



NETWORKING

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What type of networker are you?

The four networking types:

- Loner (little or no networking)
- Socialiser
- User
- Relationship Builder or Networker

Loner

Likes to do most things by himself (because he does it faster or best)
Doesn't want to bother or worry other people
Feels that his knowledge and skills are often superior to most people
Only asks for help as a last resort (and when it may be too late)

Socialiser

Tries to make a friend of everyone he or she meets
Tends to know people's names and faces but not what they do
Is not usually systematic or ordered about follow-up - contact is random
May not listen too deeply and is quick to move on

User

Is likely to collect business cards without really connecting with the people
Tries to make 'sales' or 'pitches' on the first encounter
Talks and focuses on own agenda rather than to gather information
Has superficial interactions
Keeps score when giving favours

Builder

Has a 'giving' disposition or abundance mentality
Is generally happy to ask others for help or guidance
Listens and learns about people carefully
Is regularly on the look-out for useful information from which others can also benefit
Has a well-ordered and organised networking system

20 seconds & the elevator pitch

1. Keep it short. Be succinct. According to Wikipedia, an adult's attention span is eight seconds, so be sure to give just enough information (and more importantly perhaps the right information) so that after only hearing a sentence or two, someone knows what you do - and if it's a pitch, what you need.
2. Have a hook. As Mel Pirchesky advises, "The objective of the first ten or fifteen seconds is to have your prospective investors want to listen to the next forty-five or fifty seconds differently, more intently than they would have otherwise."
3. Pitch yourself, not your ideas. As Chris Dixon writes, "The reality is ideas don't matter that much. First of all, in almost all start-ups, the idea changes - often dramatically - over time. Secondly, ideas are relatively abundant." Instead of talking about ideas, highlight what you've done - the concrete accomplishments or skills - rather than some intangible concept or a future goal.
4. Don't forget the pitch. It's easy to get so caught up in the details of who you are that you neglect to mention what you need. What amount of financing are you seeking, for example?
5. Don't overwhelm with technical or statistical terminology. While being able to tout one or two amazing and memorable phrases or figures can be useful, don't fill your elevator speech with numbers or jargon.
6. Practice. Rehearse your elevator pitch so that when the opportunity to give it comes, you can deliver it smoothly.
7. Use the same tactics for print. You can hone your elevator skills by practicing them in writing.
8. Revise. As your start up moves through various stages, be sure to update and refresh your pitch.
9. Be involved in the start-up community before you pitch. Business Insider suggests "Engaging in online discussions, writing insightful blog posts, and participating in the relatively small start-up community can earn you a 'strong presence' that gets you noticed by potential investors." Building relationships with investors before pitching to them will help your success.
10. Listen. When seeking to build strong networks, remember it can be just as important to listen as it is to talk.

Do's and don'ts

Do:

- Ask others for help
- Be friendly, warm and sincere
- Be persistent in following up and following through
- Focus carefully on learning people's names
- Be helpful to others even if there is no immediate or direct benefit to you
- Stay in touch regularly and systematically
- Always carry calling cards
- Get known as being well-connected (and a valuable resource for others)
- Sit next to strangers at events (not alone or with people you know)
- Keep networking even when you think you can stop

Don't:

- Be impatient. Results and benefits can come when you least expect them and
- Often take time
- Lose sight of your ultimate goal or objective
- Expect too much of others
- Have hidden agendas (not being up-front and straightforward with other People)
- Be insensitive to value, belief and cultural differences
- Fail to follow through when you find or are given leads
- Contact people only when you need something
- Go for quantity over quality in your relationships
- Try to do too much and spread yourself too thinly
- Try to network in a way that doesn't fit your style