

# Want to Be a Master Networker? Stop Making Boring Introductions and Do This Instead

Whether you're hosting a conference, mingling at a networking event, or leading your team through a presentation to a new client, there's one step that's inevitable: introducing people to one another. If you're like most busy professionals, your introductions of your colleagues and clients feel perfunctory, are unplanned, and come across as either terse or rambling.

Introducing people to each other is the beginning of establishing credibility (for them and for you), building rapport, creating connections, starting or strengthening relationships, making quality referrals, setting the stage for future business collaborations, and much more.

In addition, when you demonstrate that you care about your colleague and clients enough to learn and share more memorable about them than is on their business card or LinkedIn profile, you make yourself more memorable too.

If you want to distinguish yourself from your competitors, polish your presence, wow people with your networking skills, build solid personal and professional relationships, and be invited to attend (or even speak) at more events that feel critical to your business growth, try these three strategies for making more memorable, flattering introductions.

**1. Story:** Replace *"This is Doug and he's an accountant"* with a story about how you met Doug, or when Doug helped you out of a jam (accounting or otherwise), or when Doug impressed you personally or professionally.

For example, *"This is Doug. I learned that he was a brilliant accountant the hard way - when I got a terrifying letter from the IRS about back taxes that I knew I had paid, but didn't know what to do next. That's when my wife told me about her co-worker Doug, who knew just what to do and (as you can see) has kept me out of jail ever since."* An important note: make sure the story you tell about the other person makes them look good - always.

**2. Surprise:** Replace *"This is Nancy and she owns a floral shop"* with something about Nancy that surprised you and/or would be surprising to others.

Consider, *"This is Nancy. She owns an elegant floral shop in the financial district that does everything from personal bouquets to corporate baskets and even conferences and weddings. And despite the fact that she loves her job, it turns out that she's allergic to about 20 different flowers. I was shocked to hear that but she has that as a fun fact right on her website. I mean, can you imagine being literally allergic to your job?"*

Remember that a surprise shouldn't surprise the other person. You don't want to reveal something embarrassing or too personal.

**3. Shared:** Replace *"This is Mark and he runs a chain of computer repair stores"* with something that you and Mark discovered you have in common outside of work.

Try: *"This is Mark. When he told me that he ran a computer repair store, I confessed that I still have my 1982 Commodore 64 computer in my basement. That's when Mark laughed and admitted to me that he did, too!"*

How can you make this even better? Mention something that you think Mark and the person you're introducing Mark to have in common. *"This is Mark, who runs a chain of computer repair stores. I think he's a great person for you to get to know, not just for when you have a computer crash, but so that you have someone else to talk about University of Michigan football with. I'm surrounded by Wolverines!"*

Introducing people doesn't have to be hard. But it doesn't have to be boring, either.