

Alex Babushkin

**101
TIPS ON**

**NET
WORKING**

**HOW TO MAKE
VALUABLE CONNECTIONS
WITH PEOPLE**

Alex Babushkin

**101 tips on networking. How to make
valuable connections with people**

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A short guide on how to make and cultivate connections with people. This book is recommended for entrepreneurs, managers, sales professionals, and anyone else who wants to succeed in business and life through networking.

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Содержание

I. STRATEGIC NETWORKING	7
1	7
Organize your contacts	7
2	8
Make a list of people you want to meet	8
3	9
Get to know networking hubs	9
4	10
Ask friends to introduce you to people from their circle	10
5	11
Meet VIPs through their circle	11
6	12
Look for novel ways to promote your ideas	12
7	13
Cultivate “budding” connections	13
8	14
Write to your former classmates	14
9	15
Take note of weak connections	15
10	16
Build relationships for the future	16
II. WHAT TO DO BEFORE AN EVENT	17
11	17
Make it a rule to attend at least one event per week	17
12	18
Think about things to talk about	18
13	19
Prepare a few questions to develop conversations	19
14	20
Prepare a mini-presentation about yourself	20
15	21
Make a personalized name tag	21
16	22
Follow the dress code	22
17	23
Contact whoever you want to meet the day before	23
18	24
Use «+1” if you can	24
19	25
Arrive at the event before it starts	25
20	26
Join the group behind the event in social networks	26
III. WHAT TO DO DURING AN EVENT	27
21	27
Go about on your own	27
22	28

	Sit in the first row	28
23		29
	When asking a question, don't forget to introduce yourself	29
	Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	30

101 tips on networking

How to make valuable connections with people

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I. STRATEGIC NETWORKING

1

Organize your contacts

Remembering everyone is no easy matter. As a rule, each of us remembers dozens of people, including close friends we see often, or else acquaintances that we've talked to recently. If you keep a database of your contacts, you'll be able to zero in on just who you need a lot faster. Don't bother with hard-copy spreadsheets. Use Excel, Google Docs, or CRM software. For each person you enter into your database, add keywords you can use for searches later on. Keywords can include: specialty, position, company name, field of activity, city of residence, and so on. Enter new contacts in your database right after you make them. Make sure to update your info on the contact and what each contact has to offer so that it is always relevant.

2

Make a list of people you want to meet

Set a goal. This is your reference point for networking. Identify three to five people who can help you reach this goal. Expand your network of contacts, starting with getting to know these people.

3

Get to know networking hubs

Hubs are people with a wide range of active acquaintances. Hubs know a lot of people. These include politicians, journalists, event organizers, PR specialists, and professional networkers. They also include hairdressers, lawyers, headhunters, and successful entrepreneurs. Establish friendly or collaborative relations with these people. This will give you access to their network of contacts. Also, they can help you get in touch with whoever you might need to reach your goal.

4

Ask friends to introduce you to people from their circle

This is the simplest and most effective way to expand connections. Invite acquaintances over to visit or to a meeting, and suggest they bring along someone you don't personally know. Think of concentric circles as you expand your network of contacts. The circles grow larger as you make more and more new friends. Turn your friends' friends into your connections.

5

Meet VIPs through their circle

If you don't know how to approach a famous person, then look at his circle and decide who you can easily connect with. This might be a family member, or former and current colleagues, secretaries, friends, classmates. After you've developed relations with them, ask them to introduce you to the VIP. Let someone from the celebrity's circle serve as the bridge between you and him (or her).

6

Look for novel ways to promote your ideas

Don't just promote your ideas to the decision-maker. Pay attention to the people around him or her. Sometimes it's a lot easier getting to know them. Then, you can convey your idea to the decision-maker through them. Often, bosses approve decisions that have been submitted by their subordinates.

7

Cultivate “budding” connections

Be equally respectful toward who you talk with, regardless of status or position. Don't just brush someone aside, even if you don't think he or she is of immediate use to you. You never know – he or she may someday be a successful entrepreneur, and even your boss. All contacts are useful connections.

8

Write to your former classmates

If you've lost contact with your classmates, then most likely you don't know how successful they are and what they're up to. Since you lost touch with them, many of your friends from the past have established themselves socially, changed their city of residence, moved into a position of stature in their occupation, or opened their own business. Reconnect with people you used to study with, served with, former colleagues, or your old classmates. Find out what they're into now, where they work, where they live. Tell them about yourself and your projects. You just might come up with some new opportunities to reach your goals.

9

Take note of weak connections

People with whom you communicate rarely and only chit-chat with are weak connections. But sometimes those contacts have more to offer than your close friends have. This is because when you hang with the same old group of people, you tend to be a lot like each other, both in terms of your interests and skills. What your close acquaintances know about and have to share is often information that you yourself are already aware of, or have easy access to. As a rule, weak connections have a circle of communications that is different from yours. For you, they represent new opportunities. So don't forget about your weak connections – cultivate them. Sometimes they might end up being useful.

