

10 Networking Tips

Not everyone makes the most of business networking opportunities and some examples of this would be:

- Concentrating on selling rather than exchanging information.
- Not delivering a promise or failing to follow up.
- Misreading the body language of groups.

What successful networking really comes down to is the relationships you build and how you approach networking, your ability to listen and to communicate effectively - and, of course, actually being there!

1. Be prepared to listen to what others are telling you.

Listen, ask questions, then ask more questions. This is a great way to understand the person you are talking to.

The success of the event should not be determined by how many times you deliver a business card or a verbal advertisement, but rather, how much you learn about the other people.

You can use this knowledge as an asset for when you next meet.

2. Communicate effectively

Have the ability to communicate effectively who you are and what you do. That again, is why the UCD is just so important. And why we position it as a UCD rather than a USP!

3. Exchange business cards when appropriate

Be prepared to exchange business cards, but don't force your business card on someone who doesn't want it.

Be yourself professionally! Don't wait at the door giving out business cards as people leave.

Anything to do with business is always about image, even in informal surroundings like a networking cocktail party or golfing event.

Dress well, look good, and remember that you're not just there as yourself but you're also representing your business. The impressions you give others will carry over into their mental picture of your organisation.

4. If you see someone standing on their own, draw them into your conversation.

Act like the host, not a guest. Introduce strangers to each other, be friendly and smile.

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5. Honour promises

If you promise to deliver something, make sure you do it; whether that is a follow-up contact after the networking event or anything else.

Your brand is at stake.

6. Maintain relationships

Maintain the relationship you have with people you know, but don't spend all your time in the comfort zone of talking to established contacts; you won't make any new contacts or identify new business opportunities by doing that.

You can meet with them anytime, this is a chance to explore new circles.

7. Don't sell

Even with buying signals, arrange to meet soon after. There are too many variables, food, drink, speaker, entertainment, others. Timing is critical, and it won't be right.

8. Watch your step!

Be aware of the impact of intruding on someone-else's personal space, your tone of voice and your body language.

A simple smile can light up a room!

Understand group body language so you know when to join a group and when you are about to interrupt at a vital stage. Be a cheerful person whenever you're networking. Even if you find yourself talking with somebody who's got a sad story to relate, do everything you can to cheer them up and make their day a bit brighter.

People remember others that make them feel good and tend to not bother remembering those who depress them.

9. Do unto others

Deal with others as you would want them to deal with you. Your reputation is a very positive asset.

10. Don't miss any opportunity to network

Don't miss an opportunity to network, whether that is at a business networking event or in a social environment where you can make new contacts.

**Remember that networking is the journey, not the destination
Travel the road well to reap the rewards.**