

FREE



GUIDE 2019

**Networking:
how to do
it well**

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

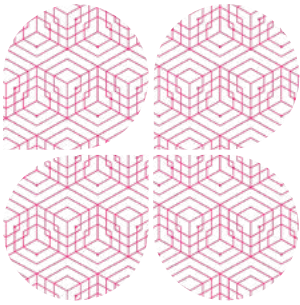
Cathy Hayward is managing director of Magenta Associates, and a communications specialist with more than 18 years' experience in a range of journalistic, publishing and marketing roles. She founded Magenta in 2011 after a journalistic career spanning a number of different titles including *FM World*, the award-winning magazine for the British Institute of Facilities Management, *Marketing Week*, *Financial Management*, *Soccer Analyst*, *Supply Management*, *Unions Today*, *People Management* and *Director*. She holds a Masters degree in journalism, as well as the Chartered Institute of Public Relations' post-graduate diploma in PR.

Introduction

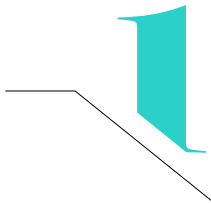
For many people networking is a drag. It can feel like you are at bad party where you either feel ignored, or worse still, stuck with the office bore. But networking isn't something you should dodge; if you want to make an impact within your sector, get on in your career or find the best people to link up with for the next business deal, effective networking is required.

The old adage 'it's not what you know, it's who you know' still holds true. Research by ABC news in America found that 85 per cent of jobs are secured by networking. In the age of social networking; with LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook to draw from, you might wonder why it's even worth bothering attending another networking event. That's where you'd be wrong. Social media does indeed have its place, but networking is about getting to know other people and building personal relationships with them. Once you've met and talked with someone in the flesh you will be in a much stronger position to contact them in the future, whether it's about a job, a project or a business opportunity.





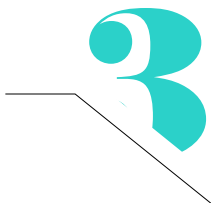
This short guide takes you through the process.



Be clear on what you want to achieve in your networking activities. When you attend a networking event is it to drum up new business? Find a new job? Do you want to meet new people within your sector, refresh existing relationships, share ideas and access some useful professional support? Once you've a stronger idea of what your networking activities are for, identify the most suitable networking events to visit. For instance, if you want to connect with fellow professionals in your sector, join an industry body such as the BIFM, CIPD, BCO or CIM; if you'd prefer to make some wider business connections seek out organisations such as the local Chamber of Commerce and if you'd like to meet a diverse range of business contacts in your area, participate in one of the local networking groups in your town or region. Most of these groups and their events will be advertised on local business or social networks, such as LinkedIn and Facebook.

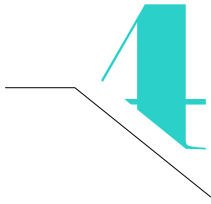


Before attending an event, try to get hold of the delegate list and if appropriate the details of any speaker/s to find out some useful background information on them and their organisation. Make sure you're properly attired for an event by wearing formal business wear unless otherwise informed and always bring along a pack of business cards. Arrive in good time so you're not walking into a busy room and if you feel daunted, introduce yourself to another person standing on their own, they'll be glad of the gesture. Keep your introduction to a maximum of 90 seconds – explaining clearly who your clients are, establishing your goals and means of carrying them out.

