Developing Successful Networking Skills

Quick & Easy Tips on Building Connections
Developing Successful Networking Skills

- Agenda
  - Networking Defined
  - Preparation
  - In Person-Networking Etiquette
  - Navigating the Room
  - Why We Follow Up
Networking Defined

• Networking formal definition:
  
  • The “exchange of information or services among individuals, groups, or institutions to specifically cultivate productive relationships for employment or business purposes.”
  
  • Picture a computer switchboard
Networking Defined
Networking Defined

• A “network” is a group or system of interconnected people or things

• **Networking is the mechanism in which we establish new connections with people**

• Like our computers, networking is how we exchange information with each other
Networking Defined

Why is networking important?

• Meet new people and build new connections
• Learn about business opportunities and job opportunities
• Notify others about products, services, business and expertise
• Establish a referral base and obtain clients
• Improves communication and socialization skills
Networking Defined
Types of Networking Events

• Receptions, mixers, fundraisers
• Conferences, seminars, trainings
• Sporting events
• Luncheons, dinners
• Student organization meetings
• Town hall meetings, forums
• Volunteer events
Types of Networkers

• Clingers
• Floaters
• Loner/Wallflowers
• Connectors
Preparing for the Event

Do your RESEARCH!

• Identify opportunities that interest you
• Know the time, date, location, purpose of the event
• Know who will be in attendance
• Perfect your elevator pitch
• Determine the attire for event
  • Business professional is the default
• Determine how you will track new contacts
Preparing the Event

Don’t forget:

• Business cards
• Prepare questions in advance
• Update your resume
• Update your LinkedIn profile (no spelling errors)
• Set a goal of how many people you want to meet
Questions
In-Person Networking Etiquette

• Smile
• Make good eye contact
• Watch your body language
• Maintain professionalism at all times
• Use formal names unless instructed otherwise
• Name on the right side in a conspicuous area
• Firm handshake- no weak or limp handshakes
The Top 10 Bad Business Handshakes
In-Person Networking Etiquette & Other Tips

• Avoid sticky and stinky foods
• Keep your plate and beverage in your left hand; keep your right hand free to shake hands
• Keep a napkin close by to wipe a sweaty glass or palms
Navigating the Room

Remember to:

• Arrive early

• If you don’t know any of the attendees, find the host. Ask for introductions

• Make your way around the room, don’t linger in one place too long

• Ask open ended questions to learn about others and to start conversations
Navigating the Room - The Entrance

• Examples of conversation starters:
  • What brings you to this event?
  • What did you think of the keynote speaker?
  • So what you do in your spare time?
Navigating the Room - The Entrance

- Wait for a pause in a group conversation before joining
- Pay attention to the body language of group
  - Which way are their bodies turned?
  - Eye contact or smile(s)
  - Gestures waving you to come forward
- Attendees expect interruptions
- May feel awkward at first, but practice!
Navigating the Room - The Entrance
Navigating the Room- The Entrance

• Activity 1- Write/Discuss the answers to the following:
  • What questions would you ask during a networking event?
  • What questions have you found to be helpful in continuing a conversation with a new contact?
Navigating the Room- The Entrance

Other tips:

• Jot a note on the back of the business cards you collect

• The note will be a memorable fact that you’ll mention in your follow up correspondence (where you met, their specialties, etc.)
Navigating the Room- The Exit

• Exit conversations gracefully
• Pay attention to the other person’s body language
• Don’t forget to thank them for the conversation
• Don’t forget to shake hands and exchange business cards
• Grab another beverage or more food during this time
Navigating the Room- The Exit

Examples:

• Tell him/her it was a pleasure speaking with him/her. I see a few people I need to catch before they leave. Meanwhile, I’d love to stay in contact with you. Do you have a card?

• Let’s schedule another day to chat in the future. How about coffee?
Navigating the Room- The Exit

• Activity 2- How would you conclude your conversation with an individual or group? Write/Discuss your response with your table.
Why Follow-Up is Important

• Keeps the line of communication open
• Refreshes the person’s memory of you and reduces awkwardness when too much time passes by
• Learn about other opportunities and you may receive job referrals
• Foster new relationships by extending your network
Follow Up Tips

• Send follow up email or LinkedIn invitation within 24 hours of the event
• Your LinkedIn request should mention where you met and an interesting part of the conversation
• Your correspondence should include next steps:
  • Future meeting date
  • Forward requested materials
  • Invite to a future event (if some time has passed)
Questions???
Contact Me

• Contact me via email: marybowenesq@att.net
• Or find me on LinkedIn:
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