**Effective Business Networking: Working The Room**

’Working the room’ is a truly effective business networking skill that will help you quickly establish new connections and contacts with quick informal meetings.

Working the room – what does this mean and how can you be good at it?

OK to explain …you walk into a roomful of people and at best think ‘where on earth do I start?’ and at worst say to yourself, ‘I just want to turn round and go back out.’ If these sound familiar then rest assured you’re not alone. They are most people’s initial reactions when faced with a room full of strangers.

‘Working the room’ is a term given to that process, when networking, of moving effortlessly from one person to another.

**Approaching others:**

So perhaps you find the most difficult thing is going up to people and introducing yourself – just remember that everyone is in the same boat as you – they are here to network and therefore expect and hope you will do just that. Just follow these tips for working the room and your confidence will soar.

1.Make the first move – introduce yourself to others rather than waiting for others to come to you – this allows you to choose who you talk to and you’ll be thanked by the other person.

2.To ease yourself in try heading for that one contact you know however don’t stick with them – after all you already know them

3.Look for lone people to speak to – think how pleased they will be to talk to you, after all they want effective business networking, not just standing around watching others.

4.Look for contacts the same height and age as you to make connections with – this can help you feel more relaxed at the outset, and choose the sex you feel more comfortable networking with.

5.Decide whether to approach groups of people depending on how they are standing. E.g. if there are a couple of people more or less standing side by side then this means they are open to being approached. If a couple or a group appears ‘closed’ with all parties facing each other then it may be more difficult, so save them until later.

6.As you join a couple or group, listen to what they are saying, wait for a lull in the conversation, ask whether you may join them and introduce yourself.

**Moving On:**

You’ve introduced yourself and you’ve had a good conversation with someone, but the meetings finished and you know instinctively it’s time to move on…what do you do?

Be prepared to move on, it’s all part of effective business networking - once you feel that you have gained all you need from your new connection it is time to move on to the next person– remember that the other person will probably be feeling the same way too.

**Move on by:**

•suggesting you go and get a drink or something to eat

•by introducing them to someone else asking them to introduce you to someone else you know

•saying ‘I know your time is precious so I don’t want to take any more of it

•saying ‘thank you for your time…perhaps we could arrange a meeting another time when we can talk at greater length’

•if all else fails just say ‘well shall we go and introduce ourselves to some more people now?’

* Excuse me, I need to catch …….. before they leave.

EL2 Ltd