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# Ask Away: What Do I Need to Know About Networking?



MATTHEW KOSINSKI | April 13, 2015 |  
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*Welcome to Ask Away, Recruiter.com's weekly column! Every Monday, we'll pose an employment-related question to a group of*

*experts and share their answers. Have a question you'd like to ask the experts? Leave it in the comments, and you might just see it in next week's Ask Away!*

**This Week's Question:** *We all know that networking is an important part of building a successful career in pretty much any industry. What we want to know now are your best tips on how to network and get the most from your professional contacts. So: what do you think job seekers need to know about **networking**?*

"Networking works best when you can offer something of value beyond a traditional transaction. Case in point, I've partnered with several former retail buyers that leverage their relationships with their former colleagues for my client's products. In return, not only do I offer an annuity stream based on sales secured, but I afford the buyers' the financial freedom to become their own entrepreneurs."

- Linda Parry  
CEO  
**Product Launchers**

"The best tip I have for networking is this: Be strategic in 'keeping it real.' While the job is to sell one's self, it is imperative that one remain one's own self."

- Robin Lee Allen  
Managing Partner  
**Esperance Private Equity**

"Be Unselfish: nothing turns off a new contact more than someone who immediately puts the touch on the people they meet. Seek to learn about the needs of others and offer to help meet those needs where you can."

“Have a Plan: learn about the venue; identify attendees you wish to meet, and learn something about them and their businesses in advance. Identify people who can help make an introduction.

“Set Reasonable Goals: meeting one new, interesting contact or one specific person may be all you need to do to be successful. Meeting a goal at one event will give you confidence for the next one.

“Follow Up: if you’ve promised someone anything, keep your word. And for everyone who shared their contact information with you, send a note of appreciation the next day.

“Have a Talisman: it helps to go into an event with a friend or colleague, but if you find yourself alone, wear something that gives you confidence. I wear a colorful pocket square a friend made for me, and it often draws a compliment.”

**- Mike Spinney**  
**Blogger/Privacy Consultant**  
**HoGo**

“You don’t have to belong to any formal networking organizations like the the Chamber of Commerce or BNI [Business Network International]. I don’t belong to any of those organizations because they are too general and very expensive. I do a lot of my networking at meetups and events aimed at the tech/startup community. I am more likely to find like-minded people that I can help and can help me. You have to give value before you get it.

“Twice a year, send out an email to all your contacts asking them if there’s any way you can help them directly or by making a referral. People shouldn’t go into a networking event expecting to get anything out of it.

Most of the time, nothing ever [happens], and almost never immediately.”

- Rasheen Carbin  
Cofounder and CMO  
nspHire

“It’s ironic, but a fact: people prefer to network with and help those who are already in motion, because they typically require less help than those just starting out. Most people will be psyched to give you the final nudge that gets you over the hump. It makes them feel like a hero, because in their minds (whether true or not), they contributed to your success. But few have the time, the interest, or the ability to help you get started.

So, when you approach a networking contact — whether [they are] new or old — start off by telling them what you’ve already done to help yourself, then ask them for just a little help — something specific that you know they can do if they choose to. They’ll do it!”

- Joseph Terach  
CEO  
Resume Deli

“Use the art of conversation, not solicitation. Construct your elevator pitch so that it will encourage a conversation that is more personal, not just superficial.”

- Troy Hazard  
Author, Consultant, and Entrepreneur  
Troy Hazard International

“You’d be amazed where some of my best contacts have come from over the years: a gardener who also

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SIGN UP

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"Seriously, be nice to everyone and make friends before you need them. You never know who is in or will be in a position to help!"

- Paige Arnof-Fenn  
Founder and CEO  
Mavens & Moguls

"Don't overwhelm your targets. Give them space to breathe and pay attention to their attention spans. The last thing you want to do is annoy someone that can help you. [At networking events,] make sure to walk around and get a sense of who's available to approach before dropping into a conversation."

- Lori Cheek  
Founder and CEO  
Cheekd

"Don't start a conversation for the sole reason of asking for something. People feel used when the only time a person reaches out is when they need a favor. This is especially important with a new relationship. Let the relationship deepen a little so that you have earned the right to ask a favor. This needn't take a long time — two or three interactions should be sufficient."

- Marilyn Santiesteban  
Assistant Director, Career Services  
Bush School of Government & Public Service, Texas A&M University

"I tend to be very selective with the networking events I

attend. Large rooms full of people all trying to sell to each other can be pretty exhausting and not very fruitful. The most success I've had at networking events is when a trusted colleague is making vetted introductions. It makes a big difference if you are being introduced, rather than walking up to someone cold. Apply this to job hunting as well: if you have a connection to a potential employer, find it and use it."

**- Jason Brewer**  
**Cofounder and CEO**  
**Brolik**

"The most effective networking tip is to get really curious about the person you're meeting. Ask a lot of questions and keep your focus on the other person. The more you focus on them, the less self-conscious you'll be. Everyone likes talking about themselves to some extent. Don't get really personal, but it's definitely fair to ask them what they love most about their firm, what keeps them up at night, what their favorite charity is, stuff like that. More personal than the basic name/rank/serial number, but not anything they wouldn't want to see in print."

**- Elene Cafasso**  
**Founder and President**  
**Enerpace, Inc., Executive Coaching**

"Networking doesn't just happen. You have to work at it. Finding commonalities with networking resources that are secondary to the job often result in rich contacts. For instance, a weekend softball league may result in great networking resources, even though it's outside of the office and employment at your company isn't required to join."

**- April Masini**

## Relationship Expert and Author

[AskApril.com](#)

"You must train. I read books. I listen to podcasts. I use software to discipline and train me in my networking. Some examples:

Book: *Networking With the Affluent*, by Thomas Stanley

Podcast: "The Smart Business Revolution," by John Corcoran

Software: [Contactually](#)

-Trevor Ewen

Computer Scientist and Software Engineer

[Neosavvy](#)

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## By [Matthew Kosinski](#)



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