

Ten Top Tips to Network like a Pro

As they say, your network is your net worth, so are you networking like a pro? If not, fear not, there is time to learn. Hopefully this helpful guide will get you networking like a pro in no time.

Tip one: Be a farmer, not a hunter

If you are going to a networking event or joining a networking group, then everyone's intentions are to network, meet new people and see what local business is about. But no one likes the hunter that comes barging in, frantically goes from person to person and just shoves a business card in your face. Be a farmer – look for relationships to cultivate, and people you can add value to, not a hunter who looks for as many people as possible to give a business card to.

Tip two: Learn more about the people you think you don't need

We are often quick to judge who we do and don't need to speak to when at a networking event, but you never know where business connections, opportunities and referrals are going to lie in the future. Avoid the temptation of ignoring the people you think you "don't need", and actively try to learn more about everyone you meet but particularly people you *think* you can't do business with.

Tip three: Don't be closed minded

On that note, always go into a networking opportunity open minded. You really do not know who you are going to meet. In the few networking events I have been to in the last month, I have walked away with two free books (who doesn't love a freebie) and have found myself now invited to be speak at an event on dyslexia. Random but I love it!

Tip four: Explain what you do

Don't assume people will know what you do so don't be afraid to explain. Even if you think you do a job or have a business that is "normal" or that is well known, such as an accountant, electrician or PT, explain how you help people and how you work.

Tip five: Write on the business card where you met them

You might be one of those people with an annoyingly great ability to remember everything, but I like to write on the business card where I met the person. It saves me having to remember!

Tip six: Ask questions

There is nothing worse than being at a networking event and having someone talk about themselves for 15 minutes and not ask you any questions. Don't be that person. Ask questions. Try to ask questions too that are personal and a way to find out more about the person and their business. I love to ask, "what is your favourite project to work on?" or "who is your ideal client?"

*"The richest people in the world look for and build networks,
everyone else looks for work"*

Robert Kiyosaki, author of the Rich Dad, Poor Dad series

Tip seven: Think people, not positions

Don't be a hierarchy snob. Take interest in the person, not their position. Everyone has something to give.

Tip eight: It is no big deal

Don't make handing out your business cards or asking for a business card a big deal. It isn't. Just casually say "have you got a business card?" and their natural response will be to get it out and give it to you... then you can reciprocate and do the same. Easy right?

Tip nine: How do you spell that?

If you find it difficult to remember names, then ask the person how to spell their name. This will help you understand the pronunciation as well as help cement their name to memory.

Tip ten: Be memorable!

I met a great chap called Ian, who is a [regional director for the Business over Breakfast \(Bob\)](#) networking clubs who said his #1 tip was to be memorable. So true. What can you do to add value to the conversation or to that person? How can you make them remember you?

And finally...

Follow up! I make sure I always follow up on a new connection, dropping them a quick message to say hi in the next few days. Networking is not about having a massive stack of business cards or 1,000s of connections on LinkedIn you don't know. Following up will also help your new contact remember you, and after all, you want to be memorable!

Alice Dartnell, life and success coach

