



# SNS COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

Kurumbapalayam (Po), Coimbatore – 641 107

**AN AUTONOMOUS INSTITUTION**

Accredited by NBA – AICTE and Accredited by NAAC – UGC with 'A' Grade  
Approved by AICTE, New Delhi & Affiliated to Anna University, Chennai



Networking, or forming professional relationships with people, is an important part of any job. Even if someone's job doesn't require them to work directly with customers, it never hurts to meet other people in the industry or profession. There are many benefits to networking, including the receiving and sharing of ideas, learning about new opportunities, increasing business, getting advice from other professionals, surrounding yourself with other motivated people in the field, and even making new friends.

There are always plenty of networking opportunities in the community. However, you don't have to be at a networking event in order to network. Any time you talk to someone about your job or the business you work for, you open up a new networking opportunity.

Have an "elevator speech." An elevator speech is a short description of what one does for a living and the benefits the company they work for provide. The reason it's called an elevator speech is because it should be short enough that it can be said in the amount of time it takes to ride an elevator. It's basically a quick commercial about an individual and their business or employer.

An elevator speech should include information about the person's skills, what they have to offer, and what they are looking for in a professional relationship. Depending on where someone is in their career, they could be looking for a new job, new customers, or even a mentor. Having the elevator speech memorized allows them to quickly and easily describe to people what they do.



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An elevator speech is especially important for people that are just starting out in the professional world. Your students need to be able to clearly and confidently explain who they are and what they can offer to prospective employers.

Never attend a social or business event with the idea that it is all about you because it's not. Networking is about relationship building, not making sales pitches where you force others to listen to you drone on about yourself.

The same is true for social and professional networking through the Internet. When building networks you must give something back. To sustain good personal and business relationships, both parties must benefit in some way.

## **The Two Most Important Networking Skills**

Among all of the networking skills you can develop, the two most important, by far, are listening and asking questions. These two skills will impress new contacts and potential clients even more than your best business statistics.

Good listening validates the value of others and shows respect. Talking too much is perceived as rude, dominating, and not reciprocal. Asking thoughtful questions shows sincerity and gives trust because it actively shows an interest in someone else's opinions and thoughts.

## **Becoming a Good Listener**



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One of the most unappreciated networking skills that you can easily master is the ability to listen.

To get people excited about you and your business, it seems counter-intuitive, but you need to do more listening and less talking.

Good listening is active, not passive. To be a good listener, take the following actions:

- Maintain eye contact.
- Do not fidget, shift your body weight often, and never look at your watch! All these things send a message that you are bored, impatient, or not interested.
- Nod your head to show agreement but do not interrupt to make your point or share your own experiences.
- Respond by repeating at least one key point the person you are talking with just made in the form of a question. For example, if Cindy Miller just told you how excited she is about a new product, ask her when it will be made available.

Good questions follow good listening and accomplish two very important things: it shows you are listening and interested enough to ask a question and it keeps the conversation going in the direction you choose.

**Listening Skills Tip:** A good listener actively pays attention to the conversation and responds appropriately with curiosity and questions.

**Selling Yourself is Not All About You**



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There is an effective interview technique that also works very well in networking situations: To get someone excited about you, get them talking about themselves and their accomplishments first.

When people feel good about themselves, they are more likely to feel good about you as well. It is important to show that you respect and value someone by listening and asking the right questions.

When networking, pepper your conversations with tidbits about yourself and your business but always end your self-pitch with a question directed to the person you are talking to. They will get excited about their answers and associate that excitement with meeting you.

**Networking Success Tip:** Basic human nature demonstrates that if someone is interested in you, they suddenly become more interesting themselves. To be interesting, you must first be interested!

## **Networking with Sincerity Counts**

None of the previously mentioned tactics are suggesting that you should make up questions just to sell yourself. However, if you learn the art of listening and asking questions, you'll find that you can easily build sincere, lasting relationships that are rewarding for both parties.



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Avoid treating clients, customers, and other business associates as “cash cows” and opportunities. Most people are good at recognizing those who are trying to suck-up to them and are offended by insincere interest, compliments, and gestures.

## How to Ask the Right Questions

Asking questions is an art. Ask the wrong questions, and you can easily offend someone. But the reverse is also true; asking the right questions can build trust by opening lines of safe communication.

Keep questions positive and focused. For example, if Yolanda Winston tells you how hard it was to downsize and lay off employees, a good reply would show empathy and pose a question to redirect her thoughts:

- **A Good Response:** “That must have been hard for you given how much you care about your employees (empathetic listening). Do you think the economy will improve for business owners over the next quarter?” (Here, you're refocusing the conversation's topic to the economy and away from the layoffs while indirectly letting Yolanda know that you attribute her downsizing to the economy and not her personal failure).
- **A Poor Response:** “Don't feel bad, a lot of businesses are dishonest off workers (when sharing personal struggles, few people like to be compared to others; it is dismissive). You'll do better next year (disinterested; patronizing).”



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