



THE ART OF NETWORKING

PURPOSE OF NETWORKING

Networking **IS NOT**:

- Brown-nosing.
- Asking for a job.
- Schmoozing.
- Torture.
- An imposition on others.
- Using people.
- Asking for a favor.
- A one-time deal.

Networking **IS**:

- How 80% of all jobs are found.
- Building contacts in an area of law in which you're interested.
- Making new friends.
- An information-gathering tool.
- A way to stand out from the crowd.
- Fun.
- A long-term process.
- A tool to find jobs in the hidden job market.
- Stepping outside your comfort zone.
- A life skill that you'll use as a lawyer.
- The key to successful job searches!

Even if your paper credentials are not as strong as you would like, good networking skills can help turn you into a strong job candidate.

How to Make Small Talk

From Debra Fine's The Fine Art of Small Talk

Small talk serves an important function—without it, you rarely get to the *real conversation*.

1. **Take the risk:** it is up to you to take the risk of starting a conversation with a stranger.
 2. **Assume the burden:** it is up to us to assume the burden of conversation. It is our responsibility to come up with topics to discuss, to remember people's names and to introduce them to others. It is up to us to relieve the awkward moments or fill the pregnant pause.
- Small talk is a valuable personal and professional thread that connects people.
 - Improving conversation skills can enhance leadership abilities, reduce your anxiety about social situations, boost confidence, lead to new friendships, and more.



FIND THAT APPROACHABLE PERSON.

Approachable person = makes eye contact with you or who is not actively engaged in a conversation or other activity such as reading a newspaper or working on a computer. It's the solitary person getting a bite to eat, someone sitting alone at a table, or the one crossing the room unescorted.

INTRODUCE YOURSELF. Go up to someone, extend your hand, make eye contact, smile and say, "Hello, my name is_. It's nice to meet you."

IT'S UP TO YOU TO START A CONVERSATION.

#1 Social fear in America = Public Speaking.

#2 Fear = Starting a conversation with a stranger.

EXAMPLES OF BUSINESS ICEBREAKERS.

1. Describe a typical day on the job.
2. What got you started in this industry/area of practice?
3. What do you enjoy most about your profession?
4. What's the most difficult part of your job?

Remember the following **4 steps** and you're on your way to a good chat:

1. Make eye contact.
2. Smile.
3. Find that approachable person!
4. Offer your name and use theirs.

EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL ICEBREAKERS.

1. Tell me about your family/work/firm/history.
2. What's a typical day like for you?
3. What books/movies have you seen recently and would you recommend them?
4. Tell me something exciting about your work/life/family that's going on right now.

STARTING WITH A STATEMENT.

1. What a great conference! Tell me about the sessions you attended.
2. It's been great working together for months now, tell me about some of your outside interests/how you came to the firm/what you've learned since working here.

AN ELEVATOR SPEECH

Can be delivered in the time it takes to ride the elevator with someone (30 to 60 seconds).

It is also the answer to the question, "So tell me about yourself." It's an overview of yourself.

- ✓ Leaves listener with lasting, positive impression, and should make him/her say "tell me more."
- ✓ Personal branding.
- ✓ Differentiates you from your peers.
- ✓ You can position yourself as a leader or specialist that can fill a particular role.
- ✓ Consider your audience & adjust your speech accordingly.
- ✓ Rehearse it often.



- ✓ Keep it fresh and updated.

Tips for creating an “elevator speech”:

- ✓ Write down important points and concepts that highlight your services and yourself.
- ✓ Write out 4 to 5 sentences using keywords and concepts.
- ✓ Use action verbs and easy to understand language.
- ✓ Keep it short and informative.
- ✓ Edit it until it is as brief as possible while still conveying desired message.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE EXPERTS

