

JLD Annual Conference 11th July 2009

Networking Presentation notes Session leader: Luke Cunliffe

Why do we need to network?

- Bring in business
- Jobs
- Make business contacts
- Competitor analysis
- Personal branding

Definition of networking:

- Meeting people for the purpose of initiating fruitful business relationships

Context for this presentation:

- All business events including seminars, conferences, networking events

Preparing oneself:

- Clothing (find out dress code in advance)
- Hygiene
- Emotions (be in the right frame of mind)
- Equipment (business cards, pen and paper)

Strategy/Objectives for an event:

- How many people would you like to meet?
- Is there anyone in particular you'd like to meet?
- If possible, review the attendance list beforehand
- Contact people of particular interest in advance and let them you'd like to meet them
- What are you looking for from each event and new contact?
- What do you have to offer?

What makes a bad first impression?

- Poor handshake
- Little or no eye contact (can look shifty)
- Too much eye contact (intense staring is intimidating, offputting and just plain weird)
- Lack of enthusiasm
- Dishevelled clothing
- Messy hair
- Drunk
- Invading personal space
- Staying too far away
- Selling
- Scratching oneself and other undesirable physical habits/mannerisms
- Talking over the top of other people
- Not saying anything at all
- Bad breath
- Forgetting names
- Talking only about oneself and not enquiring about others
- Swearing
- Telling rude jokes

What makes a good first impression?

- Firm handshake
- Make and maintain reasonable eye contact
- Without being phoney, be polite and enthusiastic
- Maintain a tidy appearance
- Stay sober
- Respect personal space
- Listen as well as contribute to conversation
- Keep breath fresh
- Try to remember names, repeat them aloud when introduced
- Be interested in others to be interesting to them
- Ask good questions
- Be considerate with conversation topics

Working a room:

- Arrive early or on time otherwise you may find groups and pairs have already formed
- First - Go for people standing alone – they're easier to approach
- Second - Go for groups of three or more, stand on the edge, make eye contact with someone (not the person speaking) and smile
- Third/last - Go for people standing in pairs, particularly if they appear engrossed in a conversation (clues will be they're facing each other and seem oblivious to outsiders)
- Introducing colleagues is often easier than introducing ourselves and blowing our own trumpet

Body Language:

- Maintain a calm, confident and relaxed manner
- Smile frequently
- Maintain eye contact
- Avoid fidgeting

Introducing yourself:

- Give your first name
- Offer your hand for a handshake
- Avoid elevator pitches and quirky introductions
- Offer 2-3 small pieces of information, i.e. name of your employer or what you do
- As you get further into the conversation volunteer other pieces of information such as which department you work in, what kind of law you practice
- If your contact looks a little clueless about what you do make it easy for them by explaining simply what kind of work you handle – this can be done by using a recent case study or saying what you're working on currently or saying what a typical day entails

Small talk > big talk:

Topics you CAN talk about:

- Weather
- Travel
- Holidays
- Where you live
- Current affairs
- Sport (within reason)
- Arts
- Literature
- Leisure

The aim is purely to find common ground

Topics best left for other occasions:

- Coarse jokes
- Sex
- Religion
- Fanatical politics

Ending conversations:

- Avoid lying

- Don't abandon people and leave them on their own

Excuses you could make include:

- have to go to the restrooms
- have to get another drink
- have to get food
- have to make a phone call
- have to leave

With all of these, make sure you are seen to follow up and do them or you'll be seen as shallow and rude

It may be better to say:

- It's been great to meet you and I would like to meet more people here - would you like to come and meet some with me?
(Then take the other person and introduce them to anyone you know or even other people in the room. You don't have to know anyone in order to join other groups – just walk up and introduce yourself and your partner)

If you would like to keep in touch:

- Find a reason to keep in touch
- Be the one to suggest it
- Take charge of how you will contact them and when (How about I give you a call on Wednesday and arrange a meeting?)
- Ask for contact details
- Minimum you need is email and telephone number (this is the reason for carrying a pen and paper, in case the other person doesn't have any business cards with them)
- Get their agreement to a follow-up
- Avoid leaving the next contact in their hands i.e. "I look forward to hearing from you"
- Initiate the next contact and let them know you will do it

Business cards:

- Look at their business card
- Comment on some aspect of it
- Write down on the back of the card what follow-up action you agreed to take – it's a good idea to ask their permission if you write anything in front of them
- Afterwards, write down anything that may remind you about them – physical description, common ground in conversation, where they live etc
- Avoid giving out business cards randomly – it looks like you're desperate and short of friends

Follow up:

- Do what you said you would do
- Follow up quickly while your contact still remembers you
- Add contact to your database and set reminders on your calendar to make sure you keep in touch with them sporadically

Contact list:

- Review your contact list regularly
- Make sure you contact people at regular intervals
- Find reasons to contact people
- Build your network

Luke Cunliffe
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For more information about Networking, please contact Luke Cunliffe, executive coach, at the address below or alternatively at luke@cunliffeassociates.com or on +44 (0) 20 7585 2595.