



Meetings Made Easy

Making the most of MustMeet networking

A short introduction for Delegates to networking at business events

The Seven Be P's – Tips and techniques for getting the best out of networking.

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Introduction

Networking: Face-to-face is still the best way

Networking is consistently ranked by Delegates as one of *the* major benefits of attending business events – and yet many Delegates find networking difficult. They are uncomfortable starting conversations with strangers and do not know how to move on and ‘work the room’ to find the best contacts for their business.

Many business events capitalize on this interest in networking by offering dedicated times in the agenda and spaces in the venue for networking. Even so, we’ve all attended events where you are left standing around with many other delegates, hoping to meet the person that can add value to your business and justify the cost of time out of the office. That person may be standing next to you just waiting for an introduction; more likely they are the other side of the event and you will never meet by chance.

The growth of social networking in this age of the internet and email continues apace. Yet even here the value of face-to-face networking is recognised with many articles promoting the benefits of combining your on-line activities with personal connections. After all, even the newest ‘virtual world’ communities have an annual physical get together here in the old fashioned ‘real world’.

Face-to-face meetings arranged by MustMeet answer many of these conflicting needs and can make a real difference to business events you attend. MustMeet ensures you get the maximum value from the time you invest in your event by helping you network with peers, partners and potential new customers. And we’ve found that structured networking makes your fellow Delegates open to networking and encourages more informal contact and conversation. Many Delegates have told us they have spent months of calling and chasing for meetings and then arranged them in minutes at events where their prospects are attending.

This short paper shows you how to make the most out of face-to-face networking at events you attend.

Plan your networking

When should you start networking?

Of course, everyone who attends any event 'networks' – even if its only with exhibitors at trade shows. What we're talking about is more structured networking and planning your time to allow it. Ask yourself the following:

- Is this a good event for me to network? Can I meet the right people?
- How do I meet the right people? Where will they be? What will they be doing?
- How can I be pro-active before the event to set up meetings with potential contacts?

You can add huge value to your time at any event by spending even a short time preparing before you go.

What type of networking?

Ad Hoc Networking

Most smaller business events give Delegates enough coffee and lunch breaks to get to know each other. Many events pack so much in that there is little time for Delegates to just meet and talk; many more don't allow space for just mingling or seating areas for ad hoc meetings. What will your event be like? Can you find out who else is attending before you go?

Ask your event organizer if they are using MustMeet. With Delegates and presenters listed on MustMeet, you can see before you arrive who may be available to meet with you – or at least remind yourself of people you may have met with briefly before.

Planned Networking

Larger events improve networking for Delegates by setting aside space and time specifically for networking. At Exhibitions and Tradeshows space for networking is often provided by sponsored areas, including bar and café areas. These can prove challenging for serious networkers since they are usually busy enough with visitors there for the refreshment value rather than networking. Even better are areas dedicated and free for networking.

Plan your networking before you attend. Read the event information so you know where you can arrange to meet people. It's often easier to grab a coffee meeting if the person is going to be there anyway – and even easier and more professional if you can suggest a place to meet. Think about people that you particularly want to meet with. Can you call them beforehand and arrange to meet up?

Don't forget to keep your name badge clearly visible to make it easy for other Delegates to avoid the embarrassment of trying to remember your name – particularly ones you may have met before.

Structured Networking

If the Event Organizer has set aside time and space for networking then it's really a key aspect of the event. Find out what structure they have put in place and make the best use of your time. For example ask the Event Organizer if they can provide a list of delegates' or at least attending companies to help you look for specific individuals. Ask:

- Are there dedicated staff to facilitate Networking? What can they do for you?
- Is there a notice board or meeting request facility? A Rendezvous point?

MustMeet.com is designed for structured networking. MustMeet allows Delegates to register their name and company plus a complete profile of themselves and the type of person or company they would like to meet, plus keywords to help other Delegates find them. Our management controls, opt-in and privacy policy take care of how Delegates agree to share their contact details; powerful search and listing features make it very easy for Delegates to find the right people to meet with; a familiar Diary function makes booking meetings simple. And MustMeet handles multiple meeting areas as well as giving Delegates the option to specify their own meeting location – so Delegates know exactly when and where to meet.

Make your networking count

Be prepared!

The seven Be P's.

If you have pre-arranged meetings then remember to take your itinerary with you. Remember the golden rules of networking:

- Be prepared – know who you are meeting; where and when
- Be punctual – enough said
- Be professional – have your introduction and elevator pitch or agenda ready
- Be practical – have something to write notes with and on
- Be patient – networking is not selling
- Be proactive – know what follow up you want or expect
- Be polite – follow up your meeting and any actions, even if it's only a 'thank you'.

MustMeet offers complete meeting management including printing your itinerary on demand and sending your details and notes to Delegates you have met with. Once the event is finished, MustMeet will not accept any more registrations. However it is always available to you to remind yourself of meetings you held during your event and follow up any business opportunities.

Exhibitions

Events with Exhibition Space

At trade shows and events with booths or dedicated exhibition spaces, Exhibitor staff can register on MustMeet and offer meetings at their Booth. This lets you pre-book meetings at their booths and target specific Companies you may be interested in.

If you are an Exhibitor, click on the 'Exhibitor' check box on the profile page when signing up to an event. MustMeet lets Exhibitors to input their Booth Details – their Booth will be offered as a potential meeting location.

Conclusion

We know you value networking, sometimes above the content of the event. Networking is not easy – many delegates don't really like doing it. You can really improve your networking experience, whether you simply make sure you are fully prepared or make use of full structured networking.

Maximise the return on your investment in attending events by making the most of every networking opportunity. You can achieve more useful meetings in one event than in weeks of calling and chasing. Ask your Event Organizer if they are using MustMeet networking.

About MustMeet

MustMeet is a trading entity of 118Software Solutions Ltd. 118Software was founded in 2004 and runs networking events for large corporate clients and professional associations. MustMeet takes the experience from running these events and offers a completely self-service system designed so that any Event Organizer can simply and cost-effectively add powerful diary-based networking to their business events. MustMeet offers all the functionality you need to manage networking and make sure your delegates know who to meet, when to meet them and where they are meeting, at a fraction of the price of bespoke systems.