

Small Talk Tips and Tools

1. Be strategic with who you approach

- a. Survey the room – assess People Dynamics and Room Dynamics
 - i. People: analyze body language. If someone catches your eye, smile.
 - ii. Room: analyze clusters of people
 1. Approach individuals or groups of 3+. Two people might be having a private conversation.
- b. Consider approaching those who presented or gave an intervention that can be used as a starting point to the conversation.
- c. Avoid gender-based assumptions.

2. Use natural-for-you, approachable body language

- a. Make eye contact. Smile.

3. Greetings

- a. As you observe individuals before you approach, notice how they are greeting others. If comfortable for you, mirror their approach to greeting.
- b. Or take the lead with the greeting that feels comfortable to you – and don't be offended if others have a different comfort level.
- c. Read the group and be flexible – introduce yourself when you approach if feasible or wait for another to bring you into the discussion.
- d. Always be professional.

4. Use the tools before you

- a. Read badges for names and affiliations.

5. Be curious and have open-ended questions prepared

- a. Be well-informed on ICANN-related topics and prepared for the event.
 - i. Identify areas of interests and review relevant materials in advance of the meeting to ask well-informed questions.
 - ii. Use ICANNwiki to learn more about individual contributors.
- b. Have your elevator pitch ready – who you are and why you are there. Keep it simple. Be smart, be aware, be brief.
- c. Additional appropriate small-talk topics include:
 - i. Thoughts on the immediate environment or session
 - ii. Tenure and history at ICANN
 - iii. Advice on sessions to attend and efforts to join
 - iv. How the person arrived