

NETWORKING

Tradeshows and business mixers can be intimidating for anyone. However, as a representative of your organization, they are also a great opportunity to network and build business relationships. The easiest way to feel more comfortable is to prepare ahead of time with a full stomach, the right attitude and the right tools.

- Eat before you arrive. The buffet line-up can be a great place to strike up a conversation. However, spending all your time there will not make the best impression. Juggling food and drink can present challenges when meeting people, shaking hands or while trying to carry on a conversation.
- Don't forget your networking tools! Bring business cards, brochures or profiles and wear a nametag.
- Create a hook with a 10 Second Elevator Statement. This includes an introduction of yourself and description of your business in 30 words or less. For example: *"My name is Kimberly Law. I am a Personal Image Advisor and founder of Personal Impact International. I help men and women look and act their very best."*
- Name tags should be worn in line of vision. This means on the right, close to the shoulder. When you extend your right arm to shake hands, the eye is automatically drawn to that area.
- Approach people standing on their own or in groups of three or larger. When approaching a group of two you may be interrupting a private conversation and it could become awkward or uncomfortable.
- Don't use nick-names. Listen to how people introduce themselves and follow their lead. Ask permission before shortening a name or trying out a nickname, just in case it's not appreciated.
- Avoid taboo topics like politics, religion, sex or money. In other words, stay away from anything personal or controversial.
- Spend no more than 10 minutes with the people you meet. This gives you the opportunity to move about the room and meet lots of new contacts.
- Give leads and referrals whenever possible.
- Follow up with a call, thank you or information of interest.
- Ease up on the sales pressure. Instead, show interest with questions, small talk and light conversation.

Did You Know?

In Canada and the US telling someone that they have gained weight is considered to be an insult. In some Middle Eastern countries, weight gain is a sign of success.

With a little effort and self-control, business events can be a fast, fun way to build your business network.