

Reception Etiquette: Network with Ease and Effectiveness

Litzinger Career Consulting

1. **It's all in your attitude** – People like to hire and do business with people they like. This is about relationship building, not the food or business.



2. **First impressions count** – People decide in a few seconds. Besides a good verbal greeting, make sure you have good posture, eye contact, handshake and smile. Project a positive tone of warmth and energy.



3. **Small talk is a big skill** – This helps people feel comfortable. Only focus on the positive and avoid the negative or controversial, including religion, money and politics.



4. **Easy opening lines** – Ask a question about the event or person, “What do you do at ABC Company?” or share an upbeat observation, “It’s nice to see so many people at this event.”



5. **Introductions** – Start with the more important person to the less so: “Ms. Client, this is Erin Employee.” Use Mr. or Ms. until invited otherwise; this can vary by organizational culture. Introduce yourself if others forget or as a conversation starter.



6. **Eating etiquette** – Keep your right hand free for handshakes. Hold your plate and glass in your left hand or alternate eating and drinking. Choose easy to eat finger foods and take small bites.



7. **Moving in** – Approach groups of three or more. Participate through eye contact and nodding initially. You may introduce yourself or comment about the conversation when a pause.



8. **Moving out** - Make a closing comment after you have made a positive comment about the conversation: “That sounds like an exciting project. I wish you good luck.” Extend a handshake or offer a business card.



9. **Skip the Pitch** – It is fine to share a bit about your work, but focus more on listening and helping. Don't ask about job vacancies or business opportunities.



10. **Don't forget follow-up** – Organize, prioritize and reach out to meet. Send the host a thank you as well as others who helped you.

