

The Best Speed Networking Tips & Questions To Know

By [BrandYourself](#)

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Speed networking is something that more and more professionals are starting to experiment with. Some have gone so far as to make this the main kind of networking event they attend, since they can meet more people in a short amount of time.

Whatever your preferences are, there's no doubt that speed networking events can be a fantastic way to grow your network and bring you new opportunities.

Because of this, we wanted to put together a resource full of speed networking tips and ideas that will help you make the most of any speed networking event you attend.

Understand what speed networking is all about

This is something that many new speed networkers have trouble adjusting to. The format of speed networking is something that you should have in mind before you walk in the room. This will give you the ability to make the most out of your time there, and make quality connections. There are various forms of speed networking events (we will cover that later) so you should make sure you understand what you're signing up for. Too many times you see people do speed networking but treat it like a normal networking meetup. Often this leads to them getting frustrated due to a lack of detail in the connections they make. Speed networking is about being efficient, and that starts here.

Come well prepared

This is a slight continuation from the tip above, but it's worth breaking it out into two pieces. During a speed networking event it is extremely important to be well prepared, efficient and goal oriented. There is very little time for small talk in contrast to other networking sessions. Prepare yourself by setting goals and outcomes that allow you to deliver the message that you want to communicate. In other words, know what you want to convey and prioritize that heavily. You don't have time to set things up as much as you would in a normal networking event. This can feel unnatural for some people at first, and it does take practice. Typically, once you get into the swing of things you will find your groove and feel more comfortable getting right to the point. Also, don't forget to bring a stack of business cards and preferably a folder or one-pager that clearly describes your company and what your offerings are.

Always have the end in mind

Before the speed networking event begins, set clear and concise goals and objectives to use as a guidance during the different meetings. To create a new contact in a specific local market could be an objective, but the overall goal should be more specific than that. A great way to set this up is by working backwards from what you need. For example, if your business needs new clothing distribution partners that would be a good place to start. From there, be prepared to identify other people who might have some connections to them. It's probably unlikely that you will bump into a clothing distributor directly, but meeting someone else who has is far more likely. This also can be very useful when reviewing business cards after the speed networking is finished.

Be honest and show respect

This seems pretty obvious but you would be surprised how often it is ignored. There is a common trap to fall into with speed networking as a matter of fact. Many times attendees get caught up in the "speed" element of the event and that comes at the expense of courtesy, which will actually end up wasting your time all together. Who wants to do business with someone who isn't polite? Keep it simple and respect the other person. Introduce yourself and exchange business cards before you begin and give the other person the chance to start unless he/she prefers not to. Being first has its advantages, but whoever speaks last can adjust the presentation to what they just heard, and in that way, touch on common denominators and create more interest. This is a helpful speed networking tip that will lead to better connections and more efficient sessions.

You will gain from giving

This is another aspect of speed networking that sometimes falls by the wayside. When attendees feel like they are under the clock they sometimes default to a “me-first” attitude, when the opposite can have be more effective. By helping the person you are meeting achieve their goals in an open minded and honest way, you will gain more from the meeting. One of the most powerful drivers of human action is reciprocity. When you help others they want to help you, and it applies to speed networking just like anything else. It creates a desire and will from the other party to help you out (since you just did the same thing for them). It also creates a more dynamic and open minded way of looking for win-win situations for both of you, as the party can find opportunities within your offer to help them out. This applies not only to speed networking, but [all forms of networking activities](#) as well.

Be aware of your personal brand

We have written about this in length in other blog posts too, but defining your personal brand will greatly benefit your speed networking (and all of your other career goals). Take some time before the speed networking event to establish your personal brand and make sure you are always looking through that lens. During the meeting, make sure this is a fallback point of view if you feel you are getting off-topic. Understanding your personal brand will help you stay on track as well as find new opportunities. Think of everything. Are you dressed according to the expectations of the event, are you communicating your core values and your basic principles, are you looking past a first point of contact for potential fits? Also, be aware of your posture, your body language and note the way your counterpart are responding to the way you are delivering your message. Speed networking is always viewed as a quick way to gain connections, but it is also a fantastic method of getting feedback for your pitch.

Prepare your elevator pitch

Having an elevator pitch locked in will make any speed networking event a breeze. An elevator pitch is a 30 second description of yourself, what you do and what you want to communicate. Prepare a pitch before the speed networking starts and think through the most important things you would like to communicate. Refine the pitch so that it sounds natural. If you can execute this well, you will have an audience that is alert and attentive to whatever you have to say afterwards. Present your elevator pitch and then tie things back to what they need as well. Bringing this back to how you can help the other person reaching their goals and how they can help you reach yours will make the whole process much easier.

