



Unit: Networking

Skill 24: Creative Positive First Impressions

Activity B: Preparation Counts

Activity Skills:

Brainstorming, listening and discussion.

Leadership Skills:

Understanding how to prepare for meetings and other events involving networking.

Suggested Level:

Advanced

Time:

30 minutes

Supplies needed:

- Pens and pencils to write.
- Copies of worksheet. (Included)

Do Ahead:

Make appropriate number of copies of the worksheet.

Source:

Developed by:
Logan Booth
AmeriCorps VISTA

Based On:
www.youthquestwi.org

BACKGROUND:

While the basics of making a good first impression can be summed up by, “How you Look” and “How you Act”, there are other factors that can influence first impressions on a more subtle level. This is the level of preparation. Before meetings, interviews or other events it is good to prepare yourself as much as possible to interact with the people who you know you will be meeting. Three things to think about as you prepare are:

Materials -- Bring the basics. You’ll want a pen, a pad of paper (preferably in a nice looking organizer), and a copy of your resume if going to an interview, a business card for a meeting or other function. You never know what might happen – what contact information you’ll have to write down, etc. – so be prepared for anything.

Knowledge -- Bring along knowledge of the organization that you’re visiting, or of all the organizations that you’ll be interacting with. If you’re hoping to make a great impression on someone from a particular organization you should always know about them. Reviewing the organizations web-site or even calling and having them send you material to read will allow you to speak intelligently during the meeting. Say that someone were to ask you, “Are you familiar with our (BLANK) program (or initiative, deal, pricing scale, etc.)?” If you’ve researched the organization, you’ll be able to say, “Yes.” That’s impressive.

Questions -- While you do your research on the organization you’ll be interacting with, formulate questions to ask. This shows enthusiasm for the organization (everyone loves answering questions about what they do), and is also a way to ensure that the individuals you’re speaking with know that you’ve been looking into the organization.

WHAT TO DO:

Briefly discuss the importance of preparation and the fact that you should always be prepared with Materials, Knowledge and Questions. Now hand out the included worksheet to all the participants, and instruct them to complete it individually over the next 10-12 minutes. When the participants are complete, discuss the results, writing what the participants have come up with on a large surface, if available.

TALK IT OVER:**Reflect:**

- What was the most common thing that everyone came up with to prepare?

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Notes:

- Even if you're not entirely sure what the organization you'll be interacting with does, what kinds of questions can you always ask?
- Is it always necessary to prepare with materials, knowledge and questions, or can you sometimes leave one or event two out?

Apply:

- Can you think of a time when you were not prepared for a meeting or other event? What happened?
- Have you ever encountered someone else who was unprepared at an event? What was your reaction to them?

BEYOND THE BOX:

Optional Homework:

Sit down with a friend or relative and conduct a mock job interview. Agree on what company or organization you will be interviewing for, and then both of you can research the company. Your partner will write out questions while your job is to prepare as completely as possible for anything that might happen during the interview.

Resources and Web Links: