

Tips from networking advice video series

First Impressions

When you meet someone, you automatically make a judgement about them. From that moment, you'll look for evidence to support this judgement, rather than looking to change this judgement or process characteristics independent of this.

- Clothing

Clothing is the visual representation of you that other people see. It also invokes feeling and emotion in you. For example, wearing gym clothes when doing sport can help you feel more active, whereas lounge clothes might help you unwind and relax at home. Dressing for how you want to feel and to suit your professional environment can help get you in the appropriate mindset.

- Handshakes

Your handshake is one of the first pieces of information that people get to judge you on, and they will. Practice with a friend and ask for their feedback to ensure that your handshake is a good strength (not too feeble, not too vice-like).

- Listening

Listening is a skill. Try to practice to 'RASA' when you engage in conversation with someone.

R – Receive information

A – Appreciate the information. Show you're listening by nodding or adding small comments: "Yes", "I see", "okay", "sure" when appropriate.

S – Summarise. Give a brief version back to the speaker when they have finished ("So...")

A – Ask a question back. Doing this also helps you to retain the information you have been given, as it helps you memorise the information through rehearsal, as well as showing that you are listening attentively.

Effective Pitching

When you're networking or talking to people about your area of research, you might want to make use of the 'elevator pitch'. The elevator pitch is a short pitch, which might take the amount of time you would have with someone when in a travelling elevator. There are 3 different type of elevator pitch.

- The 10 second pitch

This pitch is aimed at people who are not familiar with your field of research so describe your research in simple, concise terms, without complex terminology.

- The 30 second pitch

This is targeted at people in your research field, who might have a general knowledge of your area of research but not an expert.

- The 60 second pitch

This is targeted at experts in your field. This can be very detailed and you shouldn't have to explain concepts or terminology.

You should spend some time writing and practising these pitches. Don't improvise them! Having an effect pitch ready to go will be invaluable and ensure that you give the right message to people that you may only have one encounter with.

If you are not sure what level to pitch at, then pitch low. If someone is familiar with your field or an expert in your area they should make this obvious in their response or questions.

When you meet someone that you feel like you would want to pitch yourself to, don't jump straight in. First ask some questions and find out about the person. Their responses should give you indicators of which level to pitch at and gives you a chance to develop rapport.

Try to be these three things:

1. Confident – this is an appealing quality that people are drawn to. It will also inspire people to have confidence in you.

2. Trustworthiness – you want to encourage people to invest resources in you (be it a job, funding or time).
3. Competence – you need to show that you know what you are doing! This will help them to understand that you are able to follow through with what you say.