A good elevator pitch can be constructed by the following parts:

- Your name.
- Your title and company.
- The values you create for your clients, by describing a typical problem, what activities you used to solve it and the actual result.
- You can round up by including something about your goals and the results you wish to achieve from the meeting.

Speed networking questions are important too

Too often participants jump into an event without having any speed networking questions they can go to in order to get the conversation started. Having some good speed networking questions in your back pocket are also great to quickly see if there is a good connection with the person you’re talking to and an opportunity to work together.

Some good speed networking questions to ask are:

- What do you do?
- How can I help you do that better?
- What made you decide to come to this event? (this can be a great way to identify problems they might be having to see if you can help)
- What inspired you to start doing the work you’re involved with now?
- What are some strategies that you’ve found to be helpful for your recent work?

All of these questions will do a great job of making sure that you are not only taking advantage of the time you have together, but you’re also engaging with the other participant. The quality of the connection you form will directly impact your ability to make something out of the networking event.

Take notes

Taking notes in a speed networking event is often overlooked despite the multiple benefits it can provide. This doesn't have to be anything fancy, just enough to aid the process. Jot down who it is you are talking with, the date, the context as well as a summary of what is being said. Try to find common denominators and in which ways you can help the person in front of you, who amongst your contacts can be a good connection, which of your own goals can benefit from the other person's experience, contacts, etc. Getting this all down on paper can make the speed networking process a lot more fluid and help you identify new opportunities. It also has the beneficial side effect of helping your image during the meeting. Someone who is attentive and takes notes will be perceived as trustworthy, interested, and a hard worker. This will not only help directly, but trigger some reciprocity as well! It's simple, always bring a writing pad and a pen to meetings. Successful people think on paper.

Follow up

It's amazing how many people forget this part of the process. One of the most important aspects of networking is to follow up the contacts you have received during the meeting. For some reason though, a good number of speed networkers think that all of the magic is supposed to happen during the event. The reality is, if you do not follow up you might as well have stayed in the office and done something more useful. It doesn't have to be anything crazy either. Place a quick phone call, book a lunch or send an email so that the person gets a more lasting impression of you and what you do. This shows professionalism as well as respect for the time the other person took to meet you. By revisiting your notes, it will be easier to recall details related to the goals of the other party.

Work to continuously improve

If you want to progress and attain your career goals, working to develop yourself and your skills is crucial. What went right? What could you have done better? Do not wait to figure out how you can improve until you're in the middle of your next speed networking session. Prepare yourself ahead of time by improving your elevator pitch, prepare a mental checklist and think of how your personal brand can be even more relevant for the next speed networking event that you attend. If you feel uncomfortable, just remember that the majority of other speed networkers are feeling the same thing. It's a big thing to go talk to new people and put yourself out there, but you do it because there are some big benefits of doing so. So keep going!

Speed networking event formats:

Round robin

This is one of the most popular models of speed networking. It's fairly straightforward and involves one group rotating to meet with one person after another every few minutes. Typically a round robin speed networking event will have the attendee gain 8-10 new contacts within an hour period.

Group

This form of speed networking event involves a handful of people being assigned to a group and spending some time within that group introducing themselves. There is commonly some form of sorting that goes into determining who is in each group. Each group session will normally last anywhere between five to fifteen minutes.

Station

A station based speed networking event is a bit different than the other two. What will normally happen is all attendees will go and fill out a questionnaire before the actual meeting. This will cover the basics of what they do and who they would like to meet. Then these will be sorted to find out who would be a good fit to connect with one another. Numbered stations are then set up and each attendee will be directed on which station to visit for a specific period of time.

As you can see there's more to speed networking than meets the eye. While some dismiss the format in favor of more traditional networking styles, there are definitely some benefits to speed networking events.

If you are serious about improving your personal brand and taking your networking to the next level, we highly recommend trying speed networking. Put the tips above into practice and give it a shot!

We hope you will join us on Monday, Nov. 18, 2019

Hosted by:

Turner

1220 Washington

Kansas City, MO 64105

Speed Networking: 5-6PM

Dinner: 6PM

Chapter Business Meeting begins at 6:15PM

\$22.00/per person

RSVP: <http://www.kcnawic.org/nov-2019-speed-networking-registration.html>

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