



Top 7 networking tips:

1. Cultivate a genuine interest in seeing others succeed.... and help them do it:

This mindset should be prerequisite before anybody begins to network. In short, what I see most people doing when they network is talking about themselves and talking about their product or service with the hopes of selling more. This will turn people off right away.

Solution – do the exact opposite! When you meet somebody for first time focus all your attention on asking probing questions to learn about THEM such as: What brings you here today? Who are you trying to connect with? Who would be an ideal prospect for you? What is your biggest frustration?

“Every man is my superior in that I may learn from him” Emerson

2. Listen...Listen.... and then Listen some more:

I know you have heard this many times before, but it’s a skill that ALL of us can still improve. Rather than reiterate the importance of listening I’m going to share a technique which will automatically take your listening skills to the next level and FORCE you to listen more!

When engaged in a conversation, BEFORE you respond to somebody, pause and briefly summarize what you just heard before you share what you were going to say. This is a simple yet powerful technique to make the other person feel understood and demonstrates that you care what they have to say.

This is harder than it sounds and takes a bit of practice, but starting today, put on the breaks before you reply to someone and paraphrase back what they just told you first!.

3. The 3 Second Rule

As soon as you enter a room of people start a conversation with the first person you see within the first 3 seconds. DO NOT HESITATE, don’t look for somebody you know and don’t go to the bar. It doesn’t matter who you approach, just go talk to somebody!

The goal here is to build confidence, get outside ‘your head’ and build the habit of proactively meeting people. At most events there is usually a registration desk. Try and view this as the “warm up”. Use this opportunity to speak to the person beside you as you sign in or receive your name tag.

4. The soft touch:

You may have noticed what typically happens at networking events is people form small groups (usually consisting of friends or office colleagues) who then talk amongst themselves. This situation presents a challenge for most people.

Here is a very non-threatening way to approach one of these groups if you know somebody in the group (even if you don’t know them very well). As you are walking by simply “soft touch” the person

you know on the shoulder, smile, and say hi, making sure to address them by their name. Don't motion to shake their hand, and instead simply give a small wave as you keep walking (shaking hands is usually too much of a commitment in this situation). This seemingly small gesture accomplishes the following goals:

- a) Strengthening the relationship with the person you know.
- b) In some situations the individual will stop you and say "James, have you met...." and bring you into the group to introduce you to everybody else (although this is a possibility- do not expect it)
- c) It gives you unconscious face time with the other people in that group. Some of them will notice you and you now have a small connection with them for generating a future conversation.
- d) If you really wanted to meet somebody from that group and didn't get an opportunity to at the event, you can call the person you know and say "Hey I noticed you speaking to....I would love to meet them. Would you mind introducing us?"

5. Smile the whole time 😊 Smiling conveys happiness, fun, positive, and so many other great emotions! Maya Angelou is quoted as saying

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

I think this is profound. How do you want to make people feel?

I find most people at networking events are unnecessarily serious, and as a result don't let their true personality shine through. I use to be this way as well.... Do the opposite! I have found the more I smile while speaking on the phone, while writing emails or while in person meeting others, the more it makes others want to be around me. Smiling can also do wonders for your "inner game" by increasing your confidence, helping you relax and increasing your overall level of enjoyment. Smile.

6. Introduce people to each other:

Anytime you have a chance to introduce people who can benefit from knowing each other do it. Sending a quick email introduction is a great habit to get into.

"Help enough people get what they want and you'll get what you want" -Zig Zigler

7. Keep in touch by sending things of value:

In my experience, most people contact others when they want something. This is okay once in a while, but if this is the only instance in which you touch base with somebody, sooner or later they are not going to screen your calls. Ironically, you can have a lot of success in doing the complete opposite. If 80% of the time you contact somebody to offer them something of interest or value they are going to open your email or take your call every time.

A simple way to do this is keeping your eyes open for events, articles, and blogs that would interest your contacts. Other ideas include sending email introductions or cards to congratulate them for achieving success or maybe offering tickets to an event. These little gestures go a long way if you are doing it because you genuinely care. You will not only grow your relationship with that individual but they will WANT to hear what you have to say every time you contact them. In addition to making somebody else feel good you will personally feel like a million dollars when you make the time to connect!