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## **8 Steps to Make Networking Work** **Enjoyable, Effective, and Efficient**

Before your next networking event, take the time to prepare for it.

***Networking: a reciprocal process that is mutually beneficial where we share leads, ideas, and information. It enhances our personal and professional lives. It involves follow-up behaviors that create ongoing connections.***

### **1. Know what the event is.**

What is the event and what is the purpose for this event? Who will be there? How long will it last? Where is it being held?

### **2. Focus on Outcome desired.**

What do you plan to gain from attending this event? What is your purpose?

### **3. Plan your self-introduction**

Know what you will say. Practice saying your name, who you work for, and what you do. Remember to make this interesting. Ideally you want this self-introduction to start a conversation.

### **4. Check your business cards**

Make sure you have an adequate supply of clean business cards.

### **5. Prepare your small talk.**

Small talk is difficult for most people. So come up with 3 to 4 good questions you can use when introduced to someone.

“Are you a member of this organization?”

“What is your company’s greatest challenge in this economy?”

“How do you see our city changing?”

### **6. Remember to make Eye Contact and Smile**

Don’t you just hate it when you are talking to someone that keeps looking around the room for someone more “important”?

### **7. Practice your Handshake**

Make your handshake firm, but not a hand crusher.

### **8. Follow Up**

Send a note or an email to someone you met. Call someone about having coffee. Networking is a waste of time unless you follow up and develop business leads or new clients.