# Business and Entrepreneurship – Introductions and Networking

# 1 of 17 - Welcome

Welcome to this session on Introductions and Networking.

In this session we will be covering:

* Introducing yourself to clients/customers and others
* Networking

# 2 of 17 – Introduction

In order to be a great entrepreneur, you need to be able to introduce your business idea so that people become interested in it. This may mean talking to people when you feel uncomfortable.

You will also need to promote your own skills, as well as promoting your product/service. As a nation, we are poor at promoting our own strengths, blowing our own trumpet.

# 3 of 17 – Personal Introduction – Part 1

It is extremely difficult to introduce ourselves to others, with a view to making a sale or setting them up as a customer.

We often feel self-conscious and unable to articulate the things that we are good at. You need to find ways to be able to tell people about yourself without getting self-conscious while being honest.

At a first meeting, you should include a handshake, an introduction to yourself and make strong eye contact. A friendly disposition and smiling face are much more likely to encourage communication.

Check out the following video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ooq2Q7T3i_w>

# 4 of 17 – Personal Introduction – Part 2

When meeting with potential customers or contacts:

* Project confidence (even if you are not confident)
* Have a positive attitude and trust your instincts
* Know your strengths and accomplishments
* Be willing to take risks - learn from your actions
* Be realistic about what you can do and what you cannot
* Address the areas that stop you being positive
* Fear – address the fear, work out what you are afraid of
* Avoid negative thinking – look for the positives
* Relying on "should" statements – don’t dwell on what you “should have done differently”

Think about how you could write your own personal statement. This website might help you start: <https://bestengagingcommunities.com/2008/09/06/5-tips-to-introduce-yourself-in-a-positive-manner-and-sell-your-strengths/>

# 5 of 17 – Personal Introduction – Part 3

**First impressions**

It is really important that the first time you meet or speak to a potential client/associate that you present yourself in the best way to represent your business. Ensure that you are dressed appropriately for the occasion, you might have a company logo that can be put onto your clothing. Take account of the setting, wear appropriate attire that will make the right impression.

A warm and confident smile will put both you and the other person at ease. It is important to be aware of your body language, to ensure that you are projecting confidence and self-assurance. Stand up tall, shoulders back, smile, make eye contact and greet with a firm handshake. This will help you and the other person to feel at ease.

If there is anything that you know that you have in common with the person you are meeting, it can be a great way to open the conversation and to keep it flowing. In addition to promoting yourself, you also need to promote your business. It involves many of the same aspects of self-promotion. You can promote your business by talking to people and you can promote through advertising and marketing.

# 6 of 17 – Product/Service Introduction

When you decide to introduce your product or service, it is important to present the information in a way that potential customers/users will understand. However, you can’t be patronising or talk down to that person. They should think that you are addressing them specifically, giving them all of the information that they need to make an informed choice. They should be able to see themselves using the product/service.

Everything you say/present should be focused on that person buying the product or service. Know what your key points are and make them quickly, don’t go on too long and risk losing the audience’s attention. Make the information as interesting as possible, speak with enthusiasm and animation.

Use a physical demonstration if possible, it helps the person get an idea of size and function of product or scope of service. Believe in your product/service, if you are not excited about the product/service, how can you expect your potential customer to be?

# 7 of 17 – Networking Introduction

Business networking is where you develop business opportunities and contacts, face-to-face, by phone, email and social and business networking websites. If you have a business network of contacts, it will help with many aspects of your business, for example, sales and marketing. It is often an introduction to those whom it would usually be difficult to engage.

It can also bring the added advantage of recommendation and personal introduction, which are always very useful to have in a competitive business environment. It can be really uncomfortable introducing yourself to new people. Especially if you are planning to ask these people to assist you with your business venture. You may need that person to assist with an aspect of your business straight away, or, you will make new contacts but won’t necessarily use these contacts until further into your venture.

There are many tips and techniques to help you with networking, but how do you make an impression, to ensure that you will be remembered in future? Check out the following website for networking tips: <http://www.businessballs.com/business-networking.htm>

# 8 of 17 - Networking Essential Principles

1. **Elevator speech.** Describe yourself concisely and impressively.
2. **Be different.** Differentiate yourself, aim high. Be best at something.
3. **Help others.** Help others and you will be helped.
4. **Personal integrity.** Integrity, trust and reputation are vital for networking.
5. **Relevant targeting.** Groups and contacts relevant to your aims and capabilities.
6. **Plans and aims**. Plan your networking – and know what you want.
7. **Follow up.** Following up meetings and referrals makes things happen.
8. **Be positive.** Be a positive influence on everyone and everything.
9. **Sustained focused effort.** Be focused – and ever – ready.
10. **Life balance.** Being balanced and grounded builds assurance.

