



Practical Resources for Community Groups

## CHECKLIST 31

### Making the Most of a Networking Event

*Make sure you...*

- Go with a clear purpose in mind. Do you want to meet new people? Are you looking for people you can collaborate with on a specific project? Do you want to raise the awareness of your organisation? It could be all of these things or something else altogether. If you are clear about what you want to achieve in attending the event, you can focus your actions and conversations around meeting that purpose.
- Prepare a 30 second speech about your organisation and your role within it. It's no secret that most people start a conversation by asking 'So what do you do?' – make the most of the opportunity. Your 30 second speech should conjure up an image in people's mind and inspire them to want to know more. Focus on the positive.
- Avoid standing with a group of people you already know well. By all means spend some time building on recently made connections, but if you already have a strong relationship with someone, save your catch-up for another time. Push yourself out of your comfort zone and make sure you talk to at least 4 new people at each event.
- Bring your business cards. Don't rely on scraps of paper to scribble down contact details. At best it's unprofessional, at worst you end up losing them or wondering what or who they relate to.
- Ask people for their contact details and then actually follow up. A couple of days after the event simply send them an email saying 'It was nice to meet you at the ABC event. Based on our conversation, I've attached something I thought you might be interested in'. It may be something related to your organisation, but equally it could be about anything else you discussed. Perhaps an article that relates to their business or organisation, a recipe, a useful website or a YouTube link. The purpose is to show this person that you value the connection and that you were actually listening to what they had to say.
- Look for opportunities to address the whole group. Most networking groups allow one or two people at each session to make a presentation, so find out how you get on the list. By presenting to the whole group, people who relate to your cause or organisation are able to seek you out for more information. Without the presentation, it may take several events for you to strike up a conversation.
- Attend the events on a regular basis so you actually start to build relationships with people in the room. Visiting once or twice gives you introductions at best, and you'll always feel like you don't quite fit in. It takes time for networking to work effectively.
- Thank the organiser. Not only is it good manners, it is a useful connection to make in terms of meeting new people. The organisers usually know everyone attending the event, and tend to be proactive in introducing like-minded people.

For more useful information visit [www.exult.co.nz](http://www.exult.co.nz) and sign up to be an Exult Network Member.

The Members Area is full of articles and templates and it's completely FREE!

For more information about Exult and the services it provides for community groups, email [kerri@exult.co.nz](mailto:kerri@exult.co.nz)

