



# MSU Law Career Services Office

## Networking Guide

### PREPARATION

- Seek out opportunities (CASE, Spartan Law Docket, Bar Associations, LinkedIn, etc.)
- Research the event you are attending (attire, time, location, cause, host, attendees)
  - Plan to arrive early to account for traffic
- Research the people you are meeting/reaching out to (e.g., alma mater, practice area)
  - Use resources such as: CASE Resource Library, Martindale.com, Crain's Business, Vault, employer websites, etc.
- Develop your "elevator pitch"
  - Introduction (60-second pitch) stating who you are, class year, practice area interests, current employment or work experience, and something memorable about yourself

*NOTE: You should set attainable goals for meeting new people. Strive to meet at least two to three new people per event.*

### IN-PERSON NETWORKING RECEPTION

- Introduction
  - Place name tag on the right side, upper part of your lapel
    - Avoid placing your name tag on your waist pocket or bottom of jacket
  - Give your name plus your MSU law school status (1L, 2L, 3L, Recent graduate)
  - Body language: make good eye contact, smile
  - Firm handshake
  - Unless directed otherwise, use formal names with prefixes (e.g. Dr., Ms., Mr., Judge) for the people you meet
- Be Proactive
  - Be bold, approach people you don't know
    - Look for people standing alone to begin a conversation
    - Move toward the food table and begin conversing with the person standing in line with you
  - Meet many people; make your way around the room
    - Ask the event host or other attendees to introduce you to others
  - Use open-ended questions to learn more about others and start conversations
    - What led you to this particular practice area?
    - What do you love best about your practice area?
    - What would you recommend to someone new in the profession?
    - What bar associations/memberships have you found helpful?
  - Consider topics for memorable conversations and to find common ground with other attendees, such as hobbies, study abroad, languages, hometown, etc.

- Request business cards; discreetly jot a note during the break or immediately following the event (where you met them, why notable, note date of the event)
- Food and Beverage Tips
  - Keep your beverage in left hand to keep your right hand free, clean, and dry for shaking hands
  - Keep a napkin close by to wipe your hands or remove moisture from your glass
  - Eat and drink minimally; don't come to the event hungry
  - Leave enough room on your plate to set your beverage
  - Avoid malodorous, sticky, or messy foods

*NOTE: Networking isn't limited to receptions or mixers, you can build professional relationships anytime and anywhere.*

## **EMAIL AND LINKEDIN NETWORKING**

- Introduction
  - Briefly explain who you are and why you are contacting them
  - Use formal name and title in the greeting
  - If contacting someone by way of a referral, mention the referral source and then send an update to the referral source about the conversation
- Be Proactive
  - Be clear about what you are requesting (in-person meeting, introduction to someone else, more information about their career)
  - Personalize the email; avoid using an email template
  - Conclude your email or message with a thank you
  - Use spell check; do not use abbreviations or slang
  - Use a professional email signature block

## **FOLLOW UP**

- Follow up with new contacts within 24 hours of initial contact
  - Send a handwritten thank you note, email, or LinkedIn message
  - Mention something you discussed to jog their memory about you
  - Suggest a future date to meet in person for coffee or lunch
- Continue to nurture existing relationships
  - Stay connected with new and current contacts
  - Use relevant professional updates as an opportunity to cultivate your relationships with your network (e.g., receiving a prestigious award, planning to attend events in their area, obtaining a new job)
  - Look for opportunities to connect again in person (e.g., schedule an informational interview, attend a professional event of mutual interest)

*NOTE: Keep track of your professional contacts in CASE to monitor your follow-up efforts.*