

Effective Networking Skills



Adapted from Kendrick L. Harper Sr.'s
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Effective Networking Skills

❧ Build Your Networking Muscle

- ❧ Practice networking by attending lots of different networking events. You will meet many interesting people and contacts, some of which will become employers, great clients, colleagues or friends.

Effective Networking Skills

❧ Be Nice to Everyone You Meet

❧ I had a boss once who used to say “the very same person that you develop conflict with may be the one you need for support later on down the line.” You never know? Don’t burn any bridges and do your best to find a happy medium when faced with a difficult situation. Look for the win-win. You may not necessarily agree with everyone but you can agree to disagree and move on.

Effective Networking Skills

❧ Grow Your Relationship Database

- ❧ Most of the time you are only 4 or 5 people away from anything you ever want or need. All you have to do is ask. Work to develop a core relationship with individuals who have influence in areas you aspire to grow. Ask for business cards...and don't lose them!

Effective Networking Skills

❧ Communicate

- ❧ Develop a database and maintain regular and consistent contact with influential people. Face to face contact is the more personal approach when it's convenient. When you can't meet in person then a phone call or personal note works well too. Send an "it was nice to meet you" note. Use social media responsibly.

Effective Communication

❧ **Keep it Simple**

❧ Look at where you are spending your time and your precious energy. What is generating you the best results? Those are the activities you want to continue doing and do more of. Get rid of the time and/or money wasting activities. Work on being the best “You” and others will take notice.

Effective Networking Skills

❧ Build Rapport

- ❧ Are you a people magnet or a people repellent? What are you projecting outwardly? Make sure others see you as a positive, warm and approachable individual they would like to interact with. Make sure your positive personality and outlook is attracting relationships and not pushing them away.

Effective Networking Skills

❧ Set Goals

- ❧ If you have a clear vision of where you are going, the rest will fall into place. Make sure you decide on what you want short, medium and longer term and in every area of your life. Develop an elevator speech and know where you see yourself in the next three, five, and ten years. What's your outlook for the future.

Effective Networking Skills

❧ Have a Positive Approach

- ❧ It is important to understand that behavior is a form of communication. Be mindful of your body language. It can say a lot about you. Work on things such as your posture and your tone of voice when engaged in communication.

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❧ Handshake and Eye Contact

- ❧ A good handshake conveys to others that you are a confident person with good social skills and personal qualities. A good handshake leaves a lasting impression of professionalism, sincerity and confidence. Make and hold eye contact for approximately three seconds to let the other person know you fully acknowledge their presence.

Effective Networking Skills

❧ Be an Active Listener

- ❧ Maintain good eye contact with the person speaking. Try not to interrupt and make mental notes of topics you wish to respond to. A nod of the head or smile lets the speaker know they have your attention. When it's your turn to speak begin by repeating the speakers name and small inserts of the speakers discussion to acknowledge your understanding of the discussion.

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❧ Develop Small Talk

- ❧ There's nothing small about small talk. It's more of an "ice breaker" to spark conversation. It can be about something as simple as the weather or current events. Try and stay away from more controversial small talk discussions which may be offensive to someone else. It could mean a very short conversation and leave a negative impression of you. Know your audience. Prepare before an event...watch the news, read the newspaper.

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❧ Appearance and Grooming

- ❧ “You never get a second chance to make a first impression.” How well you maintain your personal hygiene and how you dress for the occasion speaks volumes without saying one word. You don’t want to be the one that feels out of place. Inquire about the dress code for an event before arriving.

Effective Networking Skills

❧ Introducing Yourself & Your Elevator Speech

- ❧ Create a working Bio of yourself and memorize it. Who knows you better than you. Be prepared to tell your story on short notice. Your introduction should include your full name. Your elevator speech should include concise information that can be shared in roughly forty-five seconds to one minute. Thank the person for their time when the discussion ends.