

# Top 10 Tips for Networking

Networking is good for business. It allows companies to build relationships and promote themselves. Here are ten top tips to make sure you make the most of any networking opportunity.

**1 Think about your pitch:** The pitch should be short, roughly a minute long. It should clearly demonstrate what your business does, who your customers are and what makes your business unique from other competitors in the market.

**2 Research and find out who is attending the networking event:** This will allow you to find out what businesses you are most interested in working with in the future and give you an opportunity to research more about their business.

**3 Prepare business cards and/or promotional material to take with you to the networking event:** You may want to design new and possibly higher grade 'eye catching' cards or material to take with you – that you wouldn't necessarily use in your day to day business – to ensure that you stand out from the competition.

**4 What are your goals/aims for attending the event:** Thinking about your goals and aims will allow you to establish what you want to achieve. For example, your aim could be to make five new supplier contacts or your goal may be to get five referrals. Also think about what ways other businesses may be able to help your business or what new skills you want to learn from the event.

**5 Make sure you are genuine:** Networking involves building relationships with other businesses. These other businesses may want to recommend or refer you to potential customers. If you do not deliver good customer service to this new customer, this may reflect badly on the business that sent you the referral and trust/reputation of your businesses may be affected.

**6 Network with as many groups as possible:** Think about what groups may be of interest to your business – you may want to spend roughly five to ten minutes with each business. Remember that this is not a social event. You may want to spend time with contacts you already know, but the aim is to network and make as many new contacts for your business as possible.

**7 Make sure you are articulate and ask open-ended questions:** Ensure you are able to clearly and enthusiastically state what your business is about and how it is unique from other competitors. You also want to make sure what you say is interesting and not too long. Also ensure that you ask open-ended questions. These questions should include words such as who,

what, where, when and how as these will provide a more detailed response. It will also show that you are interested in their business.

**8 Remember that you may not necessarily be selling to the contact you meet at the networking event:** Make sure you seem confident in your business and are seen as a strong business resource to other businesses. Remember each business may have their own network of potential new contacts. Your aim may be to promote their business and in turn for them to promote yours and hopefully create new contacts.

**9 Ensure you follow-up on any referrals you receive promptly and efficiently:** This is important as you want to provide a good image of your business and provide good customer service, not only to the new potential customer/contact but also to the business that has referred you to the customer.

**10 Ensure you provide a follow-up email or call to the businesses that you have met:** As these businesses may be potential customers or contacts, when contacting them make sure you say how you enjoyed meeting with them and are interested in their business. You may want to arrange another meeting with them. Although a follow-up call or e-mail is seen as acceptable, you should be careful not to bombard them or seem to be sales aggressive – remember you may potentially want to build a future relationship with this business.

## Happy networking!

Adapted from articles by Stephanie Speisman – a success coach who coaches groups and individuals in business networking skills [www.businessknowhow.com](http://www.businessknowhow.com) and Tref Griffiths who is CEO of [www.networkology.com](http://www.networkology.com)

