



British Library

Public perceptions of networking



10th November 2014



METHODOLOGY

Methodology Note

ComRes interviewed 1162 GB adults aged 18+ who are either in or seeking full or part time work online between 24th and 26th October 2014

Guidelines for the Public Use of Survey Results

ComRes is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules (www.britishpollingcouncil.org). This commits us to the highest standards of transparency.

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- The company conducting the research (ComRes)
- The client commissioning the survey
- Dates of interviewing
- Method of obtaining the interviews (e.g. in-person, post, telephone, internet)
- The universe effectively represented (all adults, voters etc.)
- The percentages upon which conclusions are based
- Size of the sample and geographic coverage.

Published references (such as a press release) should also show a web address where full data tables may be viewed, and they should also show the complete wording of questions upon which any data that has entered the public domain are based.

All press releases or other publications must be checked with ComRes before use. ComRes requires 48 hours to check a press release unless otherwise agreed.

HEADLINE FINDINGS

Summary

- Three in five (62%) British adults who are in or seeking work say that they have never attended a networking event.
- Those who have attended a networking event have mainly attended to build professional relationships (22%), to meet clients and customers (16%) or because their work told them to (15%).
- A third (32%) of British adults who are in or seeking work say that they associate networking with feeling nervous, a quarter (25%) say that they associate networking with feeling shy, and 20% say that they associate networking with feeling hopeful.
- Those who are in or seeking work and who have attended a networking event in the past are most likely to say agree that networking is very important for their professional development (54%), that they feel very confident about their networking ability (51%) and that they feel worried about being stuck with someone they don't want to talk to (51%) or uncomfortable (51%).
- Four in five (81%) of those who are in or seeking work and who have ever attended a networking event say that they have seen some benefits from it. Three in five (61%) say that they have made useful contacts, two in five (40%) say that they have received relevant advice, and one in five (23%) say that they have increased their sales or business as a result of networking.

Results

- **Almost two in five (38%) British adults who are in or seeking work say that they have ever attended a networking event.**
 - Younger people who are in or seeking work are more likely to say that they have attended a networking event than older people. Two in five (40%) of those aged 18–24, and almost half (48%) of those aged 25–34 and around two in five (38%) of those aged 35–44 say that they have attended a networking event, compared to three in

ten (31%) of those aged 45–54, a third (34%) of those aged 55–64, and around one in five (23%) of those aged 65+.

- Those from higher social grades are more likely than those from lower social grades to say that they have attended a networking event. More than half (55%) of those from social grade AB say that they have ever attended a networking event, decreasing to just one in five (21%) of those from social grade DE.
- Those who are in or seeking work are more likely to say that the reason they have attended a networking event is to build professional relationships (22%), to meet clients and customers (16%) or because their work told them to go (15%).
- Men are more likely than women to say that they have attended a networking event to meet suppliers (12% and 7% respectively).
- Of those who have attended a networking event, three in five (57%) have attended to build professional relationships, two in five (41%) say that they have attended to meet clients and customers, and a similar proportion (40%) say that they have attended because their work told them to.

For what purposes, if any, have you attended a networking event?	% selected (overall)	% selected (those who have been networking)
NET: Any	38%	100%
To build professional relationships	22%	57%
To meet clients and customers	16%	41%
Because my work told me to	15%	40%
To build personal relationships	11%	30%
To meet suppliers	9%	24%
To sell products or services	7%	18%
Other	1%	1%

I have never been to a networking event	62%	0%
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Base: All respondents who are in or seeking work (n=1162)

- A third (32%) of British adults who are working or seeking work say that ‘nervous’ best describes how they feel or would feel about networking. A quarter (25%) say that ‘shy’ best describes how they feel or would feel about it, and one in five (20%) say the same for ‘hopeful’.
 - Women are more likely than men to say that they feel or would feel ‘nervous’ (38% and 25% respectively), ‘shy’ (29% and 21% respectively), or ‘embarrassed’ (17% and 11% respectively) about networking. Men are more likely than women to say that they feel or would feel ‘confident’ (18% and 13% respectively) about networking.
 - Younger people are more likely than their older counterparts to say that they feel excited about networking. One in five (22%) 18–24 year olds say that they feel or would feel excited about this, decreasing to just 8% of those aged 65+.

