

10 steps to better networking

- Step 1: Goal-setting
 - Know what you want
 - What do you hope to achieve? Do you want to simply expand your current networks? Do you want to move to a new field of work? Are you a researcher who would like to know how to approach a policy maker?
 - ***Master Class Participants Task 1: Define your 'networking goal'***

- Step 2: Preparation
 - Do your home-work
 - If the event that you would like to attend is a high profile global event like GLF, look at the agenda and the list of speakers
 - Is there more information on the speakers? What is their area of expertise? Which sessions will they be attending?
 - Also think about the *types* of people you want to meet (senior professionals or peers? Researchers or policy makers? Etc.) – don't limit your networking to the specific people you've identified above
 - Are there other sessions that could provide an opportunity to network, such as the knowledge share fair at GLF or the cocktail reception? Perhaps the youth session? Think in broader terms and outside the box in terms of the variety of networking opportunities that maybe available to you at such a large scale event
 - Once you've identified your targets (e.g. the connections that you would like to make), do your homework
 - Find out what their background is
 - What is their area of expertise
 - Where have they worked before?
 - ***Master Class Participants Task 2: Identify and research two people who you would like to meet at GLF***
 - ***Master Class Participants Task 3: Identify key networking opportunities at GLF (formal or informal events/forums where you will have a chance to network)***

- Step 3: Tools
 - How do you go about finding more about the event and the speakers?
 - Google is the easiest option but it's then better to focus in
 - Check out professional networking sites like LinkedIn
 - Check out professional networking development forums such as the Guardian's Global Development Professionals' blog
 - Twitter is also a potential tool that can be used to identify important topics that the speakers whom you're interested in may find relevant
 - Google + is a mix between LinkedIn and twitter and provides more of a space for "listening"

- Step 4: The offer

- Every interaction is about an exchange
 - Just as there's something about the speaker that is of interest to you, there should be something that you could also offer them
 - What makes you memorable to them?
 - What would make them think of you the next time an opportunity arises?
 - **Master Class Participants Task 4: Think about your pitch – how will you make an impact? (to be built on during on site Networking Master Class)**
- Step 5: Presentation
 - Now you've done your preparation, you are actually at the event. How do you do about it?
 - Be engaging but not overbearing – you're trying to make a connection, not "sell" yourself
 - Be informed
 - You've done the research, use it effectively
- Step 6: The Approach
 - If you're approaching a speaker after a session have something interesting to say
 - Was there something that stood out particularly?
 - Was there something that you had hoped they would talk about?
 - Offer something different that the person will remember
 - Confidence is key
 - Talk about what you want to do but don't beg
 - Be clear about your selling point and what you have to offer
 - There's a fine line between being obnoxious and being confident
 - Be yourself; putting on a fake persona can only last for so long
 - Be relaxed and casual in more informal networking situations, i.e. cocktail receptions
 - These maybe more social events but do provide great opportunities for networking and building new connections
- Step 7: Making an impression
 - People should remember you
 - Sometimes the person you're talking to may not be relevant to you but perhaps may be good to connect with someone else you know
 - Make these introductions: people always remember the connectors
 - Connectors are as vital as the connections themselves
 - Be excited!
 - Think outside the box and rely on your research
 - Perhaps you're talking to someone with a background in soils
 - You recently read an article about how licorice can help degraded soils- incorporate that

- Step 8: Check your networking supplies (e.g. business card)
 - Make this creative so people remember you
 - Make sure you have enough
 - Make sure that your visiting card has current and up-to-date information
 - If you've listed your personal website/blog/linkedin account, make sure that all this information is also current and up-to-date online

- Step 9: Follow up
 - Send an email after a max of 24 hours to the people whose cards you collected

- Step 10: Network, network, network!
 - Always say yes to an invitation, even if it's not clear what you will get out of the meeting (you never know who you'll meet) but do make sure you do some research on what the invitation entails once you've agreed
 - Update your online presence, keep it current
 - Show up and often to events so that people will remember you and keep you in mind when there's an opportunity