

Henrik's Business Mingling checklist

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1. **Business cards**

Bring a stack of business cards and a pen. Far too many people attend events without their business cards!

Keep the cards within easy reach, perhaps in an elegant card case.

2. **Expectations**

Realise that networking is long-term, don't expect immediate results. You will get the most out of it if you offer your help, your experiences and your contacts *without demanding anything back*, "Give to Gain". It is about relations and not about transactions, i.e. you should plant seeds and not be on a hunt!

3. **The starting phase**

Start directly by approaching the person closest to you, no matter how he or she looks, don't hesitate! But respect the other person by not standing too close, many people are intimidated by that.

Tip: Avoid those that you already know, tell them that you will talk to them later. You are here to make new contacts!

4. **The introductory phase**

Don't start by telling all about what you can do, it is not your goal here, (and nobody really cares either). Instead you want to find out as much as possible about the other person, what he or she does, what are the interests etc, and you want to steer the conversation by asking questions.

So start instead by showing your interest in the other person. For example: "Hello, what did you think of the panel discussion?", or "Hello, how do you feel about this event?" (Do not ask a question that can be answered with just yes or no!)

Listen to the other person, show your full attention, then he or she will soon also be interested in you and ask what you do, which is your goal.

5. **Your elevator pitch**

As soon as you are asked "what do you do", you use your elevator pitch. It should be brief, under 10 seconds, and answer three questions:

1. What do you do? 2. Whom do you do it for? 3. What benefits does it give your customers?

(See also my elevator pitch checklist.)

6. **The decision phase**

When the other person has showed you interest and you have acquired some information, it is time to decide if this is a contact that you want to move further with or not.

7. **The comprehensive phase**

If you want to proceed, say "It would be interesting to have lunch with you and get to know more about your business. Can I have your business card to call you and set up a suitable time?"

Your goal is to exchange cards and get permission to call.

Tip: Immediately make a note on the card about what was interesting and when and where you met the person. Another way, if you cannot write on the card, is to fold the upper left corner = "Hot prospect", or the upper right corner = "Indirect contact", or the lower right corner = "No contact".

8. **Termination**

If you do not want to proceed with this person, just say "OK, it was nice to meet you. Here is my card, can I have yours?" Exchange cards and then move to another person in the room.

9. **Indirect contacts**

Every person knows hundreds of people. The person that you are talking to is perhaps not directly interesting to you, but might have other good contacts. Therefore you should exchange business cards with everybody that you meet, and ask if they know somebody that might be interested in you and your business.

10. **Time allocation**

Never spend more than around three minutes per person. Even if it is a very interesting contact, you can miss other even more interesting people if you linger with the same person too long. This is a very common mistake! Remember, your goal is to set up a later meeting with your key.

11. **The follow up phase**

Save and catalogue all the business cards. For those that you want to see again, send within two days some information about you and your business along with a suggested meeting time.

You can also send a "nice to meet you"-mail to the other contacts, where you include your elevator pitch and a link to your home page. Don't sell anything, just ask if there is any way that you can be of help.