

# Conference Networking 101

The benefits of attending a conference are many, and the real payoffs begin when you network and build relationships with others. You want to get acquainted with people who will inspire you, make introductions for you and possibly be future referrals or references for you. Here are some tips to get you started:

## Do:

- Strategize and set goals for what you want to get out of the conference
- Set cell phones to vibrate
- Wear name badge properly (pinned to right side near shoulder, or use lanyard, with badge raised to neck area) to all programs and events
- Bring business cards
- Dress for success (and wear comfortable shoes)
- Talk to strangers and know what you want to say to introduce yourself
- Shake hands
- Get places early
- Use social networking tools like Twitter (#NELA2014) and the Conference Blog (<http://nelib.org/nela2014/>) to follow the conference
- Be open minded
- Listen and pay attention
- Ask questions and share your comments
- Learn
- Take notes
- Attend social events, a Career Mixer and “Meet the \_\_\_ Section” sessions
- Sit with someone new
- Introduce someone who may not know the person you are with
- Include everyone in the conversation
- Find common ground for conversation, such as kids, hobbies or the job
- Send follow-up emails or simple notes to people who were especially interesting to you.
- Get involved; NELA always welcomes new people

## Don't

- Sit by yourself
- Talk during speakers
- Browse the internet, answer emails or constantly check your phone
- Skip networking events, like meals, receptions, sessions, outside events
- Sit only with friends or people who are “A-Listers”
- Brag or try to impress
- Ask “yes” or “no” questions
- Get too personal or talk about your problems
- Be afraid to have fun!

**Networking is a way to meet other people and connect – it is not selling. The more you do it, the better you will become.**