



Networking

Partner and Networking Meetings

Networking can either be done in person, over the phone, or by email. In-person networking is often the most successful form because individuals naturally begin to develop a relationship or potential partnership; however this isn't always an option.

One of the best ways to network or form partnerships is by having a meeting. Below are some practical tips for having a successful networking or partner meeting.

Before a meeting:

- Before calling/emailing someone, find out a little bit about him/her and why he/she might be interested in helping you.
- Introduce yourself if you don't know the person. Use an "elevator" speech (i.e. describe who you are and what your Venture does in 60 seconds or less). For more information about elevator speeches, check out the Youth Venture tip sheet, "[Elevator Speeches](#)."
- Tell the person how you found out about him/her, why you think he/she might be interested in your Venture, and how you think your Venture may benefit him/her.
- Once you get a meeting set up, do more research and go into the meeting with set goals.

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.

During a meeting:

- Find out more about the person's interests, work, or passion. As you listen, imagine ways that this person could work with your Venture, and what your Venture could contribute to his/her cause.
- Tell people what you need. Make suggestions about how you think he/she could help in a meaningful way.
- Keep in mind that not everyone you meet with will be able to help you directly. Even those that can't directly help your group can refer you on to someone who might be able to. Ask if he/she has suggestions for other people you should meet with, and provide him/her with suggestion of people he/she should meet with.
- When appropriate, offer a business card, and ask the other person for his/hers. If you have a phone conversation, make sure to exchange contact information.

After Meeting

- An important element in networking and partnering is consistent follow up. If the initial meeting goes well, the person you met with will want to hear about your progress.
- Continue to share information. Even if the person said he/she wasn't able to help you at the time, ask if you can keep him/her on your mailing list. You never know when he/she might be able to help.

More YV Tip Sheets

Check out these additional YV Tip Sheets:

- [Elevator Speeches](#)
- [Networking Basics](#)
- [How to Make a Good First Impression](#)
- [Messaging](#)