

## Useful tips for networking at conferences and events.

1. Do your homework. The list of delegates is usually provided in your conference pack on the day. Look at the list of conference delegates and highlight other delegates who may be of interest. Try and locate them during the course of the day. If you don't manage to meet them at the conference or event, try and contact them afterwards. You can always use the conference as a reference point.
2. Arrive early – it will give you time to study the delegate list and meet with other delegates before their colleague or pal has arrived.
3. If you see someone on their own why don't you approach them? Like you they will probably welcome someone else to talk to. Nobody likes standing on their own.
4. Don't stick with the colleagues you have come with – you already know them. Make the most of the opportunity to meet new friends.
5. It is sometimes useful to have some ice breaker type questions to start a conversation. For example
  - Hi, I thought I'd come over and introduce myself?
  - Hi are you here for the xyz event too?  
And some more in-depth questions....
  - What are you looking forward to at to this conference
  - What organisation/ part of the NHS/ public sector are you from?
  - What is your role?

6. Once you have met one person it is easier to bring other people into the group by positive and open body language.
7. If you are finding it difficult to identify anyone you would like to meet, why don't you ask the organisers or the staff on the registration desk if they can help identify the person you are looking for? Some conferences will offer a form of 'wish to meet' service.
8. Concentrate on the person you are talking to rather than looking for someone else over their shoulder. Try and have a quality conversation which requires being a good listener as well as a good talker.
9. Be confident about explaining to others what you do and who you work for. Develop your own simple 'elevator pitch' so that you don't have to think about it when you are asked.

An elevator speech is a short persuasive speech describing what you and your organisation does – it is usually delivered impromptu. It is known as an elevator speech because it is the type and length of conversation that you might have if someone asked you what you do while travelling in a lift – it shouldn't take more than 30 seconds. Don't be afraid to blow your own trumpet.

10. Take notes about whom you have met and list reasons why you may want to get back in contact with them. For example Contact Ms XYZ about using an after dinner speaker or Follow up Mr CDE about reciprocal linking on their website. It is hard to remember everybody after a busy conference and what useful conversations you have had with whom. If you have been able to swap business cards a brief note on the reverse of the card can be a quick and easy way to record information. Alternatively carry a small notebook and ask for their email address. If you don't have a card you might want to write your name and email details down so that you can give it to them and ask for their email in return.

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