

# 10 Networking Tips for Success in Business



Altitude  
Business Solutions

# Give Yourself the Gift of Gab and Reap the Benefits

**Some people are born good-looking. Some have the gift of gab. And some are lucky enough to be born smarter than the rest of us. Whether we like it or not, Mother Nature does not dole these characteristics out evenly.**

Do you have the social skills necessary to shine in small-talk settings? Small-talk skills are a valuable tool to have in your social arsenal. While some of us seem to have been born with exceptional social skills, many of us could use a little work. All social skills are learnable. Enhancing your social skills can have a positive effect on your professional and social life.

Try these techniques to boost your small-talk skills:

**1. Start with your listening skills.** Have you ever spoken with someone that was too distracted to pay attention to you? It's insulting and fails to inspire confidence. Be polite and give your conversation partner your full attention.

**2. Ask Relevant questions.** Asking relevant questions is another way to show you're paying attention. It also shows interest..

**3. Be aware of your body language.**

Smile, maintain good eye contact, keep your body open, and lean forward. Your body communicates more than you think. Keep your body language in mind..

**4. Start the conversation with a compliment or comment.** You can ask a question about the other person's shoes or inquire if they've had a chance to try the amazing spinach dip. A sincere compliment is also an effective way to start a conversation. Avoid being excessive. If the other person feels uncomfortable, you've gone too far.





**5. Have a list of interesting questions prepared.** You wouldn't go into battle with an unloaded gun. Avoid attending social events without some conversation material ready to go. Avoid the usual, "Where did you go to school?" types of questions. Try these instead:

- What are you passionate about?
- How do you like to relax?
- What's the best movie you've seen this year?
- What's the most exciting thing happening in your life right now?
- Describe your perfect weekend.

**6. Practice, practice, practice.** New skills are awkward at first. The more you can practice your small-talk skills, the more quickly they'll grow. Take advantage of every opportunity to put your skills to work. There are people everywhere.

- If you're waiting in line at the store, strike up a conversation with the person next to you. Introduce yourself to new neighbors and coworkers.

**7. Avoid potentially emotional topics.** Politics, abortion, and religion are few examples of topics that might be best to avoid. Many people have strong opinions on these types of issues. You might find yourself with more on your hands that you bargained for.

**8. Be the host.** Regardless of where you're practicing your small talk skills, pretend you're the host, rather than the guest. As the host, you're proactive and focused on making sure that others are enjoying themselves.





#### 9. **Know how to exit the conversation.**

Not every conversation will be productive or enjoyable. If you're not enjoying yourself, the other person probably isn't either. There's no reason for both of you to suffer. Simply say, "It was nice chatting with you. I hope we can do it again," and then move on to the next person.

10. **Relax.** When you're nervous, you make the people around you nervous, too. Take a deep breath and stay focused on the interaction. With a few conversations starters memorized, you have nothing to fear. A few, good questions will keep the other person talking most of the time.

***Do you dread social gatherings because you feel uncomfortable making small talk? Many parts of life are easier and more enjoyable when you're able to express yourself comfortably. All skills require time to master. Begin working on your social skills today.***

