemisphere. LinkedIn is really where it's at because of how professional it makes you feel. It is by far and away the most effective and popular business oriented social media site around right now and there is no sight of its reign being impeded on. The other significant business site is BNI, which is a business network in which you can refer people in your network to others and vice versa. This site is perfect for finding people around your community and state that share common entrepreneurial morals as you! I guess we do live in Montana, but regardless, there has to be someone in this state that has a computer.

Now to jump into the actual 5 ways of winning people over, she gave truly amazing ways to both extend your business reach in life and to make people love you in the world. Remember, being the caretaker of the group has its significant advantages ;). First off, you want to become genuinely interested in the people that you are around. Show that you are interested in what they have to say and pay attention. People also love it when you ask questions about whatever they are telling you about. Now, I know that it is truly hard sometimes to show interest in your bff's story about their new significant other while you are single as a pringle but if you simply pay attention to what they are saying, it will make a huge difference to them. Second, always remember to smile and to have a positive attitude on the world. While working in a coffee shop local to Bozeman, I have learned to always walk around with a smile because (1) it cheers you

up simply by smiling and (2) it creates a very joyful and bright environment for the people around you. Also, nobody likes a debby downer so please always stay positive. The third thing that she informed us was to remember names. Think about how awkward it is when someone walks up to you and knows your name but you swear that you have never seen their face in your entire life. Just the fact that they remembered your name from whenever you two met in your past makes your day and means the world. It is very hard for some people to remember names but it truly does mean so much to people when you do. Fourth, she informed us to be grateful and appreciative. There is a reason for why your parents always told you to say please and thank you. There is a reason for why you always leave a tip and for why we send thank you cards after christmas. It is because people everywhere truly loves being appreciated and loved. Others remember you when you show that you are grateful for them and this is why you want to make sure you always show your appreciation. Lastly, LISTEN. Just like how your parents always told you to listen to people as they speak. There isn't really much that I can say about this one because it is so outrageously simply. Look the speaker in the eyes (not like in a staring contest) and nod your head every minute or so to show that you are still paying attention. Listening is one of those little things that just means the world to everyone.

Your network is your net worth. This is the single biggest impactful sentence that I took away from her workshop however, as for the biggest impactful sentence that I took away from the entire conference? It's not who you know, but **who knows you**. Building your network really does take time but if you do these 5 simple steps above as well as utilizing social media for your advantage, you will find a successful network. Always be down to earth and realize that we are all human. Nobody is better than you, or worse than you, unless you are Chuck Norris. The other very important thing is to always give great first impressions. Those start in the handshake, when you make eye contact and give a strong, firm, three pump shake but please, please, please **DO NOT MISS THEIR HAND**. That makes for a very, very awkward withdrawal of both hands and then neither of you know what to do. Just follow the five simple steps to make people love you which will build your network for you.

I can not wait to see you all at the state conference and I truly hope that you enjoyed what I had to say about my favorite workshop in Seattle. Be legendary and always stay sweet.

Tristen Bennet  
Your MT VP of Membership