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 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

Yahoo! Business Discussion Group

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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.

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