



A Guide to (Happy and Creative) Networking

- In the words of the Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy...Don't Panic!!! Networking is all about building relationships. Its extremely unlikely that you will make any immediate sales at an event (although it does happen), but you may make useful contacts, new friends, potential collaborators or a few drinking buddies.
- Do your groundwork: make sure you have enough business cards, that you know exactly where and when the event is (obvious maybe but easy to forget), and observe any dress codes.
- Check out the attendees list, make a note of anyone you would especially like to speak to and commit their names to memory. Don't panic about remembering everyone or everything about them, at most events this would be completely impossible, so chill out and get curious on the night instead.
- Ask questions!!! Especially if you are nervous, it's useful to remember that everyone loves to talk about themselves. If you are lost for words, be interested instead.
- Make sure you have a short and interesting way to describe what you do. If you need to, practise beforehand!
- Relationship building is about creating opportunities for yourself but also for other people. Find out how you could help the people you meet, make referrals and remember to introduce them to others in your network who could become useful contacts. It may sound obvious but it's called networking for a reason. Building your network of contacts may directly produce sales, but will also give you a list of well-disposed suppliers, potential associates and referral-givers.
- It's a networking event NOT a singles bar...but it's okay to walk up to a complete stranger and say hello. In fact, its okay to walk up to as many people as possible and say hello. If you need to move on, just say so, politely, noone will think the worse of you for it.
- Remember to take business cards from everyone you meet. After the event you can send an email to say it was good to meet them, and set up a meeting if appropriate. Often just saying hello will be the start of a longer-term relationship and will make sure they remember who you are.

Above all, its supposed to be fun so relax, enjoy yourself, and wait and see where the relationships you create might lead.