Networking Tips

The Networking Event: After it’s all said and done, you want to have earned the right, privilege, honor, and respect to be able to meet with your connections again.

These events are NOT opportunities to market yourself; you are there to listen and gather information.

1. When you arrive at a networking event, avoid gravitating to people you know. Thanking the host is customary, but try to “dive in” quickly finding someone new to introduce yourself to. This is why you are there!

2. Stop selling and start listening! When you meet someone for the first time, listen to his/her story. Try to get to know the person. You may find out something that could be useful to you.

3. Keep your business or contact cards accessible, and in good condition. Include any personal websites or ePortfolio links if applicable.

4. When giving a person your card, personalize it by hand writing your cell or personal email number on it. This will cause the recipient to feel that they are receiving something special.

5. When receiving a card from someone, take a moment to write yourself a note on it such as a topic that arose during your conversation or where you met. If you do this while you’re still talking to the person, it will help convey your sense of personal connection. Later, when you are following up with your new connections, you will have a reminder of what you spoke about or who the person is.

6. During the course of a conversation, use the other person’s first name two or three times. People always like to hear their own name and it will help you to remember it when the discussion is over.

10. When a person is talking to you, be sure to look directly at them. Giving a person full attention with your eyes will encourage them to share more. Give the person 3-5 seconds of eye contact and then look away briefly before returning your focus to them again. This will communicate that you are engaged without having a “stare-down.”

12. The best location to network is by a high-traffic area such as a main door, the bar, or near the food.

13. Never approach someone if they are walking towards the restroom or if they have a phone in their hand. Wait until they have returned to the networking area or put their phone away.

14. After the person has shared something with you, ask them another question about what they just said. This shows that you’re paying attention and that you care about what they’re telling you.

15. Always keep one hand free to allow yourself to shake hands with people. Remember, you’re there to network, not eat a full-course meal. Avoid eating and drinking at the same time.

16. As a way of demonstrating your networking skills, introduce each new person you meet to at least one other person.

17. Avoid barging into large groups. Come along side of the group, but do not attempt to enter into the discussion until you’ve made eye contact with everyone and allowed others to say something first.

18. Do not approach two people who are talking, as you may be interrupting an important discussion.

19. Initiate conversation with someone who is standing by themselves. They’ll be happy to have someone to talk to them and, as a result, will many times open up with valuable information.

20. Follow up within 48 hours of a networking event or meeting with someone new. The longer you wait, the better the chances someone might not remember you.