

Networking

The Power of Authentic Communication

2011

OURA



Paul Byrne

How to Prepare for a Networking Event

1. Identify a goal

Be able to answer these questions:

1. What would I like to have happen as a result of attending the event?
2. What is my attitude toward this event?
3. "What's my focus?" have a purpose: gain visibility, make contacts, create goodwill, etc

2. Deal with anxiety

- Have a content orientation versus a performance orientation
- See FEAR for what it really is and dispute irrational thinking
- Visualize a positive experience
- Incorporate positive self-talk

3. Think of your value proposition:

- What value do you bring to the person?
- Tailor your message to your audience.
- Your area of specialty.
- What do you do?
- What do you want people to remember about you?
- What value do you bring to your role?

4. Be prepared conversationally

- Plan three items, issues or stories to share.
- Plan four generic questions to ask. For example:
 - a) What do you think?
 - b) How did you become interested in...?
 - c) I'm considering taking up Would you recommend a class or individual lessons?
- Use the newspaper, experiences (yours and others'), current events, movies, etc.
- Think about each item or issue - its ramifications, questions it raises, your opinion about it.

5. Consider cross selling at the conference

- Formally research other offerings within your target's organization
- Consider how you can obtain a bigger pie versus bigger slice
- Identify other appropriate contacts

Remember...

Networking is a way of life.
Professional contacts are everyone.

Introductions

To perform an introduction correctly, quickly assess who has the "most." (Status, age, respect, importance or seniority). Say that person's name **first** and the introduction will follow naturally.

Some Hints for Performing Effective Introductions of Others:

- * Always introduce someone with both first and last names. Add an item of interest that the "introducee" can comment on.
- * If you are being introduced and the "introducer" has forgotten your name, offer it.
- * If someone mispronounces your name or makes an error when introducing you, never correct them in public. If it is a serious matter, approach them after and clarify.
- * When using a stick-on nametag, place it on your right shoulder area. When shaking hands, the eye travels more easily up the right arm.
- * Use professional titles when making formal introductions.

Some Hints for Introducing Yourself to Others:

Consider the following:

1. Start with what you have in common (e.g., weather, time of year, event).
2. Have an introduction of yourself planned and practiced. Make it sound sincere.
"Hi. I'm Lynne Mackay. I'm a _____ for OURA."
3. Make a comment and follow it with a question.

"I've never seen such a buffet. Do you have any idea who catered it?"
"I can't believe the weather. Has it ever been so rainy in March before?"

Other comments or questions to consider:

- Upbeat observation: "This conference is particularly well attended."
- Open-ended question: "How do you know the host?"
- Offer a pleasant revelation: "This is my first time at an annual conference."
- Ask a general question: "Where are you from?"

Did you know?

- Women prefer to hear innocuous phrases. While men prefer to be hear direct phrases.
- Men generally underestimate how much women dislike flippant comments, and also underestimate how much women like innocuous comments.
- Women underestimate how much men like direct openers, and overestimate how much men like innocuous openers.

Examples of each:

- Flippant: "I bet this cherry jubilee isn't as sweet as you are."
- Innocuous: "What do you think of the conference?"
- Direct: "Since we're both eating alone, would you like to join me?"

During the Event

a) Maintaining Small Talk

- Try to balance your questions with comments.
- Practice: "**DBO**" - Direct Body Orientation.
- When you're listening, maintain eye contact 70-80% of the time. Look down to the floor when breaking eye contact to invest in the message you are hearing
- Be engaging: "It's better to be interested rather than interesting"

Remember...

Communication skills are not an art that some have and others don't. Rather it is learned. An open attitude is the key to self improvement

b) How to transition from Small Talk to Business Conversation

If appropriate, make the shift to "business conversation" with transitional words:

"Well..."
 "You know..."
 "It's interesting that you say that..."
 "In fact..."
 "So, what do you do?"

If the contact wants to transition to business conversation, take the cue from the contact.

Don't say	Do say
Cost or price	Investment
Down payment	Initial investment
Contract	Agreement
Buy	Own
Sell	Get involved
Sign	Okay, approve
Deal	Opportunity
Appointment	Visit
Customer	People, companies we serve

Remember... It's not a sales call

- Gently promote your services or the firm's - one on one
- Exchange cards and plan to meet to discuss
- Use non threatening language

Techniques for Working a Room

Remember...Don't confuse a "networking" situation with a social situation.

Approaching Groups:

- Scan the room; get a big picture.
- Never approach pairs. Join groups that have 1, 3, 5, 7 members in them.
- Once you've chosen a group that looks "open," physically approach them.
- Initially offer non-verbal feedback only. Eg, Stand close, make eye contact with person facing you. Nod and smile
- Move in with greeting and handshake to entire group
- Begin to offer verbal feedback.
- Be open to others who may want to join the group.
- Watch for non-verbal cues during conversation.

*NETWORKING IN
PAIRS
CAN BE A MORE
COMFORTABLE WAY
TO MEET PEOPLE,
APPROACH GROUPS,
AND LEAVE GROUPS!*

Leaving Groups:

- Lead up to it by asking closed or rhetorical questions.
"So, next Thursday would be a good time to give you a call?"
- Make the transition to your concluding comment by using, "Well..."
"Well, it's been very nice meeting you."
- Conclude with a polite, positive comment.
"Thanks so much for the great information. I'm going to have to give that a try."
- If you must leave without adequately concluding the conversation, don't forget to excuse yourself.
- Excuse yourself after you have finished saying something rather than after someone else has just finished.
- If all else fails, an excuse can sometimes facilitate your exit.
"You'll have to excuse me, I really have to check in with the office" (or refresh your drink, or talk to someone you happen to see.)

