

# The Social-Business Networking

*Or how to Schmooze like a Pro!*

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# First: Social-business Attire

- Always dress appropriately, even if it means you have to invest in something new.
- Check with the organizers of the event in advance to ascertain what most people will be wearing.
- **Never** display a lot of cleavage or leg in a social-business environment! This is still a business event.



# Be well-groomed

- Golden rule: Casual does not mean sloppy.
- If possible, wear a jacket with pockets.  
(Put **your** business cards in your left pocket, and use your right pocket to deposit cards that you are given.)
- If you are a woman, carry a purse with shoulder straps, so that you can shake hands and carry a glass without fumbling.



# How to Converse with Charisma

## Is Small talk really Small?

- Not at all. Small talk serves an important function. Without it, you would rarely get to real conversation.

## Small talk is humanizing.

- Always begin and end your conversations with small talk. You will make your clients/staff feel secure and comfortable.



# Why?

- **There is no wrong answer with small talk.**  
No one feels threatened.
- You are showing interest in the person.  
Everyone wants to feel unique.
- You will find areas of commonality and rapport.  
Your business relationship will benefit.

*(In some cultures, you will never obtain a business relationship if you do not first establish a social relationship )*



# People with Charisma “Take the Risk”

YOU take the risk of starting a conversation with a stranger. Even if you are shy, even if you risk rejection at some level....  
Most people will be grateful that you took the first step.



# People with Charisma

## “Assume the Burden”

It is YOUR responsibility to introduce yourself, to introduce new topics to discuss, to remember people's names and to introduce them to others.

**ASSUME** the burden of the other person's comfort. If they are comfortable with you, they will be comfortable doing business with you.



# First steps: How to Mingle

- When was the last time someone properly introduced you to another person? Times have changed; people expect you to mingle.





# How to Mingle

- Look for someone approachable who may be standing alone.
- Smile.
- Try to make eye contact.
- Take the risk. Walk up and introduce yourself. Extend your hand, smile, and say “Hi, my name is Melodie Campbell. I don’t think we’ve met before.”



# Openers

- Your first topic can relate to the reason you are here:

“Have you been with this organization long?”

“How are you finding the conference?”

“How do you know the host?”

“I enjoyed the keynote address. Did you?”



# How to Break into a Conversation

- Show interest in the speaker, but stand slightly away from the group. Let them become accustomed to seeing you.
- Smile. Usually, someone will smile back and shift to allow you into the group. Let the group warm to you before offering your views.



# Don't stand too close

Proxemics is the study of distance – the distance people keep between each other.

In Canada, US, Northern Europe and Japan, people prefer a personal 'bubble' of 3 feet. This is the natural distance of a hand-shake.



# Proxemics and Culture

In hotter climates (Central America and the Mediterranean) people are happy to stand closer together. Instead of shaking hands, they may kiss each other on one or both cheeks.

This presents a problem when two cultures meet.



# Proxemics and Comfort Zones

- We only allow 'intimates' to step within our personal bubble.
- For a man: when another man steps within his personal bubble, it is seen as aggressive.
- When a woman steps within his personal bubble, it is seen as seductive.



# Proxemics continued

- For a Woman: when a man steps within her personal bubble, it is seen as seductive or threatening.
- A woman from our culture will usually feel uncomfortable when a strange male tries to maintain eye contact for longer than a few seconds without talking to her.



# Women and Proxemics

- When a woman who is not an intimate steps within another woman's personal bubble, it is seen as claiming an intimacy that does not exist.
- This violates a female code of conduct that is instinctive.
- When our personal bubble is invaded, our reaction is to back up. We become defensive.





# Making Others Feel Comfortable

- Your job is to make others feel comfortable.
- Be careful to maintain a comfortable distance between yourself and others.
- Ensure that your topics of conversation do not make your companions uncomfortable.



# Avoid these Topics!

- Stories of questionable taste.
- Gossip
- Personal misfortunes, particularly current ones
- How much things cost!

5. Kids, if the person you are talking with doesn't have any.



# More Topics to Avoid:

6. Controversial subjects, especially when you don't know where people stand.  
(religion/politics)
7. Health – yours and theirs, unless you are well acquainted and truly interested.  
(The exception is when you are talking with a person who has an obvious cast, crutches or bandage.)



# About Health....

- We regularly ask 'How are you?' when we don't really want or expect to hear anything but 'fine'. Unfortunately, when things aren't fine, this query can pressure one to fib and feel slightly resentful for having to do so.
- Better to comment about the weather.



