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"How To Work A Room If You're Not A Politician: Five Take-Away Tips" by Carolyn Lavin

Effective networking is all about synergy ... enhancing business for yourself and others by bringing talents and skills to the table which were otherwise missing. While some may see networking as a buffet where they have an empty plate to bring to the table and hope to walk away with it full of leads, networking should be more like going to a potluck supper ... everyone has something to offer and everyone shares in the harvest.

Take-Away Tip #1:

Unless you are a politician ... you don't have to meet everyone in the room to be successful. Instead, try to connect with a handful of people in a meaningful way. Look for those with whom you have business synergy.

Take-Away Tip #2:

Adopt a positive attitude ... people can sense if you are feeling friendly and open to their messages. Whether it's a walk around the block or rehearsing your own 30-second commercial out loud, find a way to get out of your work doldrums and into the networking mood.

Take-Away Tip #3:

Eye contact is the barometer of communications. It is the most important skill you can employ while networking. Look at and listen to those you meet. If you want to know if people are truly listening to you, look into their eyes.

Take-Away Tip #4:

Adding a smile and eye contact to a handshake is the ultimate in communications. Be sure your handshake is strong but not domineering. Introduce yourself to small groups, chat in food and drink lines, and facilitate introductions.

Take-Away Tip #5:

Follow-up. Just making a simple follow-up gesture – e-mail, hand-written note, phone call - says good things about you and your business.

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