

Networking roleplays, tips and useful phrases

Do the two activities below in the order that your teacher tells you to.

Networking tips and useful phrases

Together decide on and write down good tips and useful phrases on networking (making useful business contacts at conferences/ trade fairs/ trade shows/ trade association events, etc). Possible topics:

- starting conversations
- small talk
- finding things in common
- listening skills/ being a good listener
- moving smoothly on to more work-related conversation (from lighter topics)
- sharing info about your work, company, etc
- “elevator pitch”
- steering the conversation
- how direct or indirect to be
- contact details
- business cards
- introducing other people/ being introduced to other people/ making other contacts
- length of the conversation
- ending the conversation
- later contact

Listen to two people networking and note down which tips and phrases they use that you mentioned in your discussion (or anything similar).

Read the transcript and find places where they could have used different tactics and/ or better phrases.

Compare your ideas for improvements with other people.

Business networking roleplays

Choose one of the roleplays below. Decide where you are meeting and who you both are (but pretend not to know the other person when you start the roleplay). The other person should be someone good to meet in that situation (e.g. an HR rep if you are looking for job opportunities). Roleplay the whole conversation, including smoothly starting and ending. Discuss what you could've done better, then do the same for other roleplays.

Roleplays to choose from

- You are looking for businesses to invest in/ for ideas on where to invest
- You are looking for extra people to come to a(nother) networking event
- You are looking for feedback on your company/ product(s)/ service(s)
- You are looking for ideas on how to change your section/ department/ division/ branch/. subsidiary (from other parts of your company)
- You are looking for info on a potential new market for your products (e.g. a country where you don't sell now or a different generation of customers)
- You are looking for job opportunities
- You are looking for new members of a group (e.g. trade union) you belong to
- You are looking for potential investors
- You are looking for potential new customers
- You are looking for potential vendors/ suppliers
- You want people in different parts of your company to support your idea
- You want to find collaborators from other sections/ departments/ divisions
- You want to find out what your competitors are doing/ how your competitors are doing
- You are looking for business partners for a joint venture

Possible situations

- trade fair/ trade show/ conference (in the queue for the coffee stand at the venue, sitting next to someone in the audience of a speech/ presentation/ workshop, in the bar of the nearest hotel, etc)
- networking event/ cocktail party
- sales conference (with staff from different branches/ subsidiaries of your company)
- (large) training event
- (audience of) a company townhall meeting

Ask about any situations which you couldn't understand, are not sure you dealt with well, etc, discussing good things to say in each situation as a class.

Do the tips and useful phrases activity above, or look at it again and try to add more tips and/ or phrases if you did it before the roleplays.