

Networking Tips

SpeakWell Partners presents...

top 10 tips



- 1. Think resource, not revenue.** Rather than trying to make a sale, focus on drawing the other person into an interesting conversation. Listen to find out their needs and offer help. A good rule of thumb is to listen 70% of the time and talk 30%.
- 2. Know your pitch.** Otherwise known as an elevator speech, the personal pitch is your ticket to a deeper, more productive conversation. Your delivery should take no longer than 30 seconds and should be positive and enticing. What makes you interesting? What are you passionate about? Practice often.
- 3. Do your homework.** First, be smart and pick your events carefully. More is not better. Find out who'll be in attendance, and then research that organization or executive. Google News and other online news sites are great sources for interesting and relevant conversation starters.
- 4. Come prepared.** Effective networking requires a few essentials, both tangible and intangible. In addition to business cards, a name tag, and appropriate attire, the right attitude is a must. Would you show up at the grocery store without your debit card?
- 5. Know your brand.** You are your business. The impression you make on others will be the same impression they have about your organization. This includes non-verbal behaviors such as posture, eye contact, use of space, managing alcohol intake and not being distracted by your cell phone/PDA.
- 6. Smile.** There's an old saying that a smile closes the distance between two people. Not only is it free, but even introverts can make a positive impression without leaving their comfort zone.
- 7. Manage the clock.** Remember, it's not about how many people you meet; it's about making authentic and memorable connections. Try to limit each conversation to seven minutes. This is enough time to exchange meaningful information. If you get stuck in a conversation, excuse yourself to refresh your beverage or use the restroom – and then do exactly that.
- 8. Filter and organize immediately.** Take the time to evaluate the business cards and contacts you collected. Write the date and event on each card. Organize a spreadsheet to track frequency of outreach, type of contact (email, phone, snail mail), commitments made, etc.
- 9. Follow up and follow through.** Networking is not an event, it's a process. The accepted rule is to follow-up with a new contact within 24-48 hours. If you made a commitment to refer someone or send along an interesting article, do it right away. Your reputation matters.
- 10. Become a super-connector.** The essence of networking is to focus on others. Whenever you act as the intermediary between two people, you increase your level of influence and their gratitude towards you. That's an investment that will pay big dividends.

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“There is no failure. Only feedback.”

- R. Allen