

WE KNOW

# MARKETING

## NETWORKING

QUICK GUIDE

This Quick Guide covers tips and etiquette elements to making your networking work well for you and your business.

### NETWORKING TIPS

We appreciate that the term 'networking' is open to interpretation and potentially has a different meaning for everybody. But whether you're a newbie to the networking or an old hand, there's always something new to learn.

- **Remember why you're there**

To network. The free food and drink might be appealing, but they're not the reason you're attending a networking event. Remember to:

- Focus on business
- Remember names and collect business cards
- Talk briefly, but effectively, and don't bore people
- Set yourself goals, such as making three good network contacts at an event, and work the room effectively.

- **Always be yourself**

You might not believe it, but people can easily see through a false front. Be relaxed at network events, talk easily, and enjoy yourself and the conversation. People will remember that.

- **Practice and plan your answer to the question 'what do you do?'**

This is a good opportunity to be using your elevator sales pitch.

- **Research the event you are attending**

Who is going and who could you meet?

- **Positive attitude**

- All great networkers have a positive attitude. They're not depressed by economic downturns, skyrocketing interest rates, or tax rate changes. Nor are they syrupy, over-evangelical, super-hyped sales people of the "gee, isn't like beautiful" variety
- Great networkers are honest about their struggles and their setbacks, but they exude an air of quiet assurance that regardless of the current struggle they will find a way around it. They're the type of people you just want to be around. If you want to be a great networker, you will need to cultivate a positive attitude. Hang around other positive people, learn to count your blessings, and always walk into a networking event prepared with at least one positive thing you can say when others ask "how's business going?"

- **Networking (the art of getting to know people – and in the business context, useful people) is second nature to some people and horribly daunting to others, especially when it comes to the more traditional networking events.**

If you fall into the second category, consider:

- Bringing a friend along (but don't spend the event talking to each other!)
  - Practicing an introduction of yourself until you are comfortable with it so you can break into a group without fear of having nothing to say
  - Thinking of some open questions for other attendees like "what line of business are you in?" to allow them to speak to you first
  - Giving yourself easy targets like 'I will talk to three new people' or 'I will just tell people about two of my products/services'.
- **Eating and drinking at networking functions**
    - Do one thing at a time – either have a drink or a bite to eat. It is difficult to juggle food and beverage, and still have a hand free for shaking hands
    - Avoid any foods that may get messy. If you do attempt the skewered meat and dipping sauce, have a napkin in hand to help you manage the runoff
    - When food is served with a toothpick, discard it properly. The toothpick never goes back on the serving tray. If a container is not provided, put the toothpick in your napkin, on your plate (if you have one), or on the tray that the server is using to collect empty glasses
    - Double-dipping is rude and unhealthy
    - Remember that events are not about the food
    - Using the Employers' Chamber staff to make introductions for you or to fall back on respite before going back to the crowd.
  - **Always follow up on those business cards, referrals and suggestions**
    - Not every one will pan out, but the people who network best are the ones who pay attention to detail. Simply collecting business cards isn't enough
    - Write some details about the individual that you have just met on the back of their business card and refer to it in conversation when you next meet.

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The Chamber has a range of resources available to help you implement the above tips into your business:

### Resources

#### Quick Guides

- Effective Communication
- Identifying Core Strengths
- Protecting Customer Relationships

### Training & Events

Strategic Planning

Business Expos

Networking Events

For further information on Effective Communication, or other aspects of communication, please contact The Chamber advisers, email [info@cecc.org.nz](mailto:info@cecc.org.nz) or phone 03 366 5096.

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