

Des Plaines Chamber of Commerce & Industry

First Friday Networking Tips

NETWORKING:

The process of establishing mutually beneficial relationships with other business people, potential clients and/or customers. It is a valuable and inexpensive marketing tool - when done correctly.

PURPOSE:

To increase your business revenue

HELPFUL TIPS:

Be Patient

- ✓ takes time to build relationships based on trust and confidence
- ✓ you may not walk away from a meeting with a referral or lead, but being in attendance has put your name and brand in front of every attendee

Bring Business Cards

- ✓ without business cards, you become "the person in the blue shirt/blouse" as opposed to John Brown from Acme Corp
- ✓ use back for notes, when & where you met, your discussion, their need(s), follow-up time/call

Practice

- ✓ know every aspect of your business and practice a 15 to 30 second "elevator" speech about your business
- ✓ especially include what makes your business different from your competitors

Develop Relationships

- ✓ save the heavy selling techniques for another time, like an appointment
- ✓ focus on building relationships with each other
- ✓ learn more about the individuals and their business since you will be referring them or doing business with them
- ✓ developing a relationship with someone earns their trust

Attend Regularly

- ✓ networking is like exercising - it is only effective if it is done regularly
- ✓ work at it - it is an ongoing process
- ✓ treat networking like an appointment and don't cancel it
- ✓ networking events are not "fillers" in your day - they are necessary to develop solid relationships

Listen

- ✓ talking with people and giving your "elevator" speech is only half of the networking effort
- ✓ listening is the other critical piece that people forget to do
- ✓ networking events aren't just about you getting the word out about your company - it is listening to what other businesses do and might need