



Networking - for People Who Don't Do Networking

Ask people about networking and you'll find some love it and some do it out of necessity but the majority of people avoid it at all costs! So networking is not for everybody...or is it?

Here's our guide to getting the best out of networking and ways to make it enjoyable too- yes you read it right!

A large green circle with a thick, bright green border. Inside the circle, the text "Pre-event" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

Pre-event

1. If you do a little **research** about the event you want to go to then this can help you decide if it's the right one for you - avoiding any costly mistakes of turning up to an event and thinking "what are they all on about" or "I didn't expect it to be like this".
2. Understand the **type** of event you will be attending - some networking events are very informal, like Social Enterprise Mentor, where you register, turn up and chat, but some are very structured...some may appear very odd , like you've entered secret society!
3. **Dress** to impress! - Think about why you are going to the event, is it to network with your peers or is it for a purpose, for example as part of your job or funding strategy...you don't know who you may meet at these events!
4. Don't forget your **business cards**, pen and paper - if you don't have any business cards take some paper to write on or make some simple ones some before you go. (shopping centres sometimes have machines that can do these for you at very low cost or use a template on your computer)
5. Prepare a **pitch** - what are you going to say when someone talks to you? Think about introductions and key messages you want to get out to people...oh and a reason to talk to someone else in case you get trapped!



The Event

1. Be **interesting** - it's so easy to just clam up at events or waffle on, so try and make connections with the person you are talking too. If you get stuck just ask them about themselves.
2. **Listen** - don't feel you have to rush round everyone, take time to listen to what people have to say
3. **Contribute** to the conversation - offering ideas can help build relationships. If you struggle to settle in then ask the host to give you an introduction to someone of interest.
4. **Move on** - if you find yourself running out of something to say or maybe there isn't a connection with the person you are talking to then it is time to move. Also, remember its a networking event so just talking to one person may not be that productive use of your time.
5. **Thank** people - you will stick in people's minds if you are polite, remember to thank people for their time and the host or organiser for the event.



Post Event

1. **Reflect** on how it went - keep a diary or notes of what went well and what didn't so that you can be better prepared for the next event.
2. **Follow-up** - with a general messages to everyone (if you get a list of attendees) or a specific message about how nice it was to meet the person you want to stay in contact with. Remember someone may not contact you after the event because they are busy, not because they don't want to talk to you!
3. **Work** on building relationships - it will take time to build relationships, but these can be good investments if you need mentoring support or you want to do business with someone.
4. **Book** again - with a general messages to everyone (if you get a list of attendees) or a specific message about how nice it was to meet the person you want to stay in contact with. Remember someone may not contact you after the event because they are busy, not because they don't want to talk to you!
5. **Inform** people when you go again - it can sometimes make the difference to people attending if they know there will be someone they want to catch up with. Let people know if you are going to another event