

Networking Survival 101: It's a Jungle (of Clingers, Floaters, and Magnets) Out There!

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Seven Tips for Mastering a Networking Reception

1. Get Comfortable With Being Uncomfortable!

Target opportunities and people based on their strategic importance. Start at the border of your comfort zone and push yourself a little bit each time.

2. Plan Ahead

Review the guest list, set goals for your desired outcome(s) plan your attire and have your business cards ready.

3. Scan The Room

Remember to look for the four types of people: floaters, magnets, loners and clingers. Steer yourself toward the floaters and try not to be a clinger.

4. Impress With Your First Impressions

Lead with a firm handshake (a nod and a smile are good substitutes) and maintain comfortable eye contact. Use compliments and jokes carefully--stick to "safe" topics--and limit alcohol consumption.

5. Act Interested and Be Interesting

Enter a group by saying something positive. Be sure to have topics to contribute. Remember that you are selling your brand, so make it memorable and unique!

6. It's Okay to Exit...But Do It *Gracefully*

Everyone is there to mingle, and you can use someone else's entrance as an excuse to exit a conversation. Be sure you end on a high note by leaving with a smile and a few business cards.

7. Follow Up

Within a few days of the event, reach out to those whom you met via e-mail or LinkedIn and refer to something memorable from your conversation. It is up to you to stay in touch!

Useful Resources:

1. <http://thenetworkingworkshop.com/networking-advice-2/>
2. <http://blogs.hbr.org/glickman/2012/12/confessions-of-a-networking-pr.html>
3. http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2012/01/the_introverts_guide_to_networ.html
4. The Introvert's Guide to Success in Business and Leadership (eBook) by Lisa Petrilli
5. *Quiet: the Power of Introverts in a World that Can't Stop Talking*