20 Ways to improve your job networking

Posted by: New Grad Life

Few people are born networkers; most of us have to work at it. Networking can be daunting to many, especially when you're attending an event and you don't know anyone. With a few tips and practice, networking can help you build your business connections, make new friends and connect people, and boost your confidence. BN360 members are encouraged to network as much as possible at our events!

1. A Better Way to Network:
The seminal secret of positive networking is 'discovering what you can do for someone else'. It's about opening a relationship, not closing a sale. When you network this way, it takes all the pressure off - guaranteed.

2. Become a Super Connector:
Great networkers enjoy connecting people. The secret of discovering what they can do for someone else is part of their DNA (Dynamic Networking Ability). When you find out what that something is, it's not enough to think about it, they do it. 'Work the Pond!' calls this high level of awareness.

3. Treat Everyone Like Royalty:
Everyone deserves to be treated with kindness and respect. Avoid rushing to rank your contacts in The Frog Chain. It makes life a whole lot easier than trying to figure who's who. Besides, one person's frog may be another person's prince or princess.

4. The Gentle Art of Conversation:
A key quality of great networkers is their style of conversation. They are focused, listen carefully and are non-confrontational in their style. Some good Chinese advice: Do not remove a fly from your friend's forehead with a hatchet.

5. Remember me?
Experienced networkers say 'Nice to see you' or 'Great to see you'. They know it works better than 'Nice to meet you'. The latter greeting is problematic when that person may respond, 'We've met before.'

6. The Power of Seven:
The minimum number of cards to carry at all times is seven. Most business or association functions have tables set for eight – you will have a card for everyone at your table. But bring more. Remember, you can never have too many cards, only too few. If you forget your cards? Go back and get them – they are that important.

7. Business Guru Tom Peters Calls it a 'Name Card" for a Reason:
Some folks are reluctant to give out their business card because they think it's too forward or pushy. Relax. It is just piece of paper with your name and coordinates. But, it's a key step in the N.E.T.W.O.R.K dance.

8 Meishi Manners:
In Japan the exchange of meishi (business cards) is a high art. A card is presented respectfully with two hands, name facing towards the recipient. The card is acknowledged. It is never taken and casually stuffed in your pocket, without a glance. Treat a person's card with interest and respect.

9. Smile Power:
Positive Networking starts with a smile. You smile at someone and they smile back. It's automatic because the brain is hard-wired to function this way. A smile opens the door to friendly communication. It's your best networking asset. Never leave home without it.

10. Sooner Rather than Later:
In business the best time to exchange cards is when you first meet. Make it a natural part of your introduction so there's none

of the anxiety of wondering when you should do the exchange.

11. Tag Teammates Make Networking More Fun:
Travel in pairs just like the FBI. They know the importance of good back-up. When you travel in pairs, you have a sense of support and security. A skilled tag teammate is your safety net in a crowd of perfect- or not so perfect- strangers.

12. Good Networking Math 1 + 1 = 4:
When sitting at a table of eight or ten put at least two people between you and your tag teammate. That way you will meet four new people and not two. Bad math. Good rule.

13. The Step Forward Rescue:
If your partner doesn't introduce you to someone immediately, it's your cue that your partner cannot remember the person's name. Step forward, extend your hand, introduce yourself and get the person's name. Now you have helped your tag teammate out.

14. You've Got to Kiss A Lot of Frogs:
One event does not make a network. To build a network you have to be there. Try to go to one event per week. Set a goal of seven new contacts per week. At the end of three years you will have a network of more than 1,000 contacts- and their networks. And, you don't actually have to kiss those frogs- you just have to give them your business card.

15. Circulate in the Pond:
Positive Networking is about meeting people and building your network. At events, avoid the temptation to stagnate- talking only to people you know. Remember the Positive Networking goal of meeting seven new people at each event. This may require you stepping outside of comfort zone.

16. Avoid Siberia:
A room's entrance is the best place to meet people or start a group. Avoid the back of the room- networking Siberia. It's a cold and lonely place. Come early and then, from this prime location, greet people as they arrive. Renew acquaintances and make new ones.

17. Great Way to Reconnect:
Read the business section of the newspapers for recent promotions, award winners and **job** changes. If you see someone that you know, even someone from your distant past, send that person a congratulatory note. Email is okay, but a handwritten note is better because it's the personal touch.

18. Be Email Friendly:
Keep them short, just one very brief paragraph with one subject per email. If you have an article that you think your contact might like, paste it into the body of the email and highlight what might be of interest. Avoid attachments.

19. To Send or Not To Send?
Before you email anything to anyone, ask yourself: Is what I am about to send going to contribute anything to this person's busy day. If it isn't, don't send it.

20. The Name Game:
Nice to meet you is not a name, but a common response on meeting someone- avoid it. Always introduce yourself by name and exchange a business card. You have just given yourself a fighting chance of that person remembering who you are.