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Networking Tips

The following are some suggestions for meeting new people from Peter Handal, the chairman, CEO and president of Dale Carnegie & Associates.

Smile: This is an obvious rule that many people just don't think about. "They're so focused on needing to network at a conference that they don't realize they're walking around with a scowl on their face. People are more likely to warm up to someone who says good morning with a broad smile than they are to someone with a dour countenance," says Handal.

Ask a question: Joining a group engaged in conversation can be difficult. The best way to do so is to pose a question to the group after getting the gist of the conversation, says Handal. "You build your credibility by asking a question."

Listen: One of the most profound points Carnegie made in *How to Win Friends* was that people love to talk about themselves. Get people to discuss their experiences and opinions—and listen with sincere interest.

Business cards: Always have them handy, says Handal. "They're an effective way for you to leave your name behind so that people remember who you are." You may even want to write your cell phone number or where you met on the back of the card. When the person looks at business cards they have recently collected, they are more likely to remember someone who took the time to write something personal on the card.

Say the person's name: "People like to hear their own name," says Handal, pointing to another one of Carnegie's basic principles—that a person's name is the sweetest sound to that person. When you meet someone, use his name in conversation. Doing so makes the other person feel more comfortable, like you really know him and he knows you.