

Top Tips for Working the Room

(Adapted from an article by Jeffrey Horn of Towers Perrin)

Level I – Beginner Learnings

Before the Reception

1. Think about who will be attending. Who do you want to meet? Who can you introduce to whom?
2. Practice your self-introduction
3. Bring a stack of business cards
4. Have some topics to talk about

In General

5. Arrive early
6. Wear your name tag on the right
7. Avoid off-color humor
8. Avoid smoking
9. Avoid being loud
10. Avoid complaining
11. Don't sit
12. Avoid excessive food and drink

Introductions

13. Meet more people rather than fewer
14. Focus on introductions and relationships, not selling

Conversations

15. Look at and encourage the speaker
16. Resist interrupting
17. Spend 85% of time listening (and asking questions about other person)
18. Try to spend 5 minutes not using the word "I"

Remembering Names

19. Repeat the name throughout conversation (judiciously)
20. Ask for business cards and look at card

Body Language

21. Smile
22. Make and maintain eye contact
23. Speak at a medium pace and clearly
24. Stand up straight

Graceful Exit

25. Keep one hand free to shake hands in next interaction
26. Don't be afraid to say, "Excuse me, I see someone I need to say hello to"



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Follow-Up

27. Send thank you notes
28. Follow-up on anything you promised to do (send materials, provide names, set lunch mtg.)

Level II – Intermediate Learnings

Before the Reception

1. Create an action plan of how you are going to “work” the event
2. Set one goal for the event and write it down – make the goal attainable (e.g., meet two individuals and collect two business cards)
3. Get a copy of the attendee list

At the Reception

4. Position yourself near the door or near the bar
5. Think of yourself more as a host and act accordingly
6. Avoid sizing up name tags
7. Avoid the “sympathy vote” by beginning conversations complaining (about health, weather, etc.)
8. Carry a half glass of beverage and order only half a glass to greater facilitate separation

Introductions

9. Initiate handshakes, but respect people’s personal space
10. Repeat the name of the person when you meet them
11. Be sure you have a brief, effective intro of yourself
12. Look for individuals with “white knuckles.” Although they may be wallflowers, they might be valuable people to spend time with

Conversations

13. Use active listening skills
14. Refer back to conversation later in the dialogue – “As you said earlier ...”
15. When you enter a group; listen for a minute or two before joining in
16. Focus on being interested vs. being interesting
17. Try to find two things in common with other person

Remembering Names

18. Introduce yourself in a way that teaches people your name: “My name is Jim Hanley – it rhymes with manly.”



Business Cards

19. Make notes on the back of a person's business card
20. Keep your cards in an easy to reach pocket

Body Language

21. Be relaxed
22. Watch when you nod
23. Pause and listen
24. Don't look over your shoulder
25. Be sensitive to body language

Graceful Exit

26. Spend no more than four to seven minutes, then, move on
27. Excuses include: having to make a phone call; get a drink; go to the restroom; say hello to someone you see
28. Follow-up as soon as possible (3 to 5 days)
29. In follow-up letters, see if you can remember something to ask them to send you

Level III – Advanced Learnings

Before the Reception

1. Pick one name from the registration list to call. "I noticed you were also attending this conference and I was wondering if you were going to the reception as well. I was hoping to steal a few minutes and meet you to find out more about you and the ABC Company."
2. Think of several questions in advance: "How would I know if I ran into your ideal client?"
3. If attending with co-workers, share thoughts, strategy, and mental checklist of action items before attending

At the Reception

In General

4. Study clothing, shoes, etc., - you can tell many books by their cover
5. Never sit at an empty table or next to an empty chair
6. Work one-on-one or with small groups
7. Never be critical of anyone at the reception
8. Be extra courteous to the staff
9. Volunteer your name
10. Split up with colleagues and circulate
11. When introducing someone, tell a bit about each person
12. If you have met two people, introduce them to each other
13. Introductions are perfect times to "market" new colleague

Conversations

14. Ask for interpretations: "What do you mean by 'often'?"
15. Control your body language
16. Be hypersensitive
17. Ask questions requiring more than a one-word answer
18. Explore comments another makes

Remembering Names

19. Ask the other person their name and then spend time on it, asking the person about self, unusual sounding name, or another aspect of her introduction
20. Give a memorable description of self, and self-deprecating is okay: "I'm the only one here who can't break 150 on the golf course."
21. Use notes on business cards to forward articles of interest

Body Language

22. Keep a level head
23. Don't fidget
24. Use entire physical being to express yourself
25. Don't respond to distractions
26. Show people what you mean
27. Maintain an approachable expression

Graceful Exit

28. "Well, I don't want to take up all your time. I'm sure you have other people you want to talk to and so do I. I'd like to continue our conversation, so why don't we plan to get together? I'll call you next week." Follow up.
29. Stay in touch

Power Networking is Not
Collecting stacks of business cards
Selling
Focusing on your agenda
Being superficial
Walking over people
Bombarding people with E-mail



Power Networking is
A means to accomplish goals
Giving while expecting nothing in return
Genuinely caring about others



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**Integrating Power
Networking Into Your Life**
Act like a host
Find common ground
Ask for a guest list
Look for someone
Let others do the talking
Engage in high-energy conversation




High-Energy Questions

"What do you love most about your work?"

"How would I know if I was talking to someone who would be an ideal client for you?"

"What's the most notable trend in your industry?"

"How did you get started in this business?"




High-Energy Questions
Continued

"What's the most exciting project you're involved in right now?"

"How has the economy affected your business?"

"What's the most interesting book you've read in the last three months?"



Additional Tips

Wear name tag on right side


Spend 5 minutes without using the word "I"

Carry a half glass of beverage

Repeat a person's name

Use active listening skills

Find two things in common



Self Introduction Continued

Not: "Hi, I'm Barbara Nichols Mencer. I'm a business coach."

Rather: "Hi, My name is Barbara Nichols Mencer. I work with professionals who feel anonymous in the marketplace. I help them create and implement strategies that bring clients in the door."



Self Introduction Continued

Not: "I'm a lawyer."

Rather: "I'm an attorney who works with clients in the real estate industry to help them get their projects built."

Or, "I'm a lawyer with the law firm of John Smith & Associates. We protect your rights in court."



Self Introduction Continued

Or, "I help corporations comply with Delaware's unique corporate laws."

Or, "I aggressively defend professionals who are sued by their clients."

Or, "I provide cost-effective representation to small businesses like yours."



Self Introduction Continued

For Community Organization:

"I'm an attorney who works with clients in the real estate industry to help them solve disputes and get their projects built."



Self Introduction Continued

For Real Estate Trade Group:

"I represent contractors, developers and architects with zoning issues and contract disputes related to their development projects."



Self Introduction Continued

Tailor your introduction:

"I represent a number of developers and managers of shopping centers involving disputes they are having with their tenants."