

A POCKET GUIDE TO NETWORKING

Networking is critical for personal and career success. Most jobs are filled with referrals and professional contacts before they can be publicly posted. Networking builds professional relationships that provide mentorship and sponsorship, workplace insights, and career development opportunities. Networking can also boost your visibility by making your skills known to the right people.

Tips for Everyone

- Focus on a few (such as “five to thrive”):
 - in your current or desired line of work
 - in a field of interest to you
- Grow the relationship:
 - periodic emails or texts
 - invites to interesting events
 - meet-up at a conference or locally
 - remembrance of milestones or anniversaries
- Find common ground:
 - Know something about the other person.
 - Engage in small talk, then expand upon it.
 - Talk about things they like or are passionate about.
 - Seek ways to add value.
 - Show genuine interest in the other person.
- Stay in touch:
 - Keep it casual—stay in touch without being a burden.
 - Find ways to be helpful to the other person.
 - Respond to social media prompts.
- Reinvest in a strained or damaged relationship (in addition to new contacts).

Tips for Introverts

- Network in ways that you enjoy most.
- Set a connection goal (“3 new people”).
- Skip big events/gatherings for smaller ones.
- Focus on the quality of your existing network.

Mastering Small Talk

- Stay informed—know what is going on in the world each day.
- Become more social/visible—give people a chance to approach you.
- Be ready with your own ice breakers—ask questions that allow the other person to give unique responses, such as “What are you looking forward to today?” or “What was the high point of your weekend?”
- Rather than ask a direct question, offer a personal observation (such as relating to a shared reason for being somewhere together).
- Be interested, not interesting—show genuine curiosity and listen more than you speak.
- Observe something unique about the other person—and ask about it.
- Get comfortable with pauses.
- Build rapport through genuine interest:
 - Repeating the other person’s name back to them
 - Using positive body language to show interest
 - Asking the other person about herself/himself
- Connect with people by putting them at ease; use humor wisely to confront awkwardness or “the elephant in the room.”
- Avoid:
 - Complaining or gossiping
 - Intense or divisive topics
 - Overly personal questions
 - One-word responses (that sound like a dead-end to the other person)
- Know when it’s time to go—end a conversation politely with phrases such as, “I’ll let you go, but I’m glad we chatted” or, “It was great talking with you, I hope you enjoy the conference.”
- Make it a habit—have random interactions with people in your daily life.