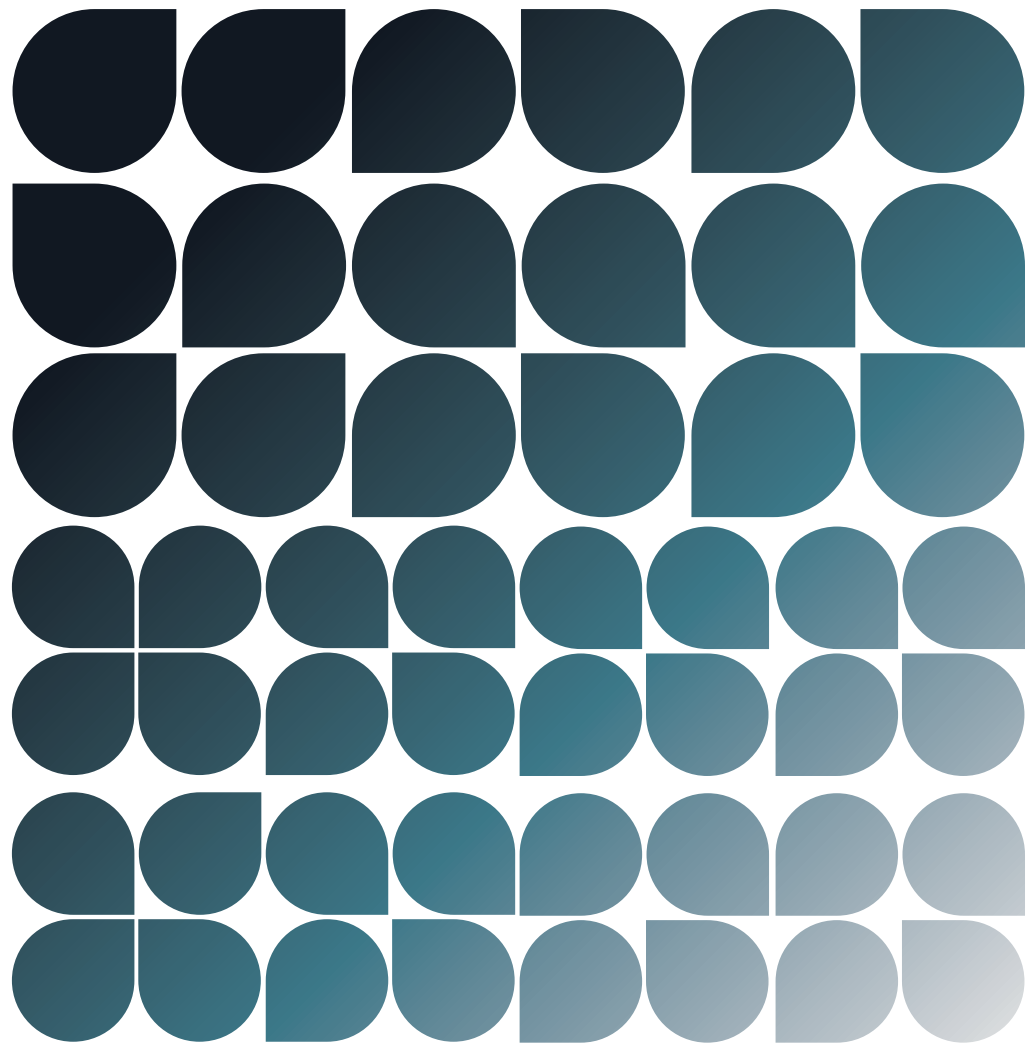


When you do engage in conversation concentrate hard on listening as well as talking. People not only enjoy talking to confident speakers but those who seem genuinely interested in hearing what they have got to say. Repeat people's names and look them in the eye rather than glancing round the room. Encourage fellow networkers to talk by asking open ended questions, such as how they got into their discipline/company/sector, what their interests are and what issues they're facing at the moment. If you get stuck with a bore, or indeed are not sure how to move on to the next person just be straight and say, 'it's been great meeting you but you must have other people you'd like to meet' and move away. Keep in mind that a networking event is a social business event so don't drink too much alcohol even if you are nervous.





Make sure you follow up on the contacts you meet at the event. Too many people see networking as way of collecting business cards which just gather dust in a drawer. To really benefit from the process make sure you maintain a connection with the contacts you've made there by linking up to them on social media such as LinkedIn or Twitter. Take the time to drop them an email reminding them of your conversation, especially if they expressed a mutual interest in an area in which you can collaborate. If you want to raise your profile further consider offering your expertise or services to a future networking event, by offering to speak or even host an event. And successful networking doesn't require you make instant strong connections with people you've met for the first time or indeed result in a massive order book or new job. Be patient, take things slowly and you'll be impressed with the results.





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