

5 AUTISTIC PROFESSIONALS SHARE THEIR NETWORKING TIPS



Networking – it's a word that has provoked strong emotion, from being a "bloody nightmare" to sending a "cold chill" down people's spines. So we asked **5 autistic professionals** for some tips and also what sort of networking events they prefer.





Hunter Hansen Business Analyst, USA

I try to find a “wing person” who I can tag along with as needed or have some kind of mapped out agenda on the kinds of minds I want to network. Having specific intentions, general plans, and then a better escape plans are my go-tos.



David Anson Internal Auditor, UK

I'm a fan of less is more. 1:1's or small groups are less overwhelming and it's easier to build rapport.

Networking events may expose you to more people, but time is limited, meaning interactions are either very focused or short.



Allie Mason

Operations Manager, UK

I prefer using LinkedIn because I am more confident and comfortable with written communication. Verbal communication involves being aware of so many different things - intonation, body language, judging when it's my turn to speak. The list goes on.



Cara Pelletier Senior Director, USA

I appreciate networking events that have a suggested talk track. For example, providing attendees with 3 questions to ask each other or some ice breaker questions so I don't have to come up with small talk on the spot.



Cara (Cont.)

In lieu of that, I'll also think ahead 3 fun open-ended questions I might ask someone to get the ball rolling. Beyond navigating the small talk, the other thing that is really hard for me is recognising faces out of context. Name tags with name and department/organisation are a lifesaver.



Gerard Atkinson Senior Manager, Australia

One thing that helped with my ability to navigate networking events was formal training on networking when I did my MBA. The school invested a lot of time and ran events where they encouraged us to put techniques into practice.



Gerard (cont.)

Some of the skills included working out how and when to enter a group conversation, active listening techniques and when and how to establish a longer-term connection. I combined this with reading how to read body language and develop a good conversation.



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