

Effective networking

What is networking all about?

Women face different challenges than men in the workplace. To meet these challenges successfully women must network. Networking is about sharing information, ideas, resources, opportunities. Members of a network look to each other for advice, tips on jobs, careers and employment and create a support system for each other. These informal strategic alliances can benefit you greatly.

Steps to more effective networking

- Define your objective. Focus on what you want to achieve and how people can help you. Think about what you can do for members of your network in exchange for information, contacts and support.
- Be visible and approachable: Go out of your way to be where people are. Be cheerful, confident and straightforward
- Make contact: Select the best approach and initiate the conversation. Wait for a response. Mention common interests. Report news of interest.
- Get the contact details of people you meet. Not just their business card but other key information that can be stapled with their card.
- Follow up on information, advice, or leads given to you.

Building your network

- Find out who has the information and influence that you need
- Develop well rounded relationships that are not all 'business'. Develop and use your contacts.
- Try to get along to meetings, even if the topic is not of direct relevance to you, to meet other people. Talk to everyone you know about opportunities
- Find those friendly network spiders, those types of people who just seem to know everyone
- Warm up long-cold contacts
- Get into the habit of being talkative

How to be visible without really trying while networking:

- Ask a question at a conference
- Make a point in a meeting
- Discuss a book with an industry leader
- Make people laugh
- Have an opinion on everything
- Send cards at Christmas or New Year to remind your contacts that you exist.

More information on Networking:

- Sydney University Network for Women (SUN): <http://www.usyd.edu.au/sun/>
- Women's Network Australia: <http://www.womensnetwork.com.au/affiliates.htm>
- Australian Government Information relating to women: <http://women.gov.au/>