

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.

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 or phone 03 366 5096.