

# Networking

## Networking Basics

### What is networking?

Networking is simply a way of talking to people you know (or people you want to know) about what you need. People in your network may be able to give you leads to help expand your Venture, offer you advice and information, provide fundraising opportunities, or introduce you to others so you can grow your network.

### Why is networking important?

We all know it's a lot harder to get Ventures off the ground on our own than with the help of friends. By relying on and expanding your network, you'll be able to accomplish a lot more.

### Networking fears:

When most people hear the word "networking," they imagine calling strangers and asking them for favors. Many people hesitate to contact people they don't know for fear of being turned down. In reality, networking is much easier than that. Most people are more than willing to help, if asked.

### Who do I network with?

Remember when you asked your mom's friend for advice on getting your theater project off the ground or got suggestions from your neighbor about where to get paint donated? That was all networking. Networking with someone who's a friend-of-a-friend is generally easier, but you can also learn a lot from people you aren't connected to. Do you admire a certain politician, author, or head of a company? Give that person a call, tell him/her why you want to meet with him/her, and see if he/she's willing to give you 30 minutes. Talking to people you know, and the people they know, about your Venture is all it takes to create a great network.

**Safety Note:** If you're meeting someone you don't know, it's always best to bring a friend along. Make sure others know who you're meeting with and where you'll be meeting. If possible, meet in a public place such as a coffee shop or at a place of business during business hours.