

Ten Top Tips for Excellent Networking!

1. BE CLEAR ABOUT WHY YOU WANT TO NETWORK

Make sure you are clear on your objectives – remember that the main reason for networking is to provide mutual benefit by connecting with people. It is not primarily about selling – sometimes investments have very long payback periods but nevertheless can be very productive along the way!

2. THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU CAN OFFER PEOPLE

What is it about you that people might find helpful or valuable? You may have some useful knowledge that they might find useful or you may have a number of contacts that may be helpful to them.

3. REMEMBER THAT NETWORKING IS AN ACQUIRED ART

Networking takes practice and you need to be brave and take a few risks, especially if you are shy. Here are some useful emotional state descriptions to think about which help conversations and contacts progress well – interested, human, enthusiastic, open, honest and yes, even nervous!

4. THINK ABOUT THE DIFFERENT WAYS YOU CAN NETWORK

Remember you can think about both online and offline networking. Think about your contacts with colleagues, customers, suppliers including both work and leisure contacts.

Why not join a face to face networking club or group and build up more connections?

Check your e mail over the last 12 months – who could you get back into contact with?

5. WRITE DOWN YOUR RECENT CONTACTS (LAST 12 MONTHS)

This can prove interesting – do you maintain a small or expanding group of contacts? Check your e mail – how many people have you “lost touch with” as a result of the pace of life and current work pressures? Decide to follow up on a few per month to re-establish contact.

6. NOW WRITE DOWN WHO YOU WOULD LIKE TO CONNECT WITH

Did the list in 5 create a few surprises?

Are there people who have literally “dropped off the radar”?

Are there some people who you think you could help outside of your current business and domestic communities?

7. THINK ABOUT THE BEST WAYS TO CONNECT UP

Think about a simple phone call. Everyone is suffering from e mail overload – your connection will just be another addition to their In Box. And be prepared to just leave a nice voicemail asking the person to give you an update call when convenient.

8. ACCEPT THAT YOU WILL NOT BE SUCCESSFUL IMMEDIATELY

Some people are very elusive but give them time to respond and follow up in a couple of weeks (this time by mail too)! You will be surprised at the response if you suggest they can call you in the evenings or weekends if they are too busy during the week

9. HAVE A PLAN

This way you will be able to measure your success. Check your diary and confirm that you are meeting people you want to help and reflect on the positive feedback from them.

10. START NOW

Be proactive now – you will feel the benefit of reconnecting (and starting some new connections) right away.

And please keep it going by perhaps reviewing on a quarterly basis.

These networking tips were provided by [Michael Beale and Steve Westall](#) who are the authors of [A Useful Guide to Networking](#).

More tips and tools at 247freetips.com