



Virtual Networking Tips

Networking events are a wonderful way to meet others, share and gain new knowledge, and make connections to further your career aspirations. What you get out of them depends on the effort you put in. This is especially true in a virtual setting where it's all too easy to stay hidden in the background. Below are a few tips to help make the most of your networking experience.

How do the networking rooms work?

The conversations in our Nexus Conference Networking rooms are driven by you and the other people in the room – visit as many or as few rooms as you like. Stay for a few minutes or an hour – it's completely up to you.

Some rooms will have general themes like *Trends in Energy, Oil & Gas* or *Entrepreneurship*. Others have no designated theme and are completely open for participants to mix and mingle on any topic they would like to discuss. Each networking room will have two hosts who are there to mingle and assist the networking process. Note: hosts are not experts on a given subject or expected to lead conversations.

You can interact with others in several ways: go on camera or mic and talk, use the group chat, send private messages to others, or go into the breakout rooms where you can do all of these things within a smaller group setting.

We expect everyone to be respectful. Just because it's virtual, doesn't mean it's anonymous. All conference attendees are asked to acknowledge the Nexus terms and conditions when they register. Professional conduct is expected during the event at all times, and anyone exhibiting unprofessional behaviour can be expelled from the conference.

Tips for a successful experience

- 1) **Use video.** For the best experience, if your bandwidth allows, and you're comfortable, go on video when you introduce yourself or when you're speaking.
- 2) **Know your purpose and plan your strategy accordingly.** What are you hoping to get out of a networking session? Do you want to get answers or advice on a specific topic, are looking to make connections to help your job search, or are you wanting to get a feel for what's happening in your industry by listening to others? Set your goals and make a game plan ahead of time.
- 3) **Prepare your intro.**
 - Describe yourself in a nutshell by providing information such as your current position, company, discipline, area of interest, etc.
 - If you're looking for new career opportunities, mention the area and type of work you are interested in getting into.
 - Get your elevator pitch ready ahead of time and remember that sharing something unique about yourself makes you memorable.

4) Take the lead. Don't wait for someone to approach you.

- When you arrive, introduce yourself in the chat and give one thing you'd like to learn or talk about.
- Scan the room. Take a look at the participant list to see who else is there and keep an eye on the chat to see what people are interested in discussing.
- Reach out to others. Post a question in the chat or respond to someone else's question or comment. If you see an interesting discussion start up, join the conversation.
- If you find one or two people who want to talk about the same topic as you, send them a message to suggest they meet you in one of the breakout rooms. You can enter and leave the breakouts at any time.

5) **Leverage your connections!** Do you recognize someone on the participant list? Send them a private message and ask them to introduce you to others they may know. Ask one connection to introduce you to another, and so on and so on, as the conversations naturally come to a close.

6) **Don't make it all about you.** Respond to others' overtures. Share your knowledge or ideas when asked or see the opportunity. Pay attention to comments you can add to keep the conversation going. Help others make connections by introducing them to people you know. Consider making introductions outside of the event and to those who may not be attending the event if you see a good fit and opportunity to do so.

7) **The more networking you do, the better results you will have.** Virtual networking can take time to become comfortable. There are many opportunities within the Nexus conference to settle into a style or approach that best suits your personality.

8) **Keep track of your connections and stay in touch.** Take notes on what you learn during or after the networking event and keep a master record of your connections. After the conference, consider maintaining connections on LinkedIn and following up with your new contacts to keep the relationship going.

Ideas for general conversation starters

- Introduce yourself, your current role and why you're participating.
- Start a discussion about something you learned in a speaker session or keynote that you found interesting or thought-provoking.
- Ask if they have heard about an interesting event or recent happening in your industry, new research, or a well-known project or initiative taking place in Alberta/elsewhere that you want to learn about.
- If you're looking for job opportunities, ask about their company and what it's like to work there.
- To learn more about the jobs of others, ask: "What tasks do you spend most of your time on at work?"
Or: "What tools, resources, etc. do you find helpful in your work?"
- Ask: What brought you here today? (This could be to the conference or to that particular networking room.)
- Ask: How do you think the industry will be different in five years? (Break this down – different for new engineers, different for women/new grads/others).
- Ask: What has changed the most about the field since you started?
- Ask: What skills should someone new to the field develop to be successful in the future?