



Photo by Ulf Buchholz

# The Entrepreneurial Linguist Judy Jenner

judy.jenner@  
entrepreneurial  
linguist.com

Judy Jenner is a Spanish and German translator in Las Vegas, Nevada, where she runs Twin Translations with her twin sister. She is also the vice-president of the Nevada Interpreters and Translators Association. She hosts the popular translation blog, Translation Times ([www.translationtimes.blogspot.com](http://www.translationtimes.blogspot.com)). You can also find her at [www.entrepreneuriallinguist.com](http://www.entrepreneuriallinguist.com).

## What's Her Name Again?

As small business owners, we need to work constantly to expand our business and grow our circle of business contacts and acquaintances. Web 2.0 and modern computing have made the online portion of this very easy—no more lost business cards, no more forgotten names or faces, thanks to frequently updated websites and current pictures. While this is a wonderful development for those of us—most of us—who have trouble remembering names and faces, the question remains: how do you remember people's names and faces at in-person networking events? You do not want to be the person who gets introduced to someone three or four times before you remember his or her name. This is embarrassing, especially if the other person does not know who you are. It makes you seem a bit unprofessional and uncaring. This forgetfulness is certainly never intentional, but you are doing yourself and your business a disservice by not trying to improve your memory skills. Making contacts, remembering who those contacts are, and recognizing them the next time around is essential.

Personally, I am good at remembering names, but I put a lot of work into it. While I understand that others might have difficulty with this, there

are certain instances when not remembering names or faces is simply unacceptable.

The good news is that you can improve your memory, and you do not need the mental processing power of a supercomputer to do so. Listed below are a few tricks and tips that should help you remember names and gain confidence.

- Try to find out a thing or two about each person you meet. The more you can associate with a person, the better. This can be difficult if you shake the hands of five people and do not have the chance to talk to anyone, but try and memorize one or two details. For instance: Erik is tall, wears glasses, and is wearing a University of California, Los Angeles sweater. Or: Vera has a really chic haircut, a firm handshake, and is drinking a martini.
- If you have the opportunity, try to exchange a few sentences with each person. The more information you share, the more likely you will be to remember the person. For instance: Erik graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles the same year your best friend did, loves *baba ganoush*, and just returned from a trip to India. Chances are you will remember some of these details when you see Erik again.
- As soon as you are introduced, repeat the person's name to your-

self and then try to use it in actual conversation: "Are you enjoying the event, Isabel? I think the cheese spread is pretty great." (Feel free to come up with better ideas here). If you say the name you just heard frequently, you are more likely to remember it.

- Ask for a business card. If you cannot quite catch the name when it is spoken, have a quick look at the card. This also comes in handy for names that are unusual or difficult to pronounce. Do not be afraid to ask the person to tell you again how to pronounce his or her name. It is better than mispronouncing it in conversation.
- Whenever you leave an event or meeting, take a few minutes to jot down notes about people on the back of their business cards. This can include any kind of information that will help you remember the person. For instance, how he or she knows you, what he or she was wearing, what you have in common, what you spoke about, the person's physical appearance, and anything else you deem relevant.

Hopefully, after working on your skills, you will not have that dreaded I-don't-remember-her-name-and-she-is-walking-toward-me feeling anymore (or at least less frequently).

*ata*

### Yahoo! Business Discussion Group

ATA members can discuss business issues online at the following Yahoo! group: [http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/ata\\_business\\_practices](http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/ata_business_practices). You will need to register with Yahoo! (at no charge) if you have not already done so, and provide your full name and ATA member number in order to join the group.

*This column is not intended to constitute legal, financial, or other business advice. Each individual or company should make its own independent business decisions and consult its own legal, financial, or other advisors as appropriate. The views expressed here are not necessarily those of ATA or its Board of Directors. Ideas and questions should be directed to [judy.jenner@entrepreneuriallinguist.com](mailto:judy.jenner@entrepreneuriallinguist.com).*