

On Networking — Top 10 Tips to Meet New People

Career Development



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Fear not! Networking is just a fancy word for meeting new people. Here are ten practical tips to help you get out there, shake hands, and have fun!

In advance

#1. Review the attendee list

At smaller events, ask to see the list of registered attendees. Scan the list and identify those who interest you. Are they from a company in your industry? Do they have a similar professional role? Identify three to five people you'd like to meet and consider connecting with them on LinkedIn beforehand to arrange an in-person chat at the event. This way, you'll already have some key contacts looking out for you.

In your mind

#2. Everyone is looking for new friends

> Just smile and start talking!

People attend in-person networking events because they want to meet others. They’re unlikely to reject your attempt to start a conversation. Just smile and start talking!?

#3. Connect, don't transact

Sometimes people show up with an agenda. You may want to introduce yourself to Big GC to get the big job; vendors may want to introduce you to their super-duper AI-enabled contract management system. That's OK!

Remember that business relationships start with personal connections, which take time to develop. Focus on building a few authentic connections instead of pursuing immediate returns. Don’t sell hard; connect first and follow up later.

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Build genuine and personal connections that will last over time opposed to instantaneous ties with other in-house counsel.

#4. Be grateful

Remember the isolation of 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19? Now, being in a crowded room with people who want to meet and engage each other is a privilege. Never take community for granted. Be grateful and go for it!

In the room

#5. Quality, not quantity

Success is not distributing dozens of business cards across the room. Success is having a few quality conversations where people remember you and feel a real connection.



#6. Listen, to learn

You already know yourself, so just talking about yourself is probably boring. After introducing yourself, focus on others — ask questions, learn what matters to others, and spark unexpected conversations. In a recent event, the loud crowded room led to a fascinating conversation learning about AI advances in hearing aid technologies to enhance speech recognition and filter out background noise.

#7. If you are bored, move on

Sometimes conversations sputter, especially when somebody is selling you something. Politely excuse yourself to get a drink, take a bathroom break, step outside, and then head back if you want. No need to get stuck to be polite.

#8. Exchange contact information

It’s sad to have a great conversation and then not know how to continue the conversation with your new friend after you leave the event. Generate and share your LinkedIn profile QR code so that other folks can easily connect and follow up with you on LinkedIn. Offer to take and share photos from the event, providing a natural reason to exchange contact details.

Afterward

#9. Follow-up note

After the event, send a quick email or LinkedIn message to affirm your new connection. Share any event photos, offer to introduce them to someone in a related field, send a news article to continue the subject of your conversation, or simply thank them for speaking with you.



Make use of technology today — QR codes are an easy way to stay connected with others after networking engagements. MaximP / *Shutterstock.com*

Most importantly…

#10. Have fun!

Everyone, especially lawyers, should not take themselves too seriously. Embrace the joy of meeting new people and experiencing new things together. At a recent event, our group of new friends invited us to a delightful dance afterparty. Go with the flow — enjoy the experience!

This article was inspired by a LinkedIn post on networking by Andrew Ting. Feel free to reach out and connect with Andrew Ting or Carrie Liu on LinkedIn!

Join ACC

Andrew Ting



Chief Legal Officer and Corporate Secretary

Panorama Education

Andrew Ting is chief legal officer and corporate secretary at Panorama Education. He is also adjunct faculty at Georgetown University’s McDonough School of Business and the George Washington University Law School. He is also on the Board of Advisors for the Association of Corporate Counsel National Capital Region’s Leadership Academy.

Carrie Liu



Assistant General Counsel & Assistant Secretary

FUJIFILM Holdings America Corporation

Carrie Liu is assistant general counsel and assistant secretary at FUJIFILM Holdings America Corporation.