

## 10 tips for promoting your library through networking

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I recently attended a business etiquette and networking workshop in Birmingham, AL. There were plenty of entrepreneurs in attendance. But, I went in an effort to learn new things. After hearing all of the useful tips from the presenter, I came to the conclusion that this course is good for anyone, including library employees.

First, the presenter said that networking is a great opportunity to expand one's business and meet new people. In my mind, the same holds true for those who work at the library. Just think, if you attend an event where people are talking about what they do, you can jump on this opportunity to promote a big program at the library and say how great the library is. Within five minutes, you've just promoted the library. It's an easy approach that could help recruit future supporters for the library and its programs.

Here are a few etiquette tips when attending a networking event:

- **Know your host and the organization.** When you attend an event, be sure you know something about the host and the purpose of the event or organization hosting the event. Knowing such information is useful during conversations with the organizer and other attendees.
- **Look at the sign-in sheet and see who may be attending the event or who is already there.** Such a list will help you determine which people you really need to contact that night. Is there a public official you've been trying to reach to discuss a library issue? Here is your chance to make contact.
- **Be aware of current events.** Read the paper before you head out to the event. Watch the news. If you know about the top news events of the day or week, you will be able to talk about more than just work.
- **Introduce yourself to someone you don't know.** Be brave. It does make a difference.
- **Remember to put your name tag on the right of your body.** A person's eyes go up the arm and straight to the name tag when someone shakes your hand.
- **Make sure you can easily access your business cards.** Women, when you want to give someone one of your business cards, don't go digging around your purse for it. Have it handy and ready to give to the person. Make sure it's clean and not crumpled. Men, know where your cards are and make sure they are clean, too. A good strategy is to keep your business cards in your right pocket, and keep the cards you receive that night in your left pocket.
- **Wear a smile, shake hands, and check your attitudes at the door.** No one likes to talk to a grumpy, mad, or sad person at a party.
- **Know your drink limit.** Booze and business really don't mix when you are trying to sell a product, program, or concept.
- **Turn off your cell phone and put it away while you are at the event.** If you keep taking it out during the event or sending text messages, you'll look like you care more about what's on your cell than what's going on in the room.
- **Follow through on a promise.** If you meet someone at an event and tell them that you will send them an email or an Evite to one of your organization's events, do that. Don't leave the person hanging, wondering if they will ever get that information.