

TOP TIPS FOR PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING



1. Prepare yourself

Have an engaging and concise description prepared about both you and your business. Be ready to use it if anyone asks, but don't just throw it into conversation unnecessarily. Keep business cards handy for people who seem keen to get to know you, or your industry, in more detail.



2. Use social media and online networking

Social media is essential for modern day professional networking. It gives you access to a broad range of people and allows you to foster relationships in a more personal way as you get involved in regular discussions and can ask people directly for help.



3. Build your reputation in the community

Your aim should be to appear to be involved in the community and build a reputation for wanting to get involved and be helpful. Networking is about giving as well as taking, so attend conferences and open days, volunteer or even sponsor an award.



4. Be friendly, but not a salesman

If you be yourself and are genuine, you'll find yourself getting much better results than if you just 'work the room.' Have real conversations; work on connecting with fewer people in detail, as opposed to gathering scattered information about everyone. People will notice if you're schmoozing, and can easily put them off.



5. Take note

Remembering what people have said to you makes follow ups easier and more meaningful. People are more likely to remember you if you reference specific things you spoke about. It also shows you care.



6. Listen to others

Asking people for help and showing an interest in what they do, rather than just what they can do for you, is a quick and easy way to make friends in business. Take advantage of others' expertise - they'll appreciate the fact that you respect their opinion.



7. Enjoy yourself!

If you're relaxed and having a good time, it will show, and people will be more likely to want to engage with you. Remember, chances are other people in the room are slightly nervous about approaching people too. If you just focus on having interesting conversations with like-minded people, the rest will follow.