

BUSINESS 3 NETWORKING TIPS STRAIGHT FROM AN EXPERT

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Do you enjoy networking? Really enjoy it? If you answered no, then you're not alone. Most people consider themselves to be shy or introverted at networking events. Many are uncomfortable with networking because the practice seems unnatural to them. However, some of these same people possess great social skills in other situations. Having the confidence to network can be a great asset in your journey to growth and career development.



So, is it possible to make networking a less painful process? Is it possible to even — dare we say — enjoy it? The answer is yes! There are a few critical networking tips you can use to actually enjoy the experience and make that connection.

According to Susan RoAne, author of [*How to Work a Room: The Ultimate Guide to Making Lasting Connections*](#), the key to success is utilizing a mix of “socialization skills” and “networking tactics.” In her book which was featured in an [SHRM Viewpoint article](#), RoAne says there are separate skillsets for social interactions than for business networking. By combining the two, you become more comfortable with interacting with others on a social level, thus leading to a better connection. To enjoy your next networking event, follow these 3 networking tips straight from an expert.

Tip #1 Focus on Preparation

Researching the event, members, and attendees before your arrival is critical to your



success. Similar to preparing for an interview, knowing more about the people and organizations you will be meeting will help you prepare a meaningful introduction. Thinking about a few significant topics to discuss will also help you feel less intimidated when you actually meet them in person.

Tip #2 Practice, practice, practice

Practicing a short introduction of yourself and connecting it to the event in a meaningful way will make you more confident because you'll feel prepared and have an idea of what you can contribute to a conversation beforehand. In addition, think of some relevant conversation starters, icebreakers, or a personal story to initiate an interesting exchange.

Tip #3 Smile and Be Approachable

Finally, you want to make sure that you seem approachable for people to talk to. RoAne proposes some easy ways to do this is with a welcoming smile or an interesting article of clothing like a fun tie or a unique piece of jewelry. The idea is to create an opportunity to start a dialogue, establish some common ground, and show a bit of your personality. Once the conversation is flowing, it will be much simpler to forge great connections, both personally and professionally.

Networking like a pro doesn't mean you have to leave your personality at the door. Connecting with others is far more comfortable when you are prepared, confident, and naturally yourself so they have the opportunity to get to know you well. Follow these networking tips next time you have trouble making connections. If you would like to learn more about networking opportunities in our area, [contact our office today](#). We are part of many professional organizations and would love to assist you in developing a knack for networking.