

## **Top Tips for Effective Networking**

Networking is not restricted to just face to face communication. It can also be in the form of online (forum) discussions, telephone conversations and email exchange.

### **1. Introduce yourself**

You only have once chance to make your first impression – so make this count! Be confident - make eye contact, smile with a firm handshake and adopt an open and friendly body language.

### **2. Be Active**

You need to ensure that you are engaged and actively taking part in the opportunities that will be taking place around you. By networking with colleagues throughout your internship, this may lead to future collaboration opportunities or support with the work that you are completing.

### **3. Be Helpful**

You will find that kindness is returned by kindness. Where possible, try to get involved in other activities that your team/ department are undergoing. This will allow you to be further integrated within the team and build on the new professional relationships.

### **4. Pay attention – Listen**

When you are networking with individuals or groups, make sure you do not see this as an opportunity to talk ONLY. You need to listen to others and hear what they have to contribute, you never know when something useful will be shared.

### **5. Be Visible**

Try and integrate yourself in conversations or informal gatherings taking place, again when and where appropriate. If you are not a natural networker, consider asking a 'connector' to make introductions, or getting a 'buddy' to go along, to help boost your confidence in a networking situation. Try and be consistent with your communication and when appropriate, you can demonstrate visibility through emails, blog posts or forums.

### **6. Ask – Do not assume**

Do not be afraid to ask questions. You may find that your work colleagues are more receptive to individuals asking questions before or during project stages. You may think that the instructions for tasks given are unclear or incomplete and therefore, require more information – do not be afraid to ask to obtain clarity. Where possible, try to use your initiative and conduct a little investigation yourself. In some cases, you could use the contacts that you have already made or perhaps continue to network within your project to create new connections in order to uncover the answers.

### **7. Stand out from the crowd**

Think about it from the other person's point of view – if you are at an event or attending a meeting in which there are others similar to yourself, how will then people remember you? Try to think about your USP. What is it that will allow you to stand out from the crowd? This is a tricky one. It requires you to be prepared by knowing your audience beforehand.

### **8. Follow up**

After you have made a contact, build on the relationship that you have just created. If you said you would, or if there is a need to, follow up with a personalised email rather than a generic one. When appropriate, you may wish to follow up with a phone call.

### **9. Stay Connected**

A great way to stay connected with your network is by using tools such as LinkedIn. If you haven't already you may wish to register an account and add new people as and when you meet them (providing that they also have an account). You will also be able to link to organisations in your field of study or line of work that you are interested in, to help you stay informed. Taking part in relevant discussion forums and posting current information about what you working on will allow you to be featured in your connections' newsfeed. There are an increasing number of employers that use LinkedIn for their recruitment purposes so, you may find that using the tool leads to further opportunities. For further guidance see 'The Warwick Careers & Skills Guide 2017' page 30; Building your online profile.