

## Networking Tips:

Your ultimate goal is to meet people and make a connection, not to sell anything. Think about the type of people you meet at a networking function that turn you off and avoid becoming one of those people.

### Pre-Event Preparation:

- **Pick your networking functions.** Choose the ones that will allow you to connect with the people you want to know.
- **Make a list of people you would like to meet (specific names or types of people.)** This will help you more efficiently connect at the event or through the people you meet.
- **Set a goal/objective.** Determine how many people you want to connect with and what you would like to accomplish with them. Use this to motivate you and keep you engaged for the entire function.
- **Eat beforehand.** Food and drink are common at networking functions. While it's OK to snack, you should avoid using them as your primary food source.
- **Appearance.** Appearance is important. While suit and tie is often not necessary, it is important to look professional.
- **Business Cards.** Make sure you have an ample supply of your cards at hand.
- **Elevator Speech.** Have a concise answer to the question, "What do you do?" prepared.

### During the Event:

- **Nametag Etiquette.** Clearly print your name and organization and place it over your right breast pocket.
- **Mingle.** If you are in a corner not talking to anyone, you are not networking. Get out and meet people!
- **It's all about them.** Keep your focus on the person you are talking to. Show sincere interest in them and their profession. Ask questions!
- **Make a connection.** Listen for ways that you can help others (not simply what product or service you can sell to them.) In most cases if you want to help them, they will want to help you.
- **The rule of three.** When possible, look for groups of one or two. It will be easier to make a connection and there is less likelihood someone will monopolize the conversation.
- **Open vs. Closed.** No matter what size group you join, make sure you are welcome. Open groups provide space for other networkers to enter. Closed groups are usually meeting face-to-face or in a circle. This prevents others from just joining in.
- **Watch the time.** Try and keep conversations to around 5 to 10 minutes. Your goal is to set up another meeting and continue networking. Get their business card and commit to follow up.
- **Get their Contact Information.** Ask for a card and permission to contact them in the future. (Tip: Keep your cards in one pocket and those received in another pocket.)
- **Document.** Discreetly write on the back of all cards received; 1. Date 2. Location/event where you met 3. Anything you promised 4. Follow-up topics

### Post-Event Follow-up

- **Review and rate.** Review the business cards you collected and prioritize them. Determine who you connected with and the probability of continuing a business relationship.
- **Follow-up.** Deliver what you promised as soon as possible. Send a card, e-mail, or call the people you met to thank them for connecting and ask for a follow-up meeting.