



Networking etiquette

Somehow, society has conditioned us to be scared of strangers and the thought of starting a conversation with someone we don't know, is daunting to most of us. We give strangers so much power. People we do not even know and who are simply defined by the dictionary as "one who is neither a friend nor an acquaintance". The best way to overcome this fear is to be prepared and to have a networking strategy. Knowledge is power and knowing networking etiquette will smooth the networking path.

Aviva Shiff, co-founder of Spark Training & Coaching Associates, helps businesses discover and amplify their talent through strategic coaching. According to her networking is simply building enduring relationships that are mutually beneficial. The ability to stand out from the networking crowd as being polished, professional and endearing gives one an edge to make an outstanding impression and outclass the competition. It comes from understanding and applying business networking etiquette. Aviva Shiff has the following networking etiquette tips:

Jump on the "Brand wagon"

Personal Branding is the message you send about you. Do you want to be known as creative, a problem solver, a philanthropist, dynamic or disciplined? Take your true skills and strengths, combine them with your passions and identify your unique promise of value to your audience. This message becomes your personal branding statement. When you are networking, one of the first things people will ask you is what you do. Take this opportunity to communicate your personal branding statement and make it shine.

Sources

1. http://www.sideroad.com/Business_Etiquette/networking-etiquette.html
2. http://www.questcareer.com/networking_skills.htm



Impress with Your Impression

First impressions are the most lasting. Humans are visual beings. More than half the impression you make is based on what people see. To make a positive visual impression, make sure you are well groomed and feel good about what you are wearing at all times.

Know Your Desired Outcome

Before going to a networking meeting or event, ask yourself, “Why am I going?” Be specific, such as “I am going to speak to ten new people today and get contact information for four of them.” Target individuals and research them on Google, or through mutual acquaintances so you are prepared to make small talk intelligently.

Small Talk

The purpose of small talk is to break the ice and build rapport. Without rapport, there is no foundation to develop a relationship. Start with an introduction and a handshake. Follow with positive observations and questions about your immediate surroundings, such as “The speaker really took the time to research the audience” or “What kind of work do you do?” When you are engaging in small talk, keep your body language relaxed and confident. For eye contact, the rule of thumb is 60%. This means look your companion in the eye 60% of the time. When you are not looking directly into the eyes, rest your gaze on the eyebrows or mouth. Don’t let your eyes stray too far away from the face. Spend 80% of your time listening and 20% talking.

“Work” the Event

When you are at a networking event, recognize that everyone is there to network too. Make sure you don’t monopolize any one person’s time. Aim to spend a maximum of 10 minutes with each person. To end a conversation graciously, simply say, “It was a pleasure meeting you, perhaps we could have coffee in the near future,” and depart.

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Business Cards

Have a clean supply of business cards easily accessible. A slim business card holder that fits in a jacket pocket is ideal. Never take cards from your back pocket. You should never dig in your purse, fumble or make people wait while you retrieve your card. Present your card in a manner that demonstrates it is worth something. When receiving a business card, take the time to look at it and comment favourably on some aspect of it.

Places, please

Avoid standing at the bar. People may congregate there, but it's not an ideal spot to engage people in conversation. Instead, stand near the food or dessert table where people are lingering and eating. You'll find them more open to talking because people like to chat during meals and people are usually happy and receptive when they have ready access to food.

Keep in Touch

Your connection may start at a networking event, but the relationship is built over time. It's important to follow up the first meeting in an appropriate fashion to keep the momentum and stay top of mind. You can achieve this by email or personal note.

Take it to the Next Level

The most important business relationships are often created and maintained outside the traditional work environment. This means that you should be prepared to meet your networking circle at restaurants, sporting events, association meetings, fund-raisers, golf courses, seminars, workshops, conferences and conventions.

Understanding and applying networking etiquette will empower you to build and nurture your own network. These lasting, mutually beneficial business relationships begin with projecting an outstanding impression, but are sustained through trust and the investment of time and effort.

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2. http://www.questcareer.com/networking_skills.htm



Mastering the art of effective networking requires time, commitment and attention. Ultimately, the end result is well worth the time it. Take the time to master these tips and you will be adequately rewarded with the extraordinary fruits of your networking efforts.

Sources

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2. http://www.questcareer.com/networking_skills.htm