



## Networking Tips

**Develop a Networking Plan** - Your overall networking plan in a community should encompass programs big and small where you can make *meaningful connections* versus standard introductions. Be sure to vary the formats so you can gain branding exposure (large events) as well as having time to develop deeper relationships (small events). Consider committee involvement in addition to your social media networking plan. The Chamber can help you build a plan for networking that meets your needs.

**Choosing networking programs** - When you are looking at programs that meet on a regular basis, choose one or two programs and be consistent with attendance to remain “top of mind” and establish loyalty. It is better to join even one committee and attend regularly rather than getting involved in multiple programs that you can’t fit into your schedule. Once you find a group that meets your goals and you’ve made connections, offer to serve on a committee.

**Preparation** - You should prepare for a networking event in the same way you would prepare for a job interview or client presentation. Before the event, devote a little time to thinking about your objective so you can build more PURPOSEFUL connections. Are you looking for new clients? To enhance relationships with current customers? Are you looking for suggestions on a business challenge? Is there a particular vendor you are in need of? Be sure to also take time to consider the profiles of the attendees and how you might help them.

**Check the nametag table at registration** - Who is coming that you really want to meet? Set a goal to introduce yourself to that person.

**Conversations at an Event** - Start a conversation by taking an interest in others’ businesses, comment on their business name, ask questions. Your introduction should not be a listing of your products and services. It should include a statement about *what differentiates you from others*. Do not dominate the conversation. *If you are the only one talking you’re presenting, not having a two-way conversation*. If you can do so naturally in the conversation, add value to your fellow participant’s experience by inserting a few industry tips or trends.

**Pay attention** - Be sure to give others your full attention. Don't be the person looking around the room while someone is talking to you but also don't be the person people are trying to get away from. 5-7 minutes of conversation is usually enough before you trade business cards and excuse yourself.

**2 or 3 conversation rule** - If you have 2 or 3 *quality* conversations, it is better than 30 meaningless interactions (unless you have a "branding" purpose for an event). Seventy-five percent of your time should be with people you don't know (unless you have another specific objective). Most regular attendees are there to meet the *new* attendees! Although it might look like you are interrupting, you are making their networking easier!

**Back to Basics** - Good breath, polite eating (don't come starving - you'll focus too much on the food and not the people), don't be a "close talker" and read non-verbal cues if someone is finished with the conversation, excuse yourself.

**Post Event Follow Up** - Write distinguishing features on others' business cards *immediately* after the event (even in your car) to help you remember people upon follow up. This **MUST** be completed within a few hours or you will forget the details. For example..."green purse, daughter goes to KU, loves horses, etc."

**Thank you cards or personal note** - If you decide to write a thank you card or personal note to someone you met networking, handwritten is more effective than an email. We all remember people who took the time to write us a handwritten card. A thank you note should **ONLY** be a thank you, resist the temptation to insert a sentence about your offering (future contacts will be more appropriate for selling).

**Tradeshow Tip** - If you are working trade shows - don't sit down at your table **EVER!** Wear comfortable shoes and stand in front of or next to your booth so you look welcoming for walk-through traffic. Don't waste your show investment by sitting at your booth all day.

**The Lenexa Chamber of Commerce –  
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