

Networking Tips

INTRODUCTION

Networking is becoming more and more part of our everyday business. The personal touch is really much more important in the twenty-first century. Your clients want to do business with *you*, the emphasis is on relationship building, which makes you a walking, talking advert - what better way to introduce and sell your business. Networking can happen anywhere. At an organised networking event, at a wedding, even in a bar. Simply talking to people is networking. One conversation will link you to another and another. Very soon, you will find that you are able to help others with a requirement and they are able to help you - successful networking.

Here are some tips to help you with your first experiences of a networking event:

“ Create
new
Opportunities ”

BEFORE

- Think about why you want to network. Is it to raise your company profile, to create new opportunities, to strengthen relationships or to find out the latest in your industry sector - be clear about your objectives.
- Have a good opening line. Describe your produce or service but keep it short and sweet and make it memorable. Practice your introduction out loud before you go.
- Learn to listen. Be interested in what other people have to say. The atmosphere is relaxed at networking events and pushy sales talk is a big no-no.
- Perhaps open the conversation with more than just your name - give the other person something to go on which will start a conversation.
- Think about the number of new people you want to meet. This allows you to budget the amount of time you spend with each person.

DURING

- Ask "w" questions: who, what, when, where, and why.
- Act like a host (not a guest) by introducing yourself and others. This is a really good tip if you are feeling nervous.
- Be confident and positive. Have a firm handshake and look people in the eye.
- Don't be afraid of approaching larger groups of people. Try not to be tied up with one person for longer than you wish. When you wish to leave, simply thank them for their time and move on.
- Practice impeccable social etiquette.
- Have plenty of business cards with you and make sure you have easy access to them. Write comments on the back so you are able to follow up effectively.
- Have fun

AFTER

- Don't forget to follow up. Do whatever you've committed to do.
- Send a follow-up email or thank you letter to the host.
- Invite hosts to a similar event.
- Mention in correspondence the the conversations you had.
- Practice problem questions, maybe role play to get over any nerves you may have.
- Don't stop networking - the more you practice, the better at networking you become.