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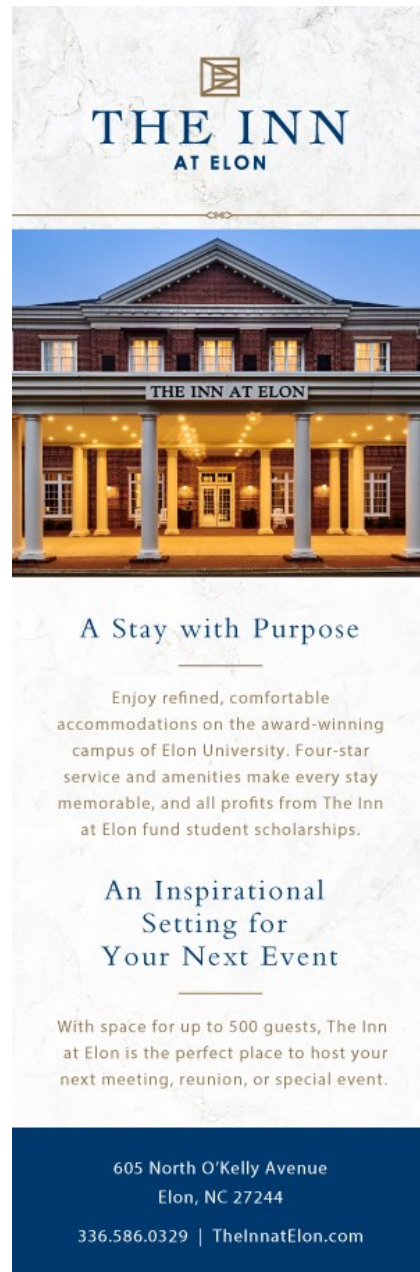
NETWORKING UPTOWN STYLE


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Let's Face It

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May 3, 2023

Let's Face It

Let's face it, one of the main reasons you're coming to the Spring Conference is to meet people...to network. Here are five simple questions and tips that can make the experience more positive and, possibly, more profitable for you:

- Have a Plan: What do you want to accomplish at the conference? If all you want to do is attend, great! Wander around, grab some free pens and hand-wipes, enjoy the buffets and leave early. However, if you really want it to be a positive experience have goals about who you want to meet and what information/names/tips you want to secure. Have a simple meet-and-greet plan, and follow-up.
- Understand, You Are Your Brand: While we are living in The Golden Age of Branding the concept started about 2000 BC by burning a symbol onto something to show ownership. In fact, the word **brand** means "to burn" in Ancient Norse (thank you, Google). The concept evolved through the 1500s-1700s with the use of trademarks that allowed tradespeople to *show who they were*. That is what you are doing when you meet and introduce yourself to someone. Let's be honest, what you are wearing, how you approach others, what you say, what you might exchange with them (business cards/information), all says, "This is who I am. This is what my organization is." Your brand is what people remember/think about you. So, who are you? Who do you want to be? What do you need to say/do to show that?
- Have a System: Years ago a good friend had a wonderful meet-and-greet system she used at conventions. She moved with a wonderfully positive energy. She always kept 5-7 of her business cards in her left hand. She would approach someone, read their name tag, greet them, extend her right hand for a handshake, exchange cards/info, chat for about 5 minutes, thank them for their time, and move on. In a day she'd meet and gain contact info from 30-50 people. A crucial key now is the range of ways to exchange information. If you don't use/have business cards know how to zap info from your phone to theirs or be prepared to take a note with your phone. You could even record their name and email/social media information.
- **LISTEN!!** Have a short, concise way to describe what you do. Stay away from the cutesy, let's-be-cool description; it weakens your brand. Remember though, while you want the other person to know who *you* are your key objective is to know who *they* are so you can decide whether or not to get in touch later. So, ask questions...and **LISTEN!** Try this: What two questions could you ask that would allow you to know more about them and what they do? Try questions that might make your decision to recontact easier, more effective and, possibly, more profitable? And, don't talk their ears off; ask questions, and **LISTEN!**
- Have a Follow-up Plan: My friend who had the great meet-and-greet strategy would always recontact folks she met within 48 hours with a phone call, some sort of postal contact (letter/notecard/postcard), or email/text. Being great at connecting isn't effective or profitable if you don't follow-up.

A side-point: If you're shy, networking can seem like one of those *just shoot me* activities. Reach out to a friend at the conference and ask them to move around with you to meet who they know and connect with others. Check out "*How to network if you are shy*" online and you'll see some great tips.

Finally, take the attitude that networking is simply a way to make new friends...and we all could use a few of those. Greet me and say HELLO! at the conference. You'll make a new friend and I have a business card you'll love!

Mike Collins
The Perfect Workday Company

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