

GO TO NETWORKING EVENTS WITH A PLAN



Summary: *Networking events can lead to awkward situations that no one is sure how to get out of with the proper preparation, you can lead the way to ending a bad conversation and moving on to the next person.*

Attending networking events are never anyone's ideal place to be. Some of the events are a lot like speed dating where you always seem to end up with the person that doesn't stop talking about themselves or their cat. You may spend 15 minutes talking with the person without getting in more than three words or to ask for their card. Luckily, you can prepare yourself beforehand to know how to get out of awkward conversations.

When going to a networking event, have a plan. **Target those that are most relevant** or can be the most useful for you. When you start a conversation and learn that there is nothing in common between you, politely offer to take their card and let them know when you hear of any opportunities that fit their criteria.

Never be afraid to **end the conversation**. The person might be a little put-off at first but remember that wasting their time is a bigger put-off. Say something like "It was so nice to meet you. I will let you network with some other people now." Or you can make an excuse that you need to use the bathroom, refresh your drink, make a phone call, etc.

The exchange of business cards is not always necessary. When they have nothing to offer you and vice versa, getting or giving your card is not as important. You still can exchange cards for politeness sake or just in case something does come up that they could of service for.

Be open about how your relationship could benefit each other. If there are no benefits, do not try to force your card on them or make them give you their card if they are not interested. There will be no future to the relationship anyways. Another tip is to start the conversation with your name and handing them your business card. Then the question of when to ask for their card or give them yours is solved.

Offer your services first before asking for something from them. Once you offer something first, most people will offer something in return. This kind of attitude will help you gain better relationships and interactions at events.

The biggest thing to remember is that everyone is at the event for the same reasons, they are trying to meet and exchange contact details just like you. Don't get embarrassed about being the pro-active member of the conversation because in the end it will save you time and energy.

Photo: planaheadevents.com