DROP IN LEARNING
QUICK TIPS

Networking: meeting useful contacts

Networking is an effective way of introducing yourself to people who may be of benefit to your career now or in the future.

Also, it's a great way to keep up with industry news and pick up information as well as helping you to keep motivated through contact with like-minded people.

Networking opportunities arise in all shapes and forms including branch meetings, industry events, conferences, seminars and trade fairs: in fact, anywhere you might meet people who are in the same industry.

NETWORKING TIPS

1. Find out who will be at the 'networking' event beforehand – is there anyone who you really should meet?

2. Find out how long the event will last and set yourself a target: "Tonight I'm going to introduce myself to three new people".

3. Psych yourself up – remember that you're there for a reason and that somebody out there is going to benefit from meeting you!

> Remember: successful relationships are mutually beneficial

4. Work the room – don't lose your nerve and lodge yourself comfortably in a corner with someone you know.

5. Ask questions and show interest. Be genuine – don't drop people as soon as you discover that they are of no use to you. For one, it's just plain rude – remember, it's a small world and you don't want to get a reputation for being 'that creep who is always on the make.' Also, people may be/or will be more influential than you initially think.

6. Introduce people and provide information: you'll often get the favour returned.

7. Use positive body language: smile, make eye contact, shake hands and stand with an open body stance.

8. Mention what you do: not as a 'hard sell' but drop it in as a natural part of the conversation.

9. Give your business card to people: this looks professional and ensures that they can contact you easily.

10. Follow up: if you've met a potential client at a networking event, contact them soon after the event - while you're still fresh in their mind - to see if you can arrange a meeting or send them some examples of your work.