

DISTRICT  Business
Growth Network

Speed

NETWORKING

Etiquette



THE PERFECT PITCH FOR SPEED NETWORKING

Speed networking is a unique networking opportunity that stands out among other networking events for several reasons. While other networking events give you a few hours to meet people and make contacts, speed networking is all about making quality connections in a short amount of time.

This type of networking event is also exceptional because you don't need to think about who you want to meet and how you'll approach them. In a speed networking event, the participants are chosen beforehand, and you're sure to be given a set amount of time with each participant.

Typically, each speed networking participant is given a certain amount of time, ranging from one minute to five minutes, to introduce themselves to other participants in a round robin format. A crucial part of speed networking is your pitch.

Your pitch, also called an elevator pitch, is a short introduction of yourself and your business. It's called an "elevator" pitch because it's supposed to be fast enough to present during an elevator ride.

HOW DO I START WRITING THE PERFECT PITCH?



With such a short amount of time available to present yourself and your business, you need to ensure that you perfect your pitch. You can ask yourself several questions while preparing your pitch to guarantee that you include all the crucial information you want to share with the other participants.

One question is, "How can I help you?" Remember, the key to any professional network is to add value to the network. What do you bring to the table? Is it your extensive experience in the industry? Maybe it's the number of views your website gets in a month, offering new communication channels to potential partners. Think of how you can help the person you're talking to and how to demonstrate the value you bring to a possible professional relationship.

Another question to ask when preparing your pitch is, "Who are your target markets?" This question goes for your business and the contacts you present your pitch to during the speed networking event. It is always beneficial for network contacts to share the same target markets. Having the same target markets creates an environment where connections can work together, refer to each other, and make the most out of networking.

After answering those questions, you're ready to put the perfect pitch together.

KEEP THESE TIPS IN MIND WHEN MAKING YOUR PERFECT PITCH



- **Clear and concise**

The most important thing to remember is to keep it brief. Your pitch should be sixty seconds or less. You need to deliver your message clearly within this time. In a speed networking event, you only have a few minutes to interact with each other. So, ensure that no time is wasted and you make an impact in this short amount of time.

There's no need to include your educational background or your complete work history in your pitch. You can include a short history of your business, for example - when it started, how many employees it has, and your current role. Again, don't share unnecessary information, such as your first job (which has nothing to do with your current job) and why you left previous roles.

- **Answer essential questions**

Next, remember the questions you asked yourself above and ensure you incorporate the answers into the pitch. Share your skills and expertise. You can also talk about how well your business is doing or your company's mission and vision. These vital pieces of information should demonstrate the value you can give to people in your network.

Make sure to include your business goals. You don't need to give detailed information, but mentioning your goals also helps paint a clearer picture of your company. A pitch is also an excellent chance to expound on your accomplishments. No need to show off or brag, but listing a few of your top achievements is acceptable and very much welcome in an elevator pitch.



Most importantly, ask yourself, "So what?" after each part of your pitch. During a speed networking event, time is of the essence. Don't include unnecessary information. Make sure that each sentence gives value to your pitch. Make it sound like yourself, but edit it to be as concise as possible.

- **Practice, practice, practice**

Lastly, don't forget to practice! Creating the perfect pitch is not easy, and when you're happy with what you've written down, don't waste your effort by not putting in the practice. Practice your pitch and make sure it sounds natural.

Often, reading something silently sounds different from hearing it out loud. Take note of your tone and facial expression while you are delivering your pitch. Don't speak in a monotonous manner or frown. Be conscious of your body language. Remember, your nonverbal communication skills (such as posture, tone of voice, and making eye contact) also play a big part in the impression you'll leave on the people you meet. Keep your body language relaxed and open while still professional.

When you practice saying your pitch out loud, you may also realize that it needs more information or lacks pertinent details. Tweak it again until you are happy with the information you are sharing. There are no rules when it comes to editing your pitch. Edit and rewrite it until you feel like you can't improve it any further. Continue to practice your pitch until you've memorized it. While you can read your pitch, delivering it from memory leaves a better impression. Again, ensure that it takes you thirty seconds or less to deliver the whole pitch.

Another tip for a perfect pitch is to remember to keep your business cards handy and within reach. Right after you finish your pitch, hand over your business card to your new contact before you forget. You don't want to scramble around for your cards during a speed networking event. Preparing your business cards in advance is part of being ready to give the perfect pitch.

There's no magic formula for creating the perfect pitch for speed networking. However, follow the guidelines mentioned above, plus put in the time, effort, and practice. You'll be able to create the perfect one for your needs.

SPEED NETWORKING ETIQUETTE

What speed networking is NOT:

1. A pitch fest
2. Selling your products or services
3. Talking for the entire time
4. A sales presentation

What speed networking IS:

1. A way to create new connections
2. A method to cement existing relationships
3. A platform to increase your network
4. A vehicle to help others
5. Brand awareness, letting people know that you exist
6. An opportunity for you to establish a new relationship and create another meeting
7. A way to explore joint venture partnerships or referral partnerships



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