

Clear objectives – know what you want

This may seem obvious, but still it is often disregarded. Networking is not a purpose in itself. In order for you to benefit from it you have to be very clear what you want it to do for you.

You need to have an agenda.

This does not mean that you are only networking to receive from others and not to share and give. Neither does it mean that you only do something for others with an immediate or calculated return.

What it does mean is that you have to be clear why you want to be networking with others. What do you want it to do for you in the long-run?

If you don't know yet what your objectives are, take a few moments to define them.

Define your networking objectives

1. Have the end in mind.
Ask yourself what changes you would like to see perhaps in 6 months time as a result of active networking. Take a step back and let your mind wander. Once you start seeing what you want to change, you can then begin to see how you want these changes to happen as a result of networking. You are now ready to identify the objectives.
2. Write down your objectives.
Describe clearly what they are and what they include. State them in a positive tone, i.e. rather than defining what you want to avoid, state what you want to achieve. Don't overwhelm yourself. Pick a maximum of 4 objectives. Set concrete objectives.
3. Make them tangible.
How will you measure achieving your objectives and to what degree? For example, if you wanted to find a new SEO provider, indicate how much you would want to increase your targeted traffic, your page ranking or hit rate. You should have at least one measurable indicator for each objective.
4. Remember your objectives and their measurements.
Once you have written them down look at them frequently – at least once a day – until you really know them by heart.
5. Evaluate them.
Objectives change over time. Review your networking objectives regularly. If they don't apply any more because you either have achieved your goal or because the business environment has shifted, create new ones that fit.