

50 Networking Tips for Nonprofit Professionals

Networking! Some of us love it. Some of us ... don't love it. Wherever you land on that spectrum, networking events are a great way to find new donors and connect with your community. Here are 50 tips to make networking easier and more fruitful. (Introverts please note! I didn't say 'fun!'). To connect with other fundraisers and nonprofit leaders, in a warm and welcoming community, come to the Nonprofit Storytelling Conference – <https://nonprofitstorytellingconference.com>

1. **Set Goals:** Before attending networking events, set clear objectives on what you hope to achieve.
2. **Perfect Your Elevator Pitch:** Be able to succinctly explain what your nonprofit does and why it matters.
3. **Be Genuine:** Authentic connections can go a long way. Show real interest in the people you meet.
4. **Ask Questions:** Asking thoughtful questions not only demonstrates your interest, but can also uncover new opportunities.
5. **Follow Up:** After meeting someone new, make sure to follow up with an email or a LinkedIn connection.
6. **Offer Value:** Networking is a two-way street. Find ways you can help others.
7. **Listen Actively:** Show interest by actively listening to what others say.
8. **Attend Events:** Regularly attend nonprofit events, conferences, and workshops.
9. **Join Online Groups:** Participate in relevant groups on LinkedIn or other platforms to expand your network.
10. **Be Patient:** Building a strong network takes time.
11. **Volunteer:** Offering your skills at an event or a nonprofit can open the door to meeting like-minded individuals.
12. **Practice Good Body Language:** A warm smile and good eye contact can leave a positive impression.
13. **Use Business Cards:** They can help people remember you and follow up after the event.
14. **Stay Organized:** Keep track of your contacts and the conversations you've had.
15. **Use Social Media:** Platforms like Twitter and LinkedIn can be effective networking tools.

16. **Join a Board:** If the opportunity arises, join a board or a committee to meet people in your field.
17. **Use your Existing Network:** Leverage your existing contacts to meet new people.
18. **Collaborate:** Look for opportunities to collaborate with others on projects or events.
19. **Show Appreciation:** A simple thank you can go a long way.
20. **Speak at Events:** Sharing your expertise can position you as a thought leader in your field.
21. **Seek Mentors:** Find those who have experience in your field and can provide guidance.
22. **Share Your Passion:** Enthusiasm can be infectious. Let your passion for your work shine through.
23. **Be Approachable:** Keep an open demeanor and invite others to engage with you.
24. **Don't Forget to Network Internally:** Networking isn't only for meeting new people. Strengthen your relationships with existing colleagues too.
25. **Engage in Local Community:** Participate in local events to connect with your immediate community.
26. **Stay Informed:** Know the latest trends and developments in the nonprofit sector.
27. **Offer to Help:** Assisting others can strengthen your relationships.
28. **Don't Oversell:** Networking isn't just about promoting your organization. It's about forming genuine connections.
29. **Remember Names:** Remembering and using names can make your interactions more personal.
30. **Network with Different Levels:** Don't just focus on the top executives. Networking with peers and junior colleagues can also be beneficial.
31. **Engage in Professional Development:** Attend workshops, webinars, and courses where you can meet people.
32. **Be Positive:** Maintain a positive attitude. People are generally attracted to positivity.
33. **Create a LinkedIn Profile:** Keep your LinkedIn profile up to date. Many professionals use it for networking.
34. **Build Relationships, not just Contacts:** Prioritize quality over quantity. Deep connections are more valuable than a large number of superficial contacts.
35. **Host Events:** Hosting your own events can position you as a leader and connector in your field.
36. **Be Consistent:** Consistency in networking can help you stay on top of mind for your contacts.

37. **Take Notes:** After meeting someone, jot down notes about your conversation to refer back to later.
38. **Find Common Interests:** Shared interests can help forge deeper connections.
39. **Be Respectful of Time:** Be concise and respectful of others' time during conversations.
40. **Stay Connected:** Regularly check in with your network even when you don't need something.
41. **Be Open-Minded:** Everyone you meet has something to offer.
42. **Prepare Beforehand:** Before events, review the attendee list and identify people you'd like to meet.
43. **Get Involved in Nonprofit Associations:** These groups can offer numerous networking opportunities.
44. **Practice Networking:** Like any other skill, networking gets better with practice.
45. **Recommend Others:** If you know two people who could benefit from knowing each other, introduce them.
46. **Use Icebreakers:** Have a few conversation starters ready to break the ice.
47. **Maintain Confidentiality:** Be respectful of confidential information shared with you.
48. **Respect Different Views:** Be open to differing opinions and perspectives.
49. **Embrace Diversity:** Seek to network with people from diverse backgrounds and experiences.
50. **Remember It's About Giving, Not Just Taking:** Be generous with your knowledge, connections, and time.