

12 Ways to Maximize Your Networking Opportunities



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Outside the privacy of your own home, all speaking is public speaking. How often have you walked into a roomful of strangers you genuinely wanted to meet but felt uncomfortable beginning a conversation? Never again!

My philosophy is that there is no point in going anywhere if people don't remember you were there. Networking is indispensable. If you go to business or association events and no one remembers you, you have wasted your time.

Here are 12 simple and effective strategies that let you walk into a room with quiet self-confidence, have people enjoy meeting you, and have them remember you afterwards for all the right reasons.

1. **Arrive looking your best.** If you are having a busy day before going to a business meeting, keep a change of clothes in your office or car so you can walk in unwrinkled.
2. **Develop a distinctive signature.** Men can wear ties that people notice and comment on. An investment banker I know wears a money tie. In business groups I stand out because I often wear a hat. In San Francisco, when people ask, "Do you know Patricia Fripp," the usual reply is, "Yes, she's the one who always wears great hats." Wear an accessory or pin that is eye-catching and makes it easy for someone to make a comment.
3. **Make your mother proud.** At your company events, as with those in your community, make your mother proud. Do not drink too much; this is business. You want to be memorable for the right reasons.
4. **Work your name tag.** Wear your name tag up on your right shoulder. This way your new

acquaintances can read it as they hear you say your name.

5. **Develop an unforgettable greeting.** When you introduce yourself, don't say just your name and job title. Instead, start by describing the benefit of what you do. A financial planner says, "I help rich people sleep at night." Another, "I help my clients realize their dreams." My friend in the National Speakers Association, Lois Creamer, says, "I work with speakers who want to book more business, make more money, and avoid costly mistakes." Mike, a photographer friend, says, "I capture 'Moments That Matter.'"

6. **Make your introduction apply to whomever you are meeting.** At a meeting industry event, such as the American Society of Association Executives or the San Francisco Convention and Visitors Bureau, my response to being asked what I do is, "I make conventions and sales meetings more exciting." Almost invariably my new friend will ask, "How do you do that?"

That is the response you want. That is when you have the opportunity to market yourself. They are asking you for more information. My reply is, "You know how companies have meetings that are supposed to be stimulating, but they are often dull and boring? Well, I present practical ideas in an entertaining way. The audience stays awake, has a good time, and gets the company's message. My name is Patricia Fripp, and I'm a professional speaker."

In Silicon Valley I might answer the "What do you do?" question with, "Brilliant engineers just like you engage me to turn them into corporate rock stars."

“How do you do that?” “That depends. Do you deliver client demos? Report to your senior management? Speak at your company’s customer conferences?”

The key to connection is conversation; the secret of conversation is asking questions. The quality of the information you receive depends on the quality of your questions.

If you find yourself in a situation for potential business development, find out about them.

7. **Say, “Just like you.”** Do not overlook the power of these three words: “Just like you.” That leads to the best advice on human relationships: “To be interesting, be interested.”
8. **Take the initiative to start conversation.** Approach people who are standing alone. Keep ideas for starting a conversation in your *back pocket*. I often say, “You win the prize for being the best dressed person here,” or “St. John never looked that good,” Try asking, “How long have you been a member of this group?” or “What part of the real estate industry do you work in?” If someone walks up, introduce your new acquaintance as if you have not just met, repeating the information you just heard.
9. **Volunteer to be a greeter.** If you are really shy and want a safe way to meet people, volunteer to be a greeter. You stand there with a label that says “Greeter” next to your name tag, and you have a specific job. “How do you do? I’m Chris Carter. Nice to meet you. Name tags are here. Food is over there.” Soon you start feeling like the host of a party. You’ve broken the ice with many people, so it will be easier to approach and talk to them later.
10. **Look for opportunities to be helpful at events.** Two of my friends chaired a fundraising lunch and fashion show. I arrived early and asked,

“Do you have an emcee to keep the program flowing?” They had never thought of having one. I offered some suggestions. My friends liked them and asked, “Will you emcee for us?” The program flowed better, I was highly visible, and my friend’s event was even more successful.

11. **Greet everyone.** Don’t ignore people you recognize, even if you’ve forgotten their names. Smile and ask a question like, “What has been most exciting that’s happened to you since we last met?” “What is your biggest recent success?” Or “What are you most looking forward to?” And never feel afraid to say, “The last time we met, we had such a great conversation. Will you remind me what your name is?” My friend Susan RoAne tells people, “Forgive me for forgetting your name. Since I passed forty, it’s hard to remember my own.”
12. **Travel with your own PR agent.** It’s simple and amazingly powerful. All you need is a friend or colleague. You commit to becoming a credibility duo. My good friend and networking buddy in San Francisco is Susan RoAne, the best-selling author of *How to Work a Room, The Secrets of Savvy Networking, How to Create Your Own Luck, and What Do I Say Next?* We realized that we needed to teach our audiences what we already do naturally. We attend many meetings together. Here’s what we do. When we arrive at an event, we alternately separate and come together. I’ll walk up to Susan as she is talking to someone, and she’ll say, “Larry, let me introduce to you Patricia Fripp. Patricia is truly one of the greatest presentation skills coaches in the country. In fact, *Kiplinger’s Personal Finance Magazine* wrote that the 6th best way to invest in you is to learn presentation skills from her.” I will then turn around and say, “Larry, I bet Susan is far too modest to tell you she’s the

best-selling author of six books and has been on the front cover of the *Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today*.”

