



The art of networking

By Sue Nemeth

NETWORKING IS ABOUT CULTIVATING RELATIONSHIPS:

- ❖ Personal
 - ❖ Friends
 - ❖ Family
 - ❖ Mentors

- ❖ Political
 - ❖ Constituents
 - ❖ Stakeholders
 - ❖ Leadership

- ❖ Professional
 - ❖ Employers
 - ❖ Clients
 - ❖ Industry leaders



Networking involves exchanging information:



- ❖ Gathering information about others
- ❖ Sharing information about yourself
- ❖ Leaving an impression of yourself

First impressions leave lasting impressions. Your body language and clothing say a whole lot about you.

Do:

- ❖ Make eye contact and smile!
- ❖ Dress professionally and wear comfortable shoes.
- ❖ Wear something bright...a brightly colored top or piece of jewelry, or bright lip stick, but not all at once!
- ❖ Silence your phone before entering the room.
- ❖ Wear your name tag high and on the right side of your body.

Don't:

- ❖ Carry a giant bag or load of materials in your arms. Keep hands free so you can reach out to shake hands. Use a firm grip when you shake!
- ❖ Eat while "working a room."
- ❖ Drink to excess.
- ❖ Lurk in the shadows and wait for people to approach you.



Introduce yourself and make conversation to break the ice.

- ❖ Introduce senior members of the group first and use formal titles (Ms., Dr., Prof., etc.).
- ❖ Compliments are safe and disarming. Compliment the person you are addressing about something they are wearing (jewelry, necktie, etc.), or something they've accomplished.
- ❖ Humor works for some people. Only use humor if you are certain not to cause offense. Self-deprecating humor is not a great idea if you are trying to leave a positive impression.
- ❖ Make an observation about the weather or event setting.
- ❖ Politely ask every person you meet for a business card and offer one of yours.

Practice makes perfect.

Accept invitations and attend events to hone your skills.

- ❖ Social mixers
- ❖ Receptions
- ❖ Conferences
- ❖ Political events
- ❖ Lectures
- ❖ Book signings



Follow up and say, “Thank you.”



- ❖ Record the contact information of everyone you meet in a directory, spreadsheet or database.
- ❖ Send handwritten notes of thanks.
- ❖ Emails are fine, but don't be too casual.
- ❖ Call to ask for advice or schedule an appointment to ask for advice.
- ❖ Use social networking sites to keep in touch and expand your networks.