

# How to Make Networking More Fun!

## AWIS Networking Social, June 16, 2008

### Tips on Networking. . .

- Evaluate where is your heart and your head before the networking event
- Have a positive attitude
  - Are you going to have fun? (or do you have a lot on your mind?)
  - Be aware of the 1<sup>st</sup> impression people will have of you
- Be early – to scope out the room – tell yourself “I feel empowered because I know where everything is” (and you get to select who you want to talk to as they come in the room)
- Never be more than 15 min. late
- Bring a buddy –introduce your buddy – but split up on occasion
- Name tag on the right
- Avoid approaching groups of 2 people – go for 3 or more who look like they are having fun “Do you mind if I join in?”
- Practice some “openers” before leaving for the event
  - (have 3 – 5 interesting stories in mind beforehand)
- Enunciate clearly – always say your name
  - (don’t make people struggle with how to repeat it)
  - (pay attention if the receiver understood you)
- Listen with your ears, your face, and with your heart (be in the moment)
- Circulate (8 – 10 min. with each person)
- When you see someone who wants to break in your circle – allow that to happen
  - (they will remember your kindness)
- Be Approachable (be aware of your body language)
  - (e.g smile, good eye contact, body posture)
- Practice, practice, practice!
- Follow-up after the event (and not months later)
- (the above list was composed from information in Susan RoAne’s book – How to Work a Room and from my own thoughts – Doris E. Davis)*

### If you have forgotten a name

- say so, with humor (most people will respond in kind)
- always state your name when greeting another person
- repeat the name of the person you just met

### What NOT to do. . .

- have uninviting body language
- control the conversations
- complain, brag
- one-upmanship, interrupt, not listen
- offer unsolicited feedback

*Prepared by: Doris E. Davis, RN, BSN, Recipient of 2008 Distinguished Professional Award, AWIS – Northern California Chapters. Received the Award for her efforts in networking in the Bay Area ([dordavis@earthlink.net](mailto:dordavis@earthlink.net))*

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### **Conversation Starters**

- talk about the organization or cause
- discuss the venue
- mention the view
- discuss the food (presentation, taste, etc) – no whining!
- respond with a question (e.g. oh? where was it held?)
  - Keep it upbeat
  - Ask questions that are relevant (not personal) (see below)

### **Examples of questions (or “openers”) (remember to say it with a smile)**

- “This is my first meeting – how about you?”
- “How are you this evening?”
- “How long have you been a member of AWIS?”
- “Have you been active in AWIS for a long time?”
- “What do you see as the benefit of being involved in AWIS?”
- “How do you think I could get more involved in the organization?”

### **Generic openers**

- “Did you hear about \_\_\_\_\_ (a current news event)”
- “Have you had a chance to sample the food?”
- “I really like your jacket (or necklace, or scarf, etc)”
- “Did you encounter much traffic getting here?”
- “How do you know the host? (or hostess)”

### **Networking with the purpose of finding a new opportunity**

- Keep in mind all of the information in this handout
- Have your elevator speech prepared – make it interesting, funny, and easy to remember
- Always have a business card (do NOT write on a piece of paper!)
- Ask if you can follow up (and if so, when and how?)
- If the person you are talking to will be submitting your name to the person who could potentially be your next boss, ask him/her if he/she know this boss’ management style, retention, etc – be careful not to “grill” too hard!
- Don’t appear desperate! (be gracious, and have a businesslike manner)
- Ask if you can name drop the person’s name to the person you are supposed to contact (getting permission is important!)
- Be prepared for the question “why do you want to leave your current job?”
- Be aware that behind-the-scenes reference checks happen!
- Do your research (about the company & the opportunity) before following up
- Think through why you think you are best suited for the opportunity
- Where are your strengths? Are you able to state them with confidence?
- Don’t say anything that can backfire!
- Be careful – you never know who knows who on this planet (the new boss might be friends with the old boss!)