# 9 of 17 – Benefits

If you are able to carry out networking well, you should see some benefits.

1. **Business contacts and increased business**

Most entrepreneurs are looking to make new contacts that will help them with their business. You may not understand how a particular contact can assist your business; they may be able to buy your product or service for their own use.

1. **Connections and opportunities**

Networking provides you with a great source of connections, and really opens the door to talk to highly influential people that you wouldn’t otherwise be able to easily talk to or find.

1. **Advice**

Networking provides a great source of information and advice. You will have access to entrepreneurs with experience and who will be able to give you advice.

1. **Raising your profile**

If you are comfortable putting yourself out there, it is a great way to get yourself and your business noticed. Attend business and social events that will help to get your face known.

1. **Increase your confidence**

If you are not confident when speaking to others, the more you network, the easier it becomes, and your confidence will grow.

# 10 of 17 – Drawbacks

* **Wasted time and resources**

You may not have focused on the right event and contacts, so time and energy have been wasted. Some potential contacts are there for their own gains. Once you go – you feel obliged to keep going or take part! It might be better to use the internet…

* **Not taking advantage of the opportunity**

If you are not confident, you may find it unnerving and you lack the confidence to make the most of the opportunity.

Check out the following video clip on how to network for introverts: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-2Xq0FafHs>

# 11 of 17 – Face to Face Networking

If you want to speak to other entrepreneurs to network with them, where should you go?

You might go to trade fairs, conferences or business showcase events.

You can look at local chamber of commerce events, such as this:

<https://www.londonchamber.co.uk/events/see-all-events/>

Make a point of collecting as many business cards as possible, you never know when they will be useful.

# 12 of 17 – Internet Networking

You don’t have to attend trade fairs and sales conferences to network, it can be done online.

Many people now use social media to increase their business network. They use sites like Facebook and Linkedin.

Check out this article on how to network on social media:

<https://www.bdc.ca/en/articles-tools/entrepreneurial-skills/improve-networking/pages/5-tips-to-network-on-social-media-like-a-pro.aspx>

If you don’t already, now is the time to create yourself a LinkedIn profile.

# 13 of 17 - Question 1

Which of these should you do when introducing yourself to a potential customer:

1. Project confidence (even if you are not confident)
2. Have a positive attitude and trust your instincts
3. Know your strengths and accomplishments
4. Talk about your sporting achievements
5. Tell them your best grades at school

The right answers are, A, B and C. Project confidence, have a positive attitude and trust your instincts and know your strengths and accomplishments.

# 14 of 17 – Question 2

Considering what you have learnt about introductions and networking, please fill in the blanks in the statements below, with the following words and phrases: ***First, Dressed, Wear, Logo, Present*** and ***Right.***

It is really important that the ***BLANK*** time you meet or speak to a potential client/associate that you ***BLANK*** yourself in the best way to represent your business. Ensure that you are ***BLANK*** appropriately for the occasion, you might have a company ***BLANK*** that can be put onto your clothing. Take account of the setting, ***BLANK*** appropriate attire that will make the ***BLANK*** impression.

The correct answers are:

It is really important that the ***first*** time you meet or speak to a potential client/associate that you ***present*** yourself in the best way to represent your business. Ensure that you are ***dressed*** appropriately for the occasion, you might have a company ***logo*** that can be put onto your clothing. Take account of the setting, ***wear*** appropriate attire that will make the ***right*** impression.

# 15 of 17 – Question 3

Which of these could be classed as benefits of networking?

1. Business contacts and increased business
2. Connections and opportunities
3. Raising your profile
4. Being able to buy a better car

The correct answers are, A, B and C.

# 16 of 17 – Question 4

Where might you go to expand your network?

1. Trade fairs
2. Business conferences
3. LinkedIn
4. Local chamber of commerce events
5. Sporting events

The correct answers are, A, B, C and D.

# 17 of 17 – End

Well done. You have completed this session on introductions and networking.

In this session, we have covered:

* Introducing yourself to clients/customers and others
* Networking

If you have any questions about the topics covered, please make a note and discuss these further with your tutor.