NETWORKING IN SOCIAL SITUATIONS

PREP WORK

- Rehearse a short description of yourself before you attend the first event/meeting. Make it one that connects your interest in this organization with your talents and career goals. If you can't come up with that kind of introduction, you may be getting involved with the wrong group.
- Consider bringing a friend along as a way to double the number of contacts you can make, but agree ahead of time to split up so that you will not talk to each other all night. You both need to meet new people.
- Make sure you dress appropriately.
- Resolve to be brave. It's very tempting to spend your time in a social setting with fellow students or people you know, but tell yourself you can hang out with them later.
- Be well rested and well fed before the event. To be able to meet and talk with new people at the event, you will need to be energetic, and you won't have much time to eat.
- If you are given a nametag to wear, place it on your right, rather than left, lapel. This way, it will be directly in a person's line of vision when you are shaking hands.
- Make sure that your purse or briefcase strap does not obscure your nametag.

THE FIRST IMPRESSION

- Target someone close to your own age with a friendly smile as your first approach.
- When introducing yourself to someone, smile, **shake hands firmly** and state your name clearly (even if you are wearing a name tag). Pause briefly between saying your first and last name.
- Use a simple opening line which gives the other person the opportunity to talk. For example, “Hi, I’m Joe Smith from UW Law School. Did you attend the fracking conference? What did you think?”
- Lawyers LOVE to talk about themselves, so just get the ball rolling for them, “When did you start working at the Attorney General’s Office? What did you do before then?” Listen for common areas of interest to discuss.
- Examples of additional topics to develop are the event you are attending, the sponsoring organization of the event, the person’s firm or practice area, current cultural or sports events, or current news events.
- Maintain **eye contact** when talking. Eye contact communicates sincerity and interest.
- Dr. Albert Mehrabian, author of Silent Messages, conducted several studies on nonverbal communication. He



found that **93% of daily communication is non-verbal**, split between voice tenor, facial expression, gestures etc.

- Do not tell ethnic, religious, political, sexual, or gender jokes. Also avoid these areas as topics of conversation.
- Try to remember the names of the people you meet. The best way to do this is by repeating a person's name two or three times as a natural part of your conversation.
- Collect business cards as appropriate, make notations on the back of the card to remind you of where you met them, what you discussed and any unique things you learned from them.

THE LITTLE THINGS MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

- Smile often, and convey genuine interest in the other person and in what is being said.
- If you are carrying a beverage, carry it in your left hand so your right hand is free to shake hands.
- Even if you met a person earlier that day, you should still state your name when you meet them again. You can safely assume that the person has spoken to at least a dozen other students over the course of the day and would appreciate a reminder such as, "Hi Linda. We met earlier today. I'm Mary Walters from UW." This holds true when you meet someone again at a later function, remind them why they may recognize you with a simple reference, "Hello Mr. Smith, it's nice to see you again. We met last year at the State Bar Conference, how has your year been in Casper?"
- To stay in top form, limit alcohol consumption to one drink and avoid messy foods. DO NOT overdrink at any social function in which you need to appear professional.

THAT'S A WRAP

- Do not take it personally if you try to talk to someone and he or she does not engage with you after you have given it a good try. Move on and talk to someone else.
- Remember that you are trying to achieve quality of contacts rather than quantity of contacts. Try to learn as much as you can about each person's firm/organization, practice, and interests. Try to impart similar information about yourself. In the end, you should be able to remember something distinctive about the other person.
- It is fine to keep your conversations to five minutes or less. You have a lot of people to meet. If appropriate, ask for an opportunity for further conversation and further advice.
- Do not ask directly for a job, but do ask for referrals to other contacts.
- When you are ready to exit a conversation, let the other person or persons know that you are happy to have met them and ask for their business card.

AFTER THE EVENT

- Review any business cards you received and make notes about the people you spoke with and what you talked about. It can be helpful to jot notes on the back of business cards (later, of course; not in front of the person); make a note of things that will help you remember the person, e.g., "Son goes to CU- Boulder. She practices energy law. Just got back from vacation to Slovenia."
- Follow up by e-mail or letter to any person with whom you made a connection, if appropriate. Reference



the setting at which you met and something you discussed. Think about how you can offer to be helpful to this person. For example, offer to follow a legal issue of interest to him or her. See sample emails in informational interviewing.

- Follow through.