

Networking Advice

Career Kickstart



Promote yourself and your skills

One of the best ways to explore your options is to talk to other people, otherwise known as networking.

The definition of networking is to interact with others to exchange information and develop professional or social contacts, and there are different types – professional, social, (such as the business-focused social network LinkedIn), face to face, and informal, (such as people you meet at weddings, or your neighbours).

Networking is important as it gives you chance to find help and support for any career problems you may be facing. It's a great way to find advice, to discover opportunities such as job vacancies, to research into a particular sector or job you might be interested in, and also to promote yourself and your skills.

Here's some advice on how to make the best impression at a networking event:

Mental: Positive attitude

Think confident and you will be perceived more positively than if you just go in to a networking session and think about how nervous you are.

Vocal: Project Don't mumble, but equally don't go over the top and shout! Try and speak slowly, and take a sip of water to slow yourself down. Practice in advance.

Physical: Dress code Not just what you wear, but also your posture and demeanour. Think about your handshake – what does it say about you? It is about getting a balance – be confident and get feedback from others. Offer your hand and remember to do the same when you exit. Think about how you stand and sit. Think twice about carrying plates of food and a drink – plus you might have your bag and your coat – don't over complicate matters for yourself.

An important part of networking is having confidence and self-awareness and learning how to behave in certain situations.

When you finish a conversation, ask the person you've been speaking to for their contact details, and find out if they're happy to connect on LinkedIn. End with a compliment and a handshake if appropriate.

Make a quick note to remember what you spoke about and any action points you may have agreed. Follow up within 48-72hrs and reintroduce yourself and the reason for wanting to continue your conversation.

Smile!



Here's a few other top tips for networking

- Remind yourself why you are going to the networking event
- Give yourself a target of how many people to speak to
- Don't play with your mobile phone
- Research about the event/people before you go so that you can focus on speaking to the right people
- Follow up formally/professionally – even if you got on very well with a person – you don't know who they may pass your email on to.
- Don't burn bridges – a contact might not be relevant or useful now but they may be in the future
- Remember to thank people for their time and smile!

For more great networking advice, visit

<https://www.jobs.ac.uk/careers-advice/managing-your-career/939/top-ten-tips-for-successful-networking>