

Business Skills 360 - Networking 1: Setting Goals

Discussion Questions

1. How often do you attend networking events?
2. What do you hope to achieve when you go into a networking event?
3. What are your strengths and weaknesses as a networker?

Vocabulary

networking – developing and using business contacts; “John is good at networking, so he has many people to call on when he needs solutions in his business.”

mixer – an informal event or party for people to meet and mingle; “On Thursday evening, the Chamber of Commerce is hosting a mixer for local business people.”

field – a specific area of work or business; “After 15 years in the field of education, Brett decided to change careers.”

proactive – acting to cause things to happen rather than waiting and reacting; “To avoid any problems, we need to be proactive in monitoring the production process.”

issue-based goals – objectives or aims that are tied to specific problems; “One of Victor’s issue-based goals at the conference was to find a way to reduce his company’s overhead.”

human-based goals – objectives or aims that are tied to people; “George went into the networking even with the human-based goal of making three solid contacts in the new media industry.”

to encounter – to meet, especially unexpectedly; “Hilary felt rather uncomfortable when she encountered her ex-husband at the fundraiser.”

to steer the conversation – to lead a discussion toward a particular subject; “I decided not to see Jane again after she spent our entire first date trying to steer the conversation back to her family problems.”

awkward – uncomfortable, embarrassing, or embarrassed; “Ryan felt very awkward when he arrived at the formal party in jeans and a t-shirt.”

“you folks” – you people; “The comedian opened his act by asking the audience: ‘How are you folks doing this evening?’”

soft contacts – casual professional acquaintances; “Charlie has a lot of soft contacts in the advertising industry but nobody he can call a close associate.”

Transcript

Hello and welcome back to Business Skills 360. I'm Tim Simmons, and I'm glad you could join me for today's show on [networking](#).

Today also marks the start of our "Back-to-School" sale on Business English Pod. Just head over to the website at www.BusinessEnglishPod.com.

Okay, back to networking. Now, I'm not going to tell you how to connect computers... this is about business networking, talking to people, making connections... and today we're going to discuss goal-setting in networking events. You need to go into these events with a clear objective so that you can make good use of the opportunity. We set goals for everything else, so why not networking?

First off, what do I mean by networking event? Perhaps it's a [mixer](#) for all business people in your community, or maybe it's a conference where you have the chance to meet people in your [field](#). These are important opportunities, and it's important that you use your time wisely. The fact is, at many networking events, 75% of the people stand around waiting for the other 25% to make something happen. It's important for you to be in that 25% group. Be [proactive](#). You can't just stand in the corner and expect everyone to walk across the room to introduce themselves.

So... to be an active and successful networker, it's a very good idea to set goals before the event. What kind of goals? We'll talk about [issue-based goals](#) and [human-based goals](#).

Let's start with issues. Before the event, sit down and give some thought to your current situation. What issues are you currently dealing with in your business or work? Are you facing specific problems or obstacles that you need help with? Do you have certain needs? Write these things down, then rank them in order of importance. For example, your list might say... *"number 1: our project meetings lack focus. Number 2: our computer servers are unreliable. And number 3: my department is spending too much on office supplies."* Great. It's good to have a top three. Too many and you'll lose focus.

Now, keep your top three issues in mind as you head into the networking event. Remember, the goal of your networking is to solve these problems, get help solving them, or simply get some ideas about how to deal with them. You may not meet someone who can actually solve these, but you may meet someone who has [encountered](#) them before. [Steer the conversation](#) toward these issues. They may help you get over that [awkward](#) situation in which you've introduced yourselves and aren't sure what more to talk about. You can say something like... *"So, [you folks](#) do a lot of project work... how do you find your meetings?"* or *"What kind of servers do you run in there?"*

Now, let's think about human-based goals. The purpose of networking is, of course, to build a *human* network. You talk to people, and your network grows. You talk to more people, and your network grows even more. That's great, but if your purpose

heading into a networking event is very general, like "talking to people," then how do you know whether you've been successful? Setting specific goals will help you get more done and measure your success, especially if you feel you're not very good at networking.

Put numbers to your goals. Set targets, just as you might for sales or other important business basics. For example, perhaps you decide that you will make three [soft contacts](#) and one excellent contact. Or maybe you decide to tell five people about your company's new product. Or maybe you aim simply to pass out 10 business cards. Whatever the specific goal is, it will help you focus your efforts. Chatting for 30 minutes about baseball with a former co-worker may qualify as "talking to people," but it's not necessarily the best use of your networking time.

Right. That's all for today. Happy networking, and if you'd like to test yourself on today's episode, check out the www.myBEonline.com website. You'll find some vocab explanations, discussion questions, and a quiz. And don't forget to tune in next week, when we'll have a look at network maintenance. Fascinating stuff. Bye for now.

Review

1. According to Tim, what does being “proactive” at a networking event mean?
 - A talking to at least 25% of the people
 - B introducing yourself with confidence
 - C keeping to the outside of the room
 - D not waiting for others to talk to you

2. Tim discusses two types of networking goals: _____ goals and _____ goals.

3. Tim suggests that before you attend a networking event, you make a top-three list of...
 - A people you’d like to meet
 - B problems or obstacles you face
 - C career goals
 - D issues you enjoy talking about

4. Which of the following is a purpose of setting networking goals?
 - A having something by which to measure your success
 - B becoming more confident in social interaction
 - C improving your computer skills
 - D enhancing your enjoyment of networking events

5. Why does Tim mention “chatting for 30 minutes about baseball with a former co-worker?”
 - A to show how networking can be both productive and fun
 - B to illustrate poor use of networking opportunities
 - C to emphasize the importance of establishing personal rapport
 - D to point out that networking events may be about reinforcing old contacts

6. Which of the following do you think qualify as good networking goals?
 - A I will talk to as many people as possible
 - B I will find three possible solutions to our current image crisis
 - C I will meet three people in the IT industry
 - D I will drink three glasses of punch
 - E I will try to be more confident
 - F I will find someone who has dealt with a case of employee fraud
 - G I will give out a dozen business cards to people I haven’t met before
 - H I will get the names of five reputable bookkeeping companies

Answers

1. According to Tim, what does being “proactive” at a networking event mean?

D not waiting for others to talk to you

2. Tim discusses two types of networking goals: _____ goals and _____ goals.

Issue-based, human-based

3. Tim suggests that before you attend a networking event, you make a top-three list of...

B problems or obstacles you face

4. Which of the following is a purpose of setting networking goals?

A having something by which to measure your success

5. Why does Tim mention “chatting for 30 minutes about baseball with a former co-worker?”

B to illustrate poor use of networking opportunities

6. Which of the following do you think qualify as good networking goals?

- B I will find three possible solutions to our current image crisis**
- C I will meet three people in the IT industry**
- F I will find someone who has dealt with a case of employee fraud**
- G I will give out a dozen business cards to people I haven't met before**
- H I will get the names of five reputable bookkeeping companies**