When you do this, just as RoAne and I do, you are both becoming subjects of interest to those you meet. They know what is interesting and exceptional about you both. And you did not have to tell them.

Now you know 12 positive, easy, and effective ways to be memorable. Adapt and apply them, and you will get the most out of your networking

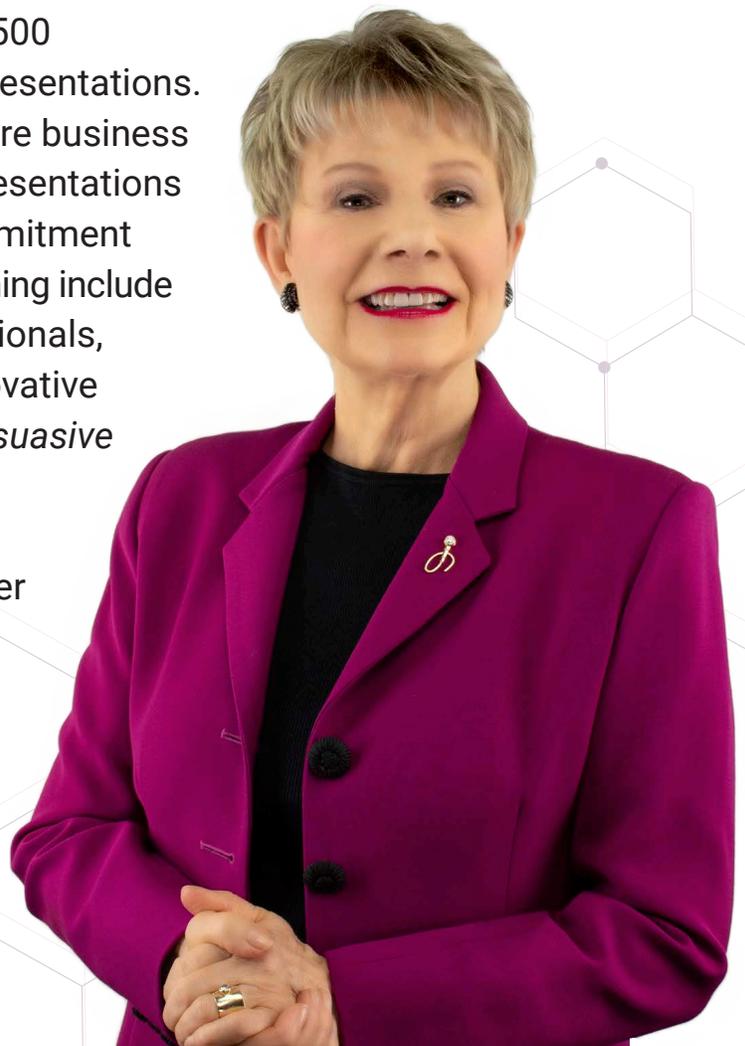
time and energy. Remember, outside the privacy of your own home, all speaking is public speaking.

In the world of virtual meetings here is your bonus. When you have only a minute or two to introduce yourself in an online meeting, tell a two- or three-line story about how you helped a client or customer. For example, “I am executive speech coach Patricia Fripp. I helped Bernard, the president of a \$2 billion software company, go from a brilliant, yet shy, modest and introverted engineer into a corporate rock star speaker in ten hours.” You could do this in person as well.

Patricia Fripp is a Hall of Fame keynote speaker, executive speech coach, sales presentation skills consultant, and online learning expert.

In Ms. Fripp’s career, she has delivered over 3,500 presentations as well as hundreds of virtual presentations. Companies hire Patricia to help them drive more business by perfecting their sales conversations and presentations and by helping leaders inspire action and commitment through their words. Clients of her speech coaching include corporate leaders, technical and sales professionals, and seasoned professional speakers. Her innovative online learning platform *FrippVT Powerful, Persuasive Presentations* has users worldwide.

Meetings and Conventions magazine named her “One of the 10 most electrifying speakers in North America.” *Kiplinger’s Personal Finance* wrote that learning presentation skills from Patricia Fripp is one of the best ways to invest in you. She is the author of two books and co-author of another three. In 2019 she was named “One of the Top 30 Women in Sales” and “One of the Top 30 Global Gurus.”



Patricia FRIPP

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