Which of the following words describe how you feel / would feel about networking?	% selected
Nervous	32%
Shy	25%
Hopeful	20%
Confident	15%
Embarrassed	14%
Excited	12%
Determined	10%
Trapped	8%
None of these	30%

Base: All respondents who are in or seeking work (n=1162)

- Those in or seeking work who have attended a networking event previously are most likely to agree that networking is very important for their professional development (54%), that they feel very confident about their networking ability (51%) or that they feel worried about being stuck with someone they don't want to talk to (51%) or feel uncomfortable (51%).
 - Men who have attended a networking event are more likely than women who have attended a networking event to agree that they feel very confident about their networking ability. Almost three in five (59%) men who have attended a networking event agree with this statement, compared to two in five (42%) women who have attended. In addition to this, men who have attended a networking event are more likely to strongly agree with this; almost one in five (18%) men strongly agree that they feel very confident about their networking ability, compared to just 6% of women who have attended a networking event.
 - Almost three in five (57%) of women who have attended a networking event say that they feel uncomfortable when networking, compared to just 46% of men who have attended a networking event. Younger people are more likely than their older counterparts who have attended a networking event to agree with this statement; two thirds (63%) of 18–24 year olds say that they feel uncomfortable when they are networking, decreasing to just 15% of those aged 65+.
 - Those from lower social grades are more likely to agree that networking is very important to them personally, of those who have attended a networking event. More than half (55%) of those from social grade DE who have ever attended a networking event say that they agree with this statement, decreasing to two in five (41%) of those from social grade AB who say the same.
 - Men who have attended a networking event are more likely than women to *strongly* agree that they have a clear strategy to get the best out of networking events. One in six (15%) men strongly agree with this, compared to just 4% of women.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about networking?	NET: Agree	NET: Disagree	Don't know
Networking is very important for my professional development	54%	41%	5%

I feel very confident about my networking ability	51%	44%	6%
I feel worried about being stuck with someone I don't want to talk to	51%	45%	4%
I feel uncomfortable when I am networking	51%	46%	3%
I feel worried about not knowing anyone	50%	46%	4%
I try to avoid going to networking events	47%	49%	4%
I have a clear strategy to get the best out of networking events	42%	52%	6%
I find it difficult to introduce myself to people I don't know	42%	54%	4%
Networking is very important to me personally	42%	53%	5%
Networking has never brought me professional benefits	41%	52%	7%

Base: All those who are in or seeking work that have ever been networking (n=419)

- **Four in five (81%) adults who are in or seeking work and who have attended a networking event in the past say that they have seen some benefits from networking.**
 - Of the benefits tested, British adults who are in or seeking work with experience of networking are most likely to say that they have made useful contacts (61%), received relevant advice (40%) or increased sales/business (23%).
 - Private sector employees are more likely (84%) than their public sector counterparts (76%) to say that they have seen any benefits from attending a networking event.

What benefits, if any, have you ever seen from networking?	% selected
NET: Any	81%
Made useful contacts	61%
Received relevant advice	40%
Increased sales/business	23%
Found a new job opportunity	21%

Found a business partner/associate	11%
I have not seen any benefits from networking	19%

Base: All those who are in or seeking work that have ever been networking (n=419)

- **In terms of usual approaches to networking, those who have attended a networking event say that they have talking points ready (37%), pair up with a friend or colleague so that they don't have to talk to anyone on their own (36%) or locate a person standing by themselves and begin a conversation (32%).**
 - A quarter (24%) of those aged 18–24 and a third (33%) of those aged 25–34 who have attended a networking event say that their approach to networking involves having a drink to help them relax. Similarly, 18–24 year olds are more likely than any other age group to say that their usual approach to networking involves hiding in the corner/toilets (22%).
 - Younger people who have attended a networking event are also more likely than older people to approach networking in pairs; a quarter (25%) of those aged 18–24 years old and half (50%) of those aged 25–34 say that their approach is pairing up with a friend or colleague so that they don't have to talk to anyone on their own.

Which of the following best describes your usual approach to networking?	% selected
Having talking points ready	37%
Pairing up with a friend or colleague so that I don't have to talk to anyone on my own	36%
Locating a person standing by themselves and beginning a conversation	32%
Locating the person I want to find at the event and finding a way to approach them	28%
Researching who will attend before I arrive, and targeting that person	23%
Having a drink to help me relax	24%
Talking to the first person I see	18%

Hiding in the corner/toilets	9%
None of these	9%

Base: All those who have ever been networking (n=419)

FURTHER INFORMATION

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