



Networking can be a **challenge**.

Effective networking is as much an art as a science.

This quiz will guide you through some key aspects of effective networking and help you understand how good a networker you are.

13 Mistakes to Avoid at Your Next Networking Event

1 “Are you hiring?” / “Can you get me a job?”

These phrases are like nails on a chalkboard. Asking for something immediately (especially something big) is incredibly off-putting. Networking is all about turning cold leads into warm leads. Wait until you’ve established a relationship with someone before putting out these feelers!

2 “Can you introduce me to X person at your company?”

So rude. Basically, you’re telling the human you’re speaking with that they’re merely a stepping stone to the person you really want to talk to. Build the relationship first. Down the road, asking for introductions will become appropriate.

3 “Can I pick your brain?”

People hate this question. It’s vague, one-sided, and needy. Start investing in the relationship and being of service before you ask for anything. Being a giver, not a taker, will encourage others to give too. If you ask to meet up for coffee, be specific about what you’d like to discuss, and triple bonus points if you can make it of benefit to the other person!

4 The Ten-Minute Pitch

Your explanation of what you do should be around thirty seconds long. If you can’t concisely say what you do, you’re going to come off as boring or incompetent. Get to the point, so you can get on with networking. Bonus Points: use your spiel to intrigue your audience so they’ll ask you for more!

5 Ask Dead-End Questions / Give Dead-End Answers

Dead-end Question: “How long have you lived here?” Conversation Starter: “What brought you out here?”

Dead-end Answer: “I’m a writer.” Conversation Starter: “I’m a writer; I love working with creatives on defining their brand.”

Other great Conversation Starters:

- “I’d love to hear more about what you do.”
- “What are you working on right now?”
- “What are your ideal clients like?”
- “Where are you from?”
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6 Do Zero Homework

Know your audience! Never show up at an event without knowing what type of people will be there and what conversation topics will be well received.



7 No Business Card

You're networking; you should give people something (card or otherwise) to stay in touch. Pro tip: stash your cards in an easily-accessible spot so they won't take you forever to fish out.

8 Zoom in for Their Business Card . . . Then Bounce

If you're having superficial, two-minute conversations with people, they won't remember you when you contact them later. Focus on having a real conversation and creating a connection before you ask someone for their card.

9 Wait for Them to Approach You

Great strategy for bridge trolls, bad strategy for networking events. Quit lurking and be proactive! Walk up to a group and introduce yourself. Talk with thirsty networkers in the bar line. Befriend the introvert in the corner who didn't read this article.

10 Go Into Sales Mode

Is there anything more annoying? You should not be setting up sales calls or hawking your wares at a networking event. You're here to make connections, not get put on someone's blacklist.

11 "That's a bad idea." / "That will never work."

If someone describes their product or business and you think it's nuts—keep that opinion to yourself. Instead of giving negative feedback, try asking more questions. You're here to make friends, not be a jerk.

12 Have One Too Many Drinks

Free drinks can be nice at a networking event, but nobody wants to chat with somebody who indulges too much. Drink much less than you would at a party to truly set yourself up for making a lasting connection.

13 Dress Inappropriately

Unprofessional dress is an invitation for people to write you off. Boost your confidence by looking professional and put together.