Exchanging Business Cards

1. Plan ahead. Make sure you have them and that they are handy to access.
2. Always keep business cards in a case - not in your wallet!!
3. If you are at a networking function, keep loose business cards in your left-hand jacket/pants/skirt pocket.
4. If you would like someone to have your business card and feel funny offering it, ask for his/hers.
5. If you do a significant amount of business in a foreign country, consider having your cards printed in English and/or French on one side and in the country's language on the other.
6. After meeting a new person, jot down some basic information on the back of the card that will assist with small talk next time you meet him/her. Keep business cards up to date. Having to make pen corrections reduces the professionalism of the card and, therefore, you.
7. Keep business cards as simple as possible. Eliminate unnecessary details.
8. Make sure font, colour, and layout allow for easy readability.

Cocktail Etiquette Tips:

- Hot hors d'oeuvres :
 - Don't stand eating from a serving plate
 - Don't visit the buffet more than twice for food – move to the dessert course.
 - Wipe greasy fingers on napkin
 - Discard toothpicks or skewers right away. Avoid walking around with them visible on a plate.
- Don't take more than 3 small hors d'oeuvres at one time
- If there are munchies i.e. mixed nuts – help yourself with a serving spoon
- Healthy foods – raw vegetables with dip – never double dip
- Make sure you use utensils to serve all foods from platters
- Never leave the handles of spoons or forks in the food for the next person in line.
- Never leave serving utensils draped on the side of a serving platter at a cocktail buffet.
- When you sit down with your food at a buffet– never begin to eat until at least three people have joined your table –you don't have to wait for everyone to begin eating
- Napkin etiquette – fold over a third of the way on your lap as all soiling goes under the fold.

Follow Up:

- Do the follow up call on a timely basis so that they have not forgotten who you are.
- Don't wait for the phone to ring
- Make calls - even just to touch base

Did you know ...

75% of new business should come from referrals, and
80% of clients are willing to refer, but only 20% are asked

Use your existing client base to be your sales force. Ask who needs your services: get details: names, numbers, introductions.

Authentic Client Communication

1. Content level
 - Language carries the meaning
 - Easily forgotten
2. Relational level
 - Emotional
 - Easily remembered

Communicate on an Emotional Level

- Trust, credibility, confidence, likeability

B.I.O.

Background

1. Where are you from?
2. Where are your parents from?
3. What kind of work did your parents do?
4. Do you have any brothers and sisters?
5. Where are your family members now?

Interests

1. What do you like to do in your spare time?
2. Have you traveled much?
3. Where do you like to go?

Occupation - School

1. Where did you go to school?
2. What did you study in university or college?
3. What was your first job?
4. How did you get from there to here?

Conversational Contribution: Do's and Don'ts

Safe Topics

- Weather, traffic, sports
- Non controversial current events, travel
- Favourable comments regarding the meeting place or city
- Common experiences, books, the Arts

Topics to Avoid

- Your health, other's health
- Cost of items, income, personal misfortunes
- Stories of questionable taste, dirty jokes, gossip, religion
- Intimate details about your personal life

Topics that Exclude

- Sports that only a minority of conversationalists play
- Babies

Comment [JM1]: First point is safe topic but here it says don't discuss?

Words and Phrases to Avoid

- Slang, foul language
- Jargon, pretentious language
- Sexist language
- Statements of disagreement that are rudely expressed
- References to someone's race, class, ethnic background or disability

Words and Phrases to Never Forget

- The name of the person to whom you are speaking
- Statements of agreement
- Requests for advice or assistance
- Statements or questions that refer to a previous conversation or event

Professional terminology

- Remember others may not share your specialized vocabulary
- Use everyday language
- Never try to impress with language: being clear and understood is the goal
- Read your audience, note confusion, take blame, restate

Don't ask too many questions

- Make upbeat observations
- If you must ask questions - ask if you can
- Ask people to elaborate on answers rather than ask more questions
- Self-disclose your thoughts, ideas, or opinions

Conversation Management: “What If...” Strategies

1. **I’m daydreaming and someone asks me a question?**
 - Admit it. Say, “I’m sorry, I missed that. Could you please repeat what you just said?”
 - Only do this once.
2. **Self Disclosure**
 - Incremental: start with “here and now”
 - Is it being reciprocated? If not, stop.
3. **Spouse’s are part of the networking event. What should I say to them?**
 - Always involve the spouse in the conversation
 - Use an appropriate opening line: “What do you do?” is not a good opener.
 - Ask: “What do you do in your spare time?”
 - “You must be Dr. Jackleg’s wife. I’ve heard about your garden.” Etc.
 - Remember spouses have enormous influence. Speak to spouses with interest and respect.
4. **You were given a compliment**
 - Accept compliments and give genuine compliments
5. **Gossip is being revealed at the event**
 - Don’t participate in gossip. Shut it down!
 - Ask if you have said this to them.
 - Change subject
6. **There is silence during the conversation**
 - Learn to be comfortable with silence.
 - Count to three slowly (in your head) and wait for the other person to speak.
7. **The question “What do you do?” is asked. How should I answer?**
 - Don’t just proclaim your title
 - Answer in a way that explains and makes you appear helpful
 - “As a University of Toronto Registrar’s Manager, I help
8. **You are faced with Criticism**
 - Get clarification
 - Use a verbal cushion
 - Use the Feel, Felt, Found Strategy
 - End response with a “temperature taking” question
 - Avoid arguing. Don’t take it personally
 - Keep your answer short
9. **I forgot the contact’s name.**
 - Admit it and make light of it.
 - Don’t do it again.

Tip to remember someone’s name ...

Repeat. Associate. Visualize. Use positive self-talk that you are good at remembering names.



**Tel. 613- 233- 2563, 1- 877- 611- 1171, Fax. 613.821.2334
328 Frank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0X8
www.mbg.ca**