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Nanyang Business School

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# THE NBS CAREER SERVICES 2014 GUIDE



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- Overcoming physical disabilities
- How to network like a professional
- Job and internship opportunities

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# NETWORK YOUR WAY TO SUCCESS

TIRED OF AWKWARD SILENCES AT NETWORKING SESSIONS? CAN'T QUITE FIGURE OUT WHAT TO SAY? WE ASKED THREE EXPERTS TO SHARE THEIR TIPS ON HOW YOU CAN BE THE LIFE OF THE PARTY... AND MAKE SOME MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS IN THE PROCESS!

## NETWORKING SKILLS – INNATE OR ACQUIRED?

by Shradha Gang

**E**ver had that moment where you walked into a networking event tongue-tied, like you left your vocabulary and grammar at the registration counter? Fret not; we have all gone through similar situations. Akin to a child struggling with a new language, networking is a skill that can be mastered over time. Here's how: practise.

As with any other skill, hobby, or subject, the more one practises, the better he or she will get. Put into this context, success comes in the form of making that connection during the networking event. Instead of merely being a name card collector and hoping that the people you're talking to appreciate things like stamps or coins, you can add value to those cards by establishing that underlying connection.

Reading about networking helps, but it is certainly no substitute for actual practice. Suppress your insecurities and take the plunge – stutter and stumble your way through if you have to. It is only through actual networking that you will learn to handle your nerves, pick up on body language cues, and put into practice the tips and tricks that you have read about.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution to networking. You have to practise to find your unique way of handling conversations and letting your personality shine. There are however, some taboo topics like politics or religion that should only be attempted at your own risk.

The best place for people who are afraid of being in networking events is a safe and secure environment like a structured course. But for those who need a quick guide, here are a few pointers to get yourself started towards networking fitness:

### Entertain Yourself

- If you're not having fun, then chances are those around you aren't either. Lighten up and smile. If you have trouble, try focusing on clothes or interesting accessories like watches or ties. Then start by complimenting the person and asking for their background story. This usually opens up the discussion, and can lead to some very interesting conversations.



### Speak, Listen, and Respond

- Make introductions short and sweet. You are at a networking session and not an interview. You want to create an opportunity to understand the other person, and not just drown them out with how awesome you are. People like people who make them feel like a star. Speak less and listen more – the responses will come naturally.





### Trust First

- If you want people to trust you, chances are you need to trust them first. Try sharing before asking a question. Share a weakness or something you like. Food and drink work well if you are stuck for ideas. For instance, talk about how delicious the cheese platter is or describe how the wine tasted for you. Refrain from criticising or complaining, though.

This list is not exhaustive, but the key ingredient to a successful networking session generally entails being nice, helpful, and ultimately fun to talk to.

Above all, be yourself! It would be a shame if people left without meeting the real you.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

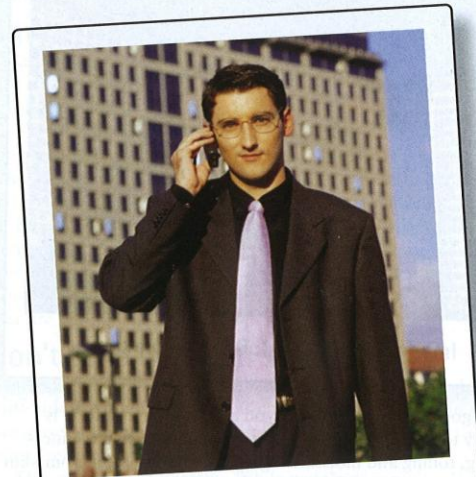
**Shradha Gang** is a corporate trainer at **Stafford & Chan Training**. She specialises in the fields of professional grooming and etiquette, communication skills, stress management, team-building dynamics and cross cultural communication.

## THE TOP 5 IMAGE DESTROYERS IN NETWORKING ENCOUNTERS

by Joshua Luke

Let's face it: we meet people every day. Therefore, presenting yourself well in terms of image is an important aspect in life, more so in business and networking situations. Studies have shown that first impressions are formed within the first 10 seconds of visual contact. Of this first impression, 55% of the judgement is formed based on appearance.

Here, I do not aim to share with you all the necessary things to stand out looking the best that you can be or appear stylish in every business and networking encounter. Instead, I hope to bring to your awareness the top image focal points that you should pay attention not to do. I shall term these points as "image destroyers".



**Image destroyer #1:  
Incorrect dress code**

Dressing appropriately is a symbol of the level of respect you show to your prospect or client, the host and the function, or simply just the person you're meeting.

You need to look the part for your outward presentation to be aligned with the kind of business image you wish to project. Generally, there are five dress codes to bear in mind: smart casual, business casual, business formal, black tie and white tie.

Identify the dress code of each business function or networking event you are attending beforehand. Dress accordingly and you will be on your way to a great first impression when you arrive.