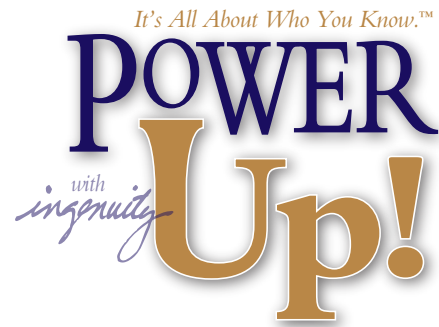


Basic Networking Best Practices



Entering a Conversation

During networking, it's important to know how to enter a conversation that is already underway. While it's essential to take this risk, make sure that you are sensitive to the others in the conversation before you attempt to enter their group. Watch people's body language and listen to the tone of their conversation for clues.

Tips for Including Without Intruding

- Avoid approaching two people who look as though they are having an intense conversation. Usually they will look totally preoccupied.
- Approach groups of three or more. (You can approach groups of two it's just a little harder.) Position yourself close to the group. Give only facial feedback to the comments being made (a nod, a smile, etc.). When you feel yourself included, either by verbal acknowledgement or eye contact, you are free to join in the conversation.
- Be open to others who "want in." When you see someone on the edge of your conversational group, remember how uncomfortable you feel in that situation.
- If you merely want to extend a greeting to someone in the conversation, you might say, "Excuse me for interrupting, but I wanted to say hello." Then move away. You may find that your interruption is welcome and that you are invited to stay and chat.

Exiting a Conversation

"Excuse me, it's been lovely (or substitute interesting) talking with you." That's all you have to say. To make the exit easier, wait until you have just finished a comment. Then smile and say, "Excuse me, it was nice meeting you." [See the reverse side of this handout for other phrases that can be used to exit a conversation.]

Presenting Your Business Card

Present your business card face up, the printing towards them so the person can read it. Treat their card with respect and try to avoid writing on it in front of them. It is a piece of them and many people may find it offensive.

Other Important Tips to Remember

- Adopt a positive attitude. If you don't want to be there, don't go. People will be able to tell and you will make a bad impression.
- Focus on the benefits of the event. Why are you attending this event? How can it benefit you? Think about these things before you attend.
- Plan your self-introduction. State your first and last name, company, position and something interesting about your work or role.
- Check your business card supply. You don't want to run out.
- Remember eye contact and a smile.
- Have a good firm handshake.
- Nametags go on the right side.
- If you are uncomfortable going to an event, use the "buddy system." Bringing a friend is always helpful because the two of you can easily introduce each other to strangers and people that each of you know at the event.