



Networking Tips

Networking is an invaluable tool that anyone in the business world can utilize. Effective networking can be your best form of marketing, as well as being extremely affordable. The Churchill Economic Development Authority offers many opportunities for true networking, which is: *When there is a planned event or gathering with the primary goal of connecting with others.* In other words, you have the opportunity to market yourself and your business in a relaxed, social situation. This often proves to be the most comfortable situation for all involved. **Networking will only be effective if you use it.** Regular attendance at CEDA meetings is extremely important for effective networking. As you attend the meetings, you will be recognized by more and more people as well as getting to know more and more people, and this facilitates you reaching your goal. People will know you and your company and refer to you, and you will do the same for them to reciprocate. Personal referrals and word of mouth advertising is invaluable and highly effective. **To make the most of a networking meeting, here are a few guidelines you should follow:**

- Arrive early. If you are there before the mass of the group, you are assured the maximum opportunity to meet everyone.
- Arrive with a goal in mind. Before the meeting, set a goal for yourself for that day, and then achieve it. Don't arrive at the meeting feeling lackadaisical or unfocused. Take some time to get yourself focused before the meeting.
- Make sure you have writing materials and plenty of business cards and/or brochures.
- Make sure you have a purse or briefcase to deposit the materials and business cards that you will accumulate.
- Make sure to shake hands when introduced, or when you introduce yourself.
- Don't huddle up with co-workers or friends. It is easier to be approached by others if you don't appear to be busy with idle conversation.
- Don't be afraid to approach people you don't know, and introduce yourself.
- Wear a name tag or business card.
- Don't hard sell yourself or your company. Networking meetings are to be social and semi-informal/relaxed. Build a relationship and the sale will come.
- Do your best to remember names of individuals you have met.

After the meeting, it is important that you follow up with the people you have met in a timely manner. If you told someone you would call them with some information, make sure you do it! It is very important to be credible and reliable in order for your networking efforts to be truly fruitful. Networking is an investment of your time, but if done effectively, it can prove to be an invaluable investment in your business's success.