

Mingling & Networking Tips

What is it and why should I mingle or network?

- Meeting people for the first time
- It is a skill, need to learn and practice
- Why is it important? Social and business development
- It is how we meet people and for the pursuit of future careers
- Learn how to 'sell yourself' on visit days for graduate schools or for career fairs or receptions
- Make a good, memorable impression

How to prepare ahead of time.

- Set realistic goals for yourself (meeting 3 people vs. 100)
- Decide ahead of time how you will introduce yourself and start the conversation
- Make sure you are dressed appropriately for the event: should you wear business casual? Business professional?
- Take a chance – be positive, excited, and motivated when you attend the event
- Remember, people can tell when you don't want to be there
- Don't seem too rehearsed – practice and be natural
- Think about how will you introduce yourself depending on the event, name, major, where you are from, etc. - these are all great places to start
- Practice the traditional US form of greeting, a handshake, ahead of time – this is a big first impression
- If the event is job or career related, do research on the companies ahead of time and have specific questions prepared

What to do at the event.

- 3 steps to a greeting: eye contact, hand shake, & your confident introduction
- Write your name clearly and legibly on your name tag and wear high on your chest so it is easy for people to see. You want them to remember your name!
- Have short, 3-5 minute conversations. Remember, you're not trying to become best friends with everyone
- When thinking about how you are going to keep the conversations going, think about what is bringing everyone together and if there are common topics or interests you could also talk about
- Approach people standing alone or in smaller groups, remember it is harder to join larger groups
- Try and commit names to memory, associate something specific about the person with their name to help you remember
- Use active listening skills: maintain eye contact, ask follow up questions, and appear engaged through your body language (ex. Don't fold your arms across your chest)
- Be careful and avoid more sensitive or controversial topics when networking (i.e. politics or religion) as people can have strong opinions, and this is not the appropriate time to have those conversations
- Remember, others are just as nervous as you are
- If you attend an event with a group of friends, make sure you split up and meet new people
- Unsure how to pronounce someone's name? Ask first! Then repeat the person's name back as soon as possible to help you remember.
- End the conversation on a positive note