

## **Networking Best Practices**

*Lisa Ryan, Heyman Associates*

### Steps of a Networking Interaction:

#### How to break the Ice—

- Find some sort of common ground
  - “What brings you to this event?”
  - “What sessions have you liked?”
  - Talk about the setting (venue, city, etc.)

#### The “Meat” of the Conversation—

- First, try to figure out how you might be able to help this person
- Next, have a simple “ask” or two of your own in mind...
  - “Do you know anyone doing x sort of work?” or “What trends are you seeing in Y area?”

#### Concluding the Interaction—

- Set a realistic goal to talk to 5 or 10 people (depending on the size of the group).
- Work out how much time that gives you with each person.
  - Just a rule of thumb, if you’re having a great conversation, keep it going.
- Gracefully exit by asking for their card and offering to follow up after the event.

#### The Importance of Follow-through—

- Get that business card!
  - May be old-fashioned, but still the quickest and easiest way to share contact information (and conclude a conversation).
- Actually connect with people afterward
  - Send a LinkedIn invite or a quick email
  - Periodically keep in touch—before you need something from them
  - If someone helps you along the way, send them a “thank you” note (handwritten!)

#### Things to Remember—

- It’s not about YOU!
- It’s all about the other person and what you can do for them.
- It’s about building and maintaining relationships, don’t be the person who calls out of nowhere and asks for help
- Make sure you have an objective—you need goals
- Make a list of everyone in your network—not just work people—friends, people in professional organizations, groups you belong to—now who do you see regularly?
- Be genuine!