



10 tips that will help introverts shine at industry events

It's time to attend the annual conference for your trade association. Extroverts are all doing the happy dance, because who doesn't love being surrounded by people all day? The answer is introverts, who are filled with dread and fear at the thought of all that interaction.

With this in mind, we have come up with 10 tips to make it easier for introverts to navigate events full of people. Because if you're publishing the industry's leading magazine, it doesn't make sense to miss out on a great opportunity to promote your product. Here goes!

1. Practice makes perfect.

Prior to the conference, practice making small talk with grocery store cashiers. This will give you confidence that you are able to talk to strangers.

2. Use positive self-talk.

If your inner dialogue is on a continuous loop of: "I hate this; I'm terrible at this; when can I leave?" that will not be helpful at all. Convert those thoughts into affirmations and you'll be much better off. "I can do this; I'm quite good at it; I actually enjoyed that conversation."

3. Prepare before you go.

Come up with questions you can use as icebreakers. What inspired you to attend? What did you enjoy about that session? Can you tell me a little bit about your work?

4. Practice outloud at home.

People will ask you what you do, so prepare an answer you can use and run through it a few times aloud. That way, you'll feel comfortable that you have an answer ready.

5. Volunteer for the event (the registration table is ideal).

This is the easiest way to meet the most people, and that way, there should be someone at every event that you know. Since you have already met a good number of people, this takes a lot of the pressure off of you when you walk into a room full of folks you don't know.

6. You're not alone.

Don't make the mistake of assuming that you're the only one there who is uncomfortable. Very few people have an abundance of confidence at large gatherings. So if you approach someone, you may well be doing them a favor.

Just think about it this way: We are two people who can learn from each other and help each other. Oftentimes, wonderful things happen because of these connections.

7. Schedule breaks for yourself.

And don't feel guilty about it! You are your number one priority. If you need to head to your room for down time a couple of times per day, by all



means do it. It will reduce your stress levels and make you feel less overwhelmed when you're engaging with people throughout the event.

8. Take big deep breaths.

They are scientifically proven to reduce stress. You can use this technique repeatedly throughout the day. If you're alone, don't be afraid to release a large, loud exhale.

And this will sound super corny, but if you want to be really brave, right before you leave your room, look in the mirror and calmly and confidently tell yourself, "You can do this." It's ridiculous but it works!

9. Make connections before you go.

It's another great way to ensure you will already know people and won't be walking into a room full of strangers. Social media is the best way to do this. Most events have a specific hashtag, and you can find people who are posting with it and connect with them.

10. Reward yourself for your bravery.

Whether it's a chocolate chip cookie or a glass of wine, treat yourself to something you love as a form of showing gratitude for your courageousness.

It may also help you to know that experts believe that introverts might even have the upper hand over extroverts when it comes to networking at events. According to an article from brainwave.com (<https://www.braindate.com/networking-tips-for-introverts/>), instead of jumping from conversation to conversation, introverts spend more time observing, which allows them to learn about people before they connect with them. This enables introverts to build a better connection once a conversation begins.

Introverts are also good listeners, which deepens the bond with others. "Within the context of networking, your introverted nature may be your superpower," the article says.

So go ahead! Get out there. If you prepare in advance and allow down time, you can actually rock your event and give your magazine and/or association much-needed marketing exposure. And who knows? You might even enjoy it too.