



## **Networking, how to create meaningful connections**

Networking has been an integral part of business for years. People would rather work with those who they feel a connection to, have an established relationship with, and feel as though a basic understanding has been created. With the current changes in the world, networking is going to take on a new look, and building relationships with meaningful connections will be more important than ever.

### **Tips for Face to Face Networking:**

1. Upon arrival, resist the urge to talk to those you already know. Instead, challenge yourself to meet five new people. Survey the room and select the first person to network with.
2. Rather than talking, telling what you do, listen. Engage the other person with thought provoking questions and take note of the details. Each interaction is a time for you to learn more about the other person.
3. When exchanging business cards, add a handwritten note to your card. This will make the other person feel special.
4. When you receive a business card from someone, add a note on it of where you met the person and what their top three needs are.
5. When speaking to people at an event, use their first name two to three times. This will create familiarity and help you memorize their name.
6. Spend the time you have with a new contact asking them questions and learning as much as you can about them, their business, and their needs.
7. When listening to the other person make sure your body language indicates you are listening to them.
8. The best location to meet people are in high traffic areas, such as the bar or food area.
9. Follow up with people within 48-hours.

### **Tips for online Networking:**

1. Before you reach out, review your professional profile. Ensure all information is accurate and up to date. Strategically choose words to show your passion, strengths, and unique skills. Remember, you researched them, they will research you as well. You want to make sure you make a good first impression.
2. Always engage with gate keepers first. Rather than email a person out of the blue, approach their gate keeper and ask for a meeting.
3. Research the person before you reach out, but make sure all your research is professional.



4. Before you make an ask, invest in the person. Add value to them, solve a problem, make an introduction. When you begin a professional relationship with added value, people will be much more interested in working with you.
5. Time your connection. Because you are focused on adding value, time your connection to correspond with an event or need the person may have. If they are an author, reach out when they are preparing to launch a book.
6. When you send your initial message, make sure there is a personal connection. The connection can be professional, or it can be something as simple as sharing an alma mater, supporting a social cause or having a similar work history. Make sure the email is focused on them and not you. Your message should be personal and professional. You want to engage and spark interest, not appear cold, or as though you are fishing for something.
7. Clear, concise communication is key. All emails should be short, to the point and easy to read.
8. When closing your email make an ask. Not the ask, but rather a small ask, some way to connect further, providing the opportunity for a second email.
9. Remember, if you would like introductions, you need to make introductions. Always give what you want. Helping others will make sure others help you.
10. When using a social networking site to network, remember not to be pushy. Also, make sure you fully understand the rules of the site.
11. Follow through is everything. Because there is no face to face connection, no handshake or other social norms used to close a deal, it is vital you follow through when you say you are going to follow through.
12. If you are just beginning to use online networking, start locally. Creating a foundation, having a solid network will not only give you confidence, but will also make people notice you.

#### Tips for Building Confidence at a Networking Event:

1. Greet the people you know
2. Never apologize
3. Make sure your facial expression is happy
4. Be yourself
5. Bring a wingman to help you engage with key people
6. Be prepared, be generous, understand you are expected to follow up



Tips to make a great first impression at a Networking event:

1. Focus on building personal connections, not sharing your life story. People will respond better and want to follow up with you when they feel as though they have met a genuine person. Listen more than you speak.
2. Maintain positive body language and a happy facial expression.
3. Listen with the intent of showing you were listening. When You respond, reference what the speaker was saying.
4. Be authentic, be genuine, be yourself. Remember you are there to build connections, not to sell.
5. When possible, research the attendees and come prepared with questions to ask.
6. Be curious. Ask questions. People love to talk about themselves.
7. Create a memorable one line introduction. Your introduction should share something you are passionate about and leave the door open for more conversation.
8. Remember, before you can sell, you need to build trust. The easiest way to build trust is to learn how you can help each new contact.

Tips to make an entrance at a Networking Event:

1. Prepare. Wear comfortable shoes and make sure you have a jacket or pants with pockets to hold your business cards and a pen.
2. Before you fill out your name tag, look at how other people have filled theirs out. You don't want to not include all the information being sought.
3. Create an interesting tagline for yourself. A short phrase that describes what you do and will work as a conversation starter.
4. Create a list of the people you hope to meet. Research them and be prepared with conversation starters.
5. Create a plan of action. Rather than simply showing up and winging it, plan how you will work the room.