10

Build relationships for the future

As a rule, it takes a lot of resources to get to know VIPS and big shots. The most stable relations are built between equals in status. To expand your circle of communications more quickly, start by establishing connections horizontally. Over time, one of the contacts in your network will succeed and move up the ladder.

II. WHAT TO DO BEFORE AN EVENT

11

Make it a rule to attend at least one event per week

Select events based on your interests, and visit at least one of them each week. Meet at least two people at each event. Then, by the end of the year you will have more than a hundred new acquaintances. If you want more, go to events more often, or increase the number of new acquaintances.

12

Think about things to talk about

Choose three to five topics that you can easily converse about. You can talk about topics related to your profession, or topics related to your hobbies. Be inquisitive, update your list with new topics.

13

Prepare a few questions to develop conversations

Think in advance about what you can ask someone when you meet them. For example, ask his opinion about a high-profile event that's in the news. Or discuss how to improve something. Look at the latest news, scroll through the latest press releases or specialized sites on the Internet. Talk about something that you think is of interest to your conversation partner.

14

Prepare a mini-presentation about yourself

Work out a succinct, yet interesting way to present yourself. Try to make your self-introduction original and catchy. Add to it an interesting fact about yourself or your company to intrigue your conversation partner.

A director of a diamond disc plant could introduce himself as follows: Greetings! My name is Igor Stavkin, and I run a company that produces the hardest product on earth.

Rehearse the text so that it sounds spontaneous, and so that you don't forget how it goes. Come up with two or three different versions of this self-introduction. You don't want to sound like a parrot, repeating the same thing to each newcomer.

15

Make a personalized name tag

When you register, don't expect the organizers to issue a name tag that you actually like. It's be nice if your name was on it, along with what you're all about. But this doesn't happen very often. To be sure of the outcome, make your own name tag ahead of time. Make it two-sided. Then, if it turns over, the information on it is still readable. Wear your name tag along with the one you get at registration, or instead of it. This way, everyone will know your name and what you do.

16

Follow the dress code

When you go to an event, dress for the occasion, or follow any dress code that applies. If it's an IT firm, then jeans and a sweater are just fine. But you don't want to alienate your partners at the business club, so wear something more conservative there.

17

Contact whoever you want to meet the day before

You can call, send an email or message him or her via a social network. When the connection is already established in absentia, your first in-person introduction and conversation will take place in a more favorable environment. The person you're connecting with will feel sort of like you already know each other. Even if you don't get a response to your message, then when you meet, you can mention it – this can serve as the catalyst for a conversation.

18

Use «+1” if you can

If you have an extra ticket or an invitation to an interesting event, use it to strengthen your network. Take someone you want to maintain a relationship with along.

19

Arrive at the event before it starts

That way, you can use the extra time to establish new contacts and meet new arrivals. By getting there earlier, you acquire a kind of “host” status. The people who show up later will start seeing you this way. You will find that you’re the center of attention, and people will turn to you for information and advice. And you’ll have no problem answering questions and making new acquaintances.

20

Join the group behind the event in social networks

That way, you can start communicating with the participants even before the the event, and then continue communicating with them afterwards. Look through the list of guests, decide ahead of time which of them are of interest to you, and who you'd like to meet. Place a post in the community with information about yourself and an invitation to connect at the event.

III. WHAT TO DO DURING AN EVENT

21

Go about on your own

If you bring a colleague or a friend to the event, don't spend all your time with him or her. Otherwise, you'll deprive each other of the opportunity to connect with new acquaintances. So split up – at least for a while. At a conference or convention, attend panels and sections in the program. At an exhibition, take different tours. At a coffee break or dinner, sit at different tables. This way, you'll double the number of contacts between the two of you.

22

Sit in the first row

The first row is the most advantageous for acquiring information and for networking. As a rule, the first row is where the experts, invited guests, and organizers sit. This is where you have an opportunity to establish useful contacts. Most of the time, photos of the event focus on the first row. Later on, you can identify yourself in the pictures on social networks, making it easier to network. The seats at the end of the row provide additional advantages. If you get up and ask the speaker a question, the entire audience will turn to look at you. After all, the audience won't even have to turn around to see you.

23

When asking a question, don't forget to introduce yourself

An easy way to introduce yourself to the whole hall or to your group is to ask the speaker a question. Before you ask the question, state your name so that everyone hears it. And say what you can offer other people. This is an easy way to introduce yourself to everyone there. Prepare your short presentation in advance. Speak slowly. Do not swallow and do not shoot your words out. For you, it's important that everyone in the room learn your name and what you can do for them. The question, of course, is also important. But the opportunity to acquaint yourself with everyone there all at once is more valuable than the answer.

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