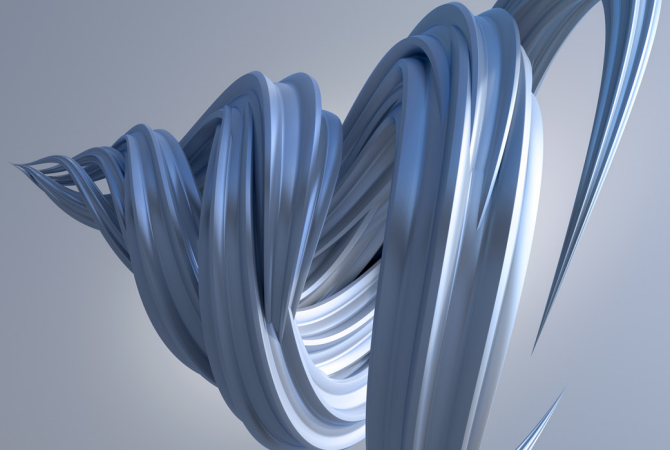


FIRM inMOTION

Networking preparation and tips



Not sure about networking?

If you feel hesitant about networking, you're in the right place. Many successful networkers started out feeling apprehensive about the thought of having to meet and make a good impression on complete strangers. These tips are designed to reduce some of the unnerving feelings around networking.

The difference between selling and networking

Let's start with separating networking from selling. Both are important, but selling is a very different game than networking. The good news is that networking can often lead to new business without having to feel or act like a salesperson.

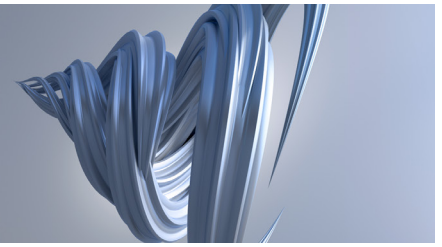
Selling is ...

- Focused on short term
- Focused on WIIFM (what's in it for me)
- Identifying people or opportunities to add value
- Discussing service offerings
- Providing help if there is an immediate payback
- Hoping for immediate profit
- Distributing and collecting as many business cards as possible
- Having a goal to sell

Networking is ...

- Focused on long term
- Focused on others
- Forming new relationships and strengthening older ones
- Getting to know others personally and professionally
- Providing help without expecting something in return
- Hoping for a connection
- Distributing and collecting business cards to and from those with actual contact
- Having a goal to establish and cultivate relationships
- Creating connections with many people and being a link between them all

"It's not what you know, it's who you know."



Preparing for chit-chat

Being comfortable with having a spontaneous conversation allows you to connect and get to know new people quickly. Striking up a conversation with an unfamiliar face can be intimidating, but with some preparation and practice, you'll be able to talk to anyone anywhere.

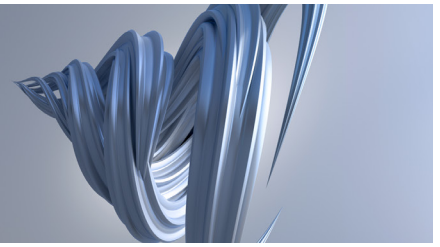
- **Know your value** and the services your firm provides. Complete The Value Ladder™ Exercise before networking activities.
- **Remember your goals.** Keep your goals in mind when practicing your relationship building and business development skills. Also remember the connections and ideas that you can report back to your manager and firm.
- **Research any theme or topic at the event you are planning to attend.** Be knowledgeable about related current events and topics.
- **Dress the part.** Making a good impression is based on what you say and how you look. Dress appropriately and professionally by making sure your clothes are neat and appropriate to the time of day and activity.
- **If available, get a list of other attendees or organizations** that will be present, so you can make a list of people to meet.
- **Take a friend.** It can be easier to approach strangers at an in-person networking activity if you are with someone you know. You'll have more to talk about by bringing existing relationships to the conversation. Just don't stand off to the side talking with your friend the whole time.
- **Start strong and be brief.** Make a great first impression by beginning with an easy, positive and short conversation starter.
 - **Something noticeable.** Opening with a compliment can make the other person open to your presence.
 - **Common ground** – Discuss the present activity, the presentation you saw, the weather, food, current news headlines, etc.
 - **Humor** – Lighten someone's day with an (appropriately) funny story or anecdote.
 - **Keep it simple.** Sometimes the best thing to do is to just say, "hi" and introduce yourself.

"That's a great tie, where did you get it?" or "Is that the new iPhone?"

"Have you always been interested in golfing?" or "Italy sounds like a great vacation spot; what was your favorite meal there?"

"How long have you been with ABC?" or "I'm not that familiar with the aerospace industry; what are the biggest challenges you/your clients face?"

"It was nice talking with you; I'm going to grab a refill on my drink" or "I'd love to connect over coffee or lunch sometime."



Preparing for chit-chat *(continued)*

Being comfortable with having a spontaneous conversation allows you to connect and get to know new people quickly. Striking up a conversation with an unfamiliar face can be intimidating, but with some preparation and practice, you'll be able to talk to anyone anywhere.

- **Maintain eye contact and leave your phone in your pocket.** This shows your interest in the conversation and changes the emotional dynamic.
- **Ditch the sales pitch and show an interest in the person before an interest in their business.** A conversation that goes deeper than “what do you do” will leave a lasting impact.
- **Ask questions.** Everyone loves to talk about themselves, more than they care to learn about a stranger. Take a genuine interest in learning about your new connection by asking open-ended questions about a topic that interests them.
- **Close cordially.** Make your last act a good one, even if it's time for you to leave.

Watch Amy Cuddy's **Power Poses** TED talk to learn how to, “fake it till you make it,” if you're feeling hesitant about networking and making small talk.

