

# THE NETWORKING PLAYBOOK 2018



**Making the Most of the CLDA  
Annual Meeting**



If you're like most people, the thought of jumping into a room full of strangers at a networking event fills you with fear. Over the next three days, you'll get the chance to not only get over this, but to enjoy it. Take advantage of every one of our networking functions, business meetings, focus group sessions, vendor breaks and the one-on-one meetings with other members of your industry.

It's all about selling yourself and your business. We've done everything to make it easy for you – starting now

Over the next three days you'll

- Meet with shippers that have come here specifically to develop new relationships with carriers
- Develop a set of resources that will help you learn what it takes to be a success in this business
- Cultivate relationships with other logistics and delivery companies, shippers and vendors who can and will add to your business
- Create a set of connections that will you as you grow your business.

This meeting and guide are designed to give you a jump start on that process. For a more in-depth look at developing your networking skills, see Keith Ferrazzi's book, [Never Eat Alone: And Other Secrets to Success, One Relationship at a Time.](#)

## **You Already Have an Advantage**

We create these conferences to make it easy for you to network with the best in the business. We have already laid the foundation for you to network productively.

Here's what you can expect from us:

- Speakers on topics of critical interest to your business
- Information on industry changes and the future of the industry, especially those that will affect the profitability of your company
- Networking opportunities = 24 potential hours of networking
- At ten minutes per connection = 144 new contacts

And you won't be doing it alone

- We've gathered some of the best minds in this business at this conference
- We have over 22 high- volume shippers here with the express purpose of adding to their Carrier Files. You'll meet them at the three CLDA Exchange sessions and at the networking and educational sessions
- We've added the veterans of this industry who have the wisdom about what you do at their fingertips
- We've set up meetings, events and social gathering where you can share your knowledge and experience with your peers
- We've provided you with ready access to our board of directors. These are men and women who live, breath and love this industry. Look for the blue ribbons on their name tags to find them. Introduce yourself and let them suggest who you should be meeting.

## **IN OTHER WORDS --- WE'VE SET THE TABLE AND WE'D LOVE TO HELP YOU DINE!**

Here are a few tips to help you enjoy the "meal" and get started on your contacts:

### **Before You Enter the Room**

- Come armed with several questions you want discuss with CLDA veterans and shippers.
- Seek out CLDA board members. Look for the blue ribbons and ask them to lead you to the shippers and delivery providers who can best help you grow your business.
- Set up your profile our CLDA app and search for the people you want to meet
  - Pick three shippers or representatives of other delivery companies
    - Shippers looking for providers in your area
    - Delivery companies that work with clients similar to yours
    - Delivery companies looking to partner with you
    - Someone in the business who knows how you can expand your delivery area or service capabilities
    - Someone who's made a name in a vertical you'd like to enter
- When you arrive at the event, board members or association staff will help you pick them out – *just ask*
- As one of the veterans to introduce you to two people they think you should know
- Get to the event on time, so you can talk to the people you want to meet before they get involved in other conversations.
- Do not text or talk on your cell at the event or near-by.
  - Move to a private area if you must take an urgent call
  - People who talk or text at or near a meeting sends off the message, "I'd rather be anywhere else."
  - Turn off the phone before you make your entrance
    - You'll live without it for the next two hours
    - If the world comes to an end during that time, someone WILL tell you.

### **At the Event**

- Avoid spending your time with people you already know. You are there to make new connections.
- Keep the purpose of the meeting in mind- to make new connections
  - Spend more time with the people than the food and drink

- Do not walk around with both a drink and food in hand.
  - You can't shake hands like that.
- Hold your drink (preferably non-alcoholic) in your left hand. This leaves your right hand free to offer a warm, dry handshake.
- Remember the list of people you want to meet and make that your priority.
  - If friends call you over, say a quick hello
  - Tell them there are people you'd like to meet at the event
  - Let them know you'll catch them later
- Approach someone you want to meet by telling them exactly that.
  - People like the idea that you want to meet them
  - Tell them, "I'm glad you're here. I've been wanting to meet you because...."
- Listen more than you talk.
  - People will think you're brilliant and interested if you listen and respond to what they are saying.
  - Skip worrying about what you're going to say to impress them
  - Listen and comment on the subjects they talk about.
- Avoid monopolizing the conversation.
- Hold off on talking about yourself until you get to know someone a bit.
  - Limit yourself to a brief introduction unless asked or unless it would really add to the current conversation
  - Understand you're there to establish a personal connection not to make a sale
  - Back off on the personal monologue
- Ask the other person all of the questions you wish they would ask you.
  - Don't try to "top" what they say.
- Elevator Speech.
  - Get yours in order and get comfortable with it ahead of time
  - Make it short enough, and meaty enough that the person knows exactly who you are in the time it would take for an elevator to go two floors.
- Avoid becoming one of these people:
  - **The Wallflower** – This person hugs the wall, the bar or a spot in front of the food. They are there to watch and not participate. If you're going to do that, stay in your room!
  - **The Ankle Hugger** – This person thinks that the first person they meet is their BFF. They never leave the first person they meet. The best way to move on from such a person (and you want to) is to say, "It's been great

- meeting you. I see someone over there I need to talk to. Enjoy your evening.”
- **The Celebrity Hound** – This person wants to leave the evening telling himself he met someone important. He’ll spend the whole night waiting for a chance to say hello to the “celebrity” along with 50 other people waiting to do the same. Meeting is not the point, making meaningful contact is. If the “celebrity” could be an important contact, find a way to quickly meet them and then find a reason to follow-up at another time when you two can meet one-on-one.
  - **The Smarmy Eye Darter** – This person never looks you in the eye because he’s searching for someone more “important” among the crowd. You want the person you’re connecting to feel like they are the only person in the room. Give them a feeling of honest warmth, sincerity and honest curiosity about what they are telling you.
  - **The Card Dispenser/Amasser** – This person judges the success of the night by how many “contacts” he’s made. A large stack of cards from people who won’t remember you and an empty card case does not pave the way for productive business relationships.

