

## **The Art of Networking**

Woody Allen said “80% of success is showing up.” One of the most important features in showing up at any place is the entrance you make. People watch the entrance to a room so use this to your advantage. Establish your professional presence. The following tips will help you enter the room directly, purposefully and with confidence.

- Before attending any event do your homework. Determine your objectives, know why you are attending, what you hope to accomplish and whom you would like to meet.
- Visualize yourself meeting strangers, shaking hands, making introductions and opening conversations.
- Walk into the room and step to the right out of line of traffic. Pause briefly to make yourself visible and to spot key persons.
- Walk to the middle area of the room not to the corner or to a wall and definitely not directly to the bar or the food. Remember, they are not having this event because they think you are hungry or thirsty.
- Circulate and make yourself known to key persons and peers.
- Introduce yourself to others stating your name, your company and something about yourself. Ask permission by saying “Excuse me, may I introduce myself?” Avoid two people who appear deep in conversation.
- Eat beforehand so you don’t appear too hungry.
- Keep your right hand free. Don’t carry food or drink in this hand.
- Shake hands with everyone you meet, Avoid gestures of affection, which may misinterpreted.
- Don’t forget to smile, smile, smile. It is a powerful communication tool and one of your most valuable assets.
- Brush up on current events, today’s news stories, movies and sporting events so you can discuss topics other than business and can engage small talk. Avoid controversial topics such as religion and politics.