# Tip two about Health:

- If you are questioned and choose to answer the truth about your health, be aware that most people will find more than two descriptive sentences boring and somewhat alarming.
- Even when people prompt you, be wary offering more than two sentences without an additional prompt.



# Dos and Don'ts

## *Instead of asking:*

- Are you married?
- Do you have any kids?
- What do you do for a living?
- How was your holiday/weekend?

## *Try:*

- Tell me about your family/What's new with your family?
- Tell me about your business/work.
- Did you have a busy holiday/weekend?



# How to Exit a Conversation:

Use these three steps in succession

## *One of:*

- This has been a really interesting conversation...
- I'm glad to have had this opportunity to talk to you...
- Great seeing you again...



Then one of:

- I must speak with the president/chairman before she leaves...
- I need to see the exhibits before I leave...
- I promised myself I'd meet three new people before I leave this evening...
- I want to catch the speaker before he leaves...
- I made a promise to circulate and meet some of the new members...





# Finally, one of:

- I hope we can continue this conversation later...
- I'll try to catch up with you tomorrow...
- Here is my business card...
- I'll look for you again...

Or better still, ask them to join you!

“Let's sit together at the AGM.”

“Why don't we meet in the lobby for the social event?”



# Example...

“I’ve really enjoyed this conversation... I need to catch the speaker before she leaves... perhaps we can meet up at lunch?”

Or

“Great seeing you again. I need to see the exhibits before I leave – are you headed that way? Here’s my business card...”



# And the dreaded....What to do if you've forgotten a name....

You've met this person before, but it was a long time ago; it's important to give your name even if you think they should remember.

- Extend your hand and say: "Hi, I'm Melodie Campbell. I think we've met before."

This often works if you've forgotten their name. By giving yours, they will likely respond with their name.



# What if you've forgotten their name right after you were introduced?

It can happen... you exchange names, get talking, and realize within 5 minutes that the name is gone...

Try this first:

1. Ask for his business card. Look at it (his name will be on it!) See if you can ask a question about it (about the company, or the job responsibilities). Give your card in return.



# As a last resort...

- If you really can't remember her name and you've just been introduced, quietly say,

“I'm so sorry, I've forgotten your name.”

You can make some joke about your age and memory, or kids and memory...

Believe me, she won't be insulted. She will be honoured that you actually cared enough to ask, and will feel better for knowing other people aren't perfect.



# What the experts do...

Many experts state that the trick to remembering names is to say them out loud.

- “Hi, My name is Mary Jones.”
- “Nice to meet you, Mary. Have you met Bob? Bob, this is Mary. Mary is from ACME company and it’s her first time at this conference.”

Use the person’s name often in conversation.  
Take every opportunity to introduce them to others, so that you can repeat the name.



# Another trick...

One successful banker swears by this trick:

- Always ask for a business card. As soon as you can (even if you have to escape to the washroom), write details of the person down on the back of the card, so that you will be able to put a face to the name later.
- Caveat: Be very *very* careful not to give away a doctored-up business card as one of your own!



# Table etiquette

On a job interview:

Sometimes, a job interviewer will request that you meet for lunch or dinner.

- The purpose of this is to test your table manners!





# Your Dinner Setting

- For Cutlery: the rule is work from the outside in.
- Your bread plate is always on your left.
- Your salad plate is on your right.
- Put your napkin on your lap as soon as you sit down.



# Etiquette

- Do not start to eat until everyone at the table has been served. If there is a hostess, wait for her to start eating.
- Napkin on your chair signals you are coming back to the table, and that you are not finished.
- Knife and fork in the 4 o'clock position signals you are finished (the waiters expect this).



# Drink Responsibly

- Adopt a two-drink rule. Alternate wine/hard drink and soft drink or water. (Never drink to excess in a business environment.)
- Take your lead from your host. If you are forced to order first, and don't know if your host will be drinking, ask her! Say:

“Are you planning on having a glass of wine?”

If she says, “no, but you go ahead,” - Don't!



# Final Words on Social Business Networking

- Smile, smile, smile! Even when you feel nervous inside.
- Take the lead, always. Don't wait for others to approach you.
- Enjoy yourself! At the very least, look like you're enjoying yourself...



# When you get home...

- On the back of each business card you collected, write the name of the event.
- File these cards in a logical place.
- Follow up on any promises you made promptly (i.e. to provide information or contacts)
- Make a point to keep in contact. Look for reasons to keep in touch with new colleagues.



# Thank you!

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