### Starting the Conversation

During the event, there’s bound to be times when you need to jump into a conversation. You’re not alone if you don’t relish the thought of doing that in a room full of strangers.

- Look for others around the edges of the room who are not involved in a conversation.
  - They are in the same boat as you
  - They will be happy you approached them
  - You can start off with something like, “This is my first CLDA Annual Meeting. I don’t know a lot of people here. I’m John. What’s your name?”
- Use one of these icebreaking phrases to start a conversation with someone you don’t know:
  - Why did you come to this meeting?
  - What does your company do?
  - How did you get started?
  - What do you enjoy most about what you do?
  - Tell me about some of the challenges you’re company’s facing. Have they changed over the last few years?
- Give verbal clues. You’ll make people feel more comfortable before and during a conversation if you:
  - Give the person a sincere smile that signals you’re open and friendly
  - Keep reasonable eye contact throughout the conversation
    - between a stare and the “eye dart”
  - Unfold your arms and relax. You’ll look at ease and approachable

- Nod your head and lean in during the conversation. Without violating their personal space.
- Cultivate a sincere interest in what the person is saying
  - Add information without taking over the conversation.
  - Your job is to listen, not talk.
- Cultivate a credible handshake
  - Avoid the following
    - The Dead Fish: A weak, limp, and sometimes clammy handshake that makes you want to wipe your hands on something after you've received it.
    - The Vise Grip: A bone-breaking grip that tingles for hours afterward. We got it – you work out!
    - The Claw: A grasp with the finger-tips used in a claw-like manner.
    - The Water Pump: An exaggerated up and down movement as if pumping water from an old fashioned well.
    - The Germ-a-phobic: A quick, barely touching handshake that appears to signal that the shaker has some dramatic phobia of germs.
  - A good handshake is one where you:
    - Keep your fingers together with the thumb up and open
    - Slide your hand into the other person's so the web of skin between the thumb and forefingers is firmly in contact.
    - Use a firm, but not bone-crushing grip
    - Shake for about three seconds
    - Pump once or twice from the elbow
    - Release after the shake, even if the introduction continues
    - Maintain good eye contact with the other person.
- Add value to others at the meeting
  - You'll get the most out of a business networking event if add value to others.
  - You can do this by introducing two people who you've discovered have something in common, like those who are facing similar issues or operating in the same vertical.
  - You can think of yourself as the host of your own "party" and introduce others to each other.
  - You'll add value for both of them.
- Be aware of someone on the edges of the conversation who might be trying to join your group.
  - Make an "opening" for them with your own body.
    - Turn your body towards them slightly
    - Give them a welcoming message to join.

## When It's Time to Move On

- Avoid spending the whole night with one person.
  - Make a connection and move on in about ten minutes
  - Remember your list
  - Move to the next person on it.
  
- Make a graceful exit
  - Cite someone you want to meet
  - Say you want to freshen your drink
  - Say "I know there are probably other people you want to meet. I don't want to take up all your time. Let's touch base to continue this conversation later in the meeting."
  
- Offer to continue the conversation if you've connected with someone with whom you want to develop a more in-depth business relationship.
  - Conclude the conversation with an invitation to continue what you discussed
  - Remind them of something you said you'd deliver.
  - Keep the door open for another meeting, mentioning something they said or a shared interest.
    - "You seem to know a lot about restaurants. I'd like to continue talking to you. We should get together sometime. I'll send you an email."
    - NOTE: Offering to send them a text is usually a bit too personal if you've just met a person. For many, this feels like stalking. Email or a follow-up phone call is less intrusive.
  
- Look for reasons to follow-up with interesting contacts.
  - Write a note to yourself on the back of the person's business card so you'll remember if you've offered to get them something after the event
  - Mention something that reminds them of the conversation in the note
    - Name of a good restaurant
    - Great summer camp for their kid
    - Article that covers a point you discussed.
  - Follow-up regularly if the contact is well-received.
    - That can build into a valuable referral source, business contact or client.
    - It helps build a network that will strengthen you firm's future.

## Follow-Up on Good Connections

This meeting is only the beginning when it comes to building powerful business relationships. You lay the foundation of relationships here, but you give them substance by what you do after you leave.

Here are some final tips to help you do that:

- Follow through on any promises you made or you've lost what you gained by meeting them in the first place.
- Drop them an email to tell them how much you enjoyed meeting them and remind them of what you discussed.
- Set up an informal follow-up meeting, perhaps over a lunch or drinks to get to know them better.
- Send them a LinkedIn request. Customize that request instead of using LinkedIn's default (I'd like to add you to my professional network on LinkedIn). Mention when and where you met (i.e. "It was great to connect with you at the CLDA Annual Meeting. Let's stay I touch").
- Ping them periodically with a link to an article or book of common interest.
- Deepen the relationship with substance, not sales. When you develop trust, sales will come. As will advice and help.
- Let them know the outcomes of any advice or referrals they give you. People love to know that you heard them and it paid off.

The next three days will offer you a rich assortment of contacts, knowledge and information. Take advantage of them all as you experience the

**CLDA Annual Meeting – Thriving on Disruption**



***The Networking Playbook*** is a publication provided by the CLDA. Please feel free to pass this along as a benefit of your membership in this association.

The Customized Logistics and Delivery Association is an advocate for the profitability and professionalism of companies that keep the global supply chain running.

For more information see [www.theCLDA.com](http://www.theCLDA.com).

