

Be a Network Guru

Conferences and networking events are a great way to meet people if you want to expand your pipeline. Be sure you know how to move about the room and speak to certain individuals. Know who you should meet and what questions you should ask when talking to them. Dress professionally and make sure you have your name tag in the correct place.

When meeting people at a networking event, you want them to remember you.

Not only are you meeting plenty of individuals, but remember that they are as well. When you get a short amount of time to speak to someone, it can be difficult to remember what they look like or what you spoke about as time passes. The best way to avoid this is to wear something that can make you easy to identify in a room full of people. Choose something that has a unique design or a splash of color that is still professional looking. If someone wants to approach you later on, they will be sure to recognize you much easier. Be especially sure to wear articles of clothing with pockets so you have a place to hold business cards collected throughout the event.

Another great way to help people remember who you are is to get people to associate your name or your business with a particular item. For example, a creative approach is to hand out Dove Chocolates so people associate the chocolate with Dove Help Desk business.

If there is food and beverage being supplied at the event, keep in mind that it can be difficult to introduce yourself if you are holding food a plate of food. If you are drinking a beverage, be sure to hold it in your left hand. This leaves your right hand available to greet others. As for food, try and eat early on or before the event.

Check to be sure that your name tag is attached to your clothing where others can see it. The best place for this is on the right side of your shirt or jacket, where it is noticeable when shaking hands with someone. If you are wearing a lanyard, shorten it so that it sits up higher. Your name should be printed in large, easy to read letters. You may prefer to bring your own name tag with your name and the company name.

Have your elevator speech prepared. An elevator speech is a short, 30 second summary of who you are and what you do. Make your profession interesting to others by explaining it in a creative light that will be more meaningful to them. Let them know exactly what it is that sets you apart from anyone else that shares your same profession. Approach both individuals and small groups, and break the ice by asking them questions about the event such as who they may know and what interested them to attend. Inquire about their profession. Do not make the conversation all about you. Your purpose is to get to know who you are speaking with to find out what your business can offer them. Always be aware when a network connection arises in conversation. If one does, ask for a card as well as handing out your own. Write helpful follow-up information on the back of the card.

If you are at an event being hosted by another company, introduce yourself to the speaker before the meeting begins. Offer to see if they need help setting up. Use this opportunity to briefly introduce yourself and tell them you are looking forward to hearing their speech. Again, if you know of any network connections, mention them to the speaker as well as handing them your card with the connection written on the back. It is just as beneficial to make connections with other people as it is to be the one introducing the connection between two other people. Think about which two people could benefit from meeting each other and how

their interests are related. This act is greatly appreciated by others and many will want to return the favor.

At a conference or networking event, there is only so much time you have to speak to people, so you need to use that time wisely. You want to be able to end a conversation so you can move on without appearing rude or abrupt. To do this, thank the person for their time and that it was nice to meet them. Explain that you don't want to take up too much of their time. Give them your business card, and let them know you would like to set a date for a follow-up conversation. You should always try and set a date to speak further. It can be difficult to try and get in touch with people after an event and having a set date beforehand eliminates this problem. Try to spend about four minutes with each individual. This gives you enough time to move around the room and meet other people.

Most conferences and networking events set aside time at the end so that attendees can ask questions. Prepare 2-3 questions ahead of time so you know what you want to say. Begin by giving a brief introduction. That allows everyone to see who you are and allows people to approach you after the meeting to speak with you individually.

These tips will help you to learn the right questions to ask in order to discover important networking connections. It's important to know how to move about a room and introduce yourself to others. You also want to make sure that you are dressed appropriately and have your name tag in the correct place, as well as arriving prepared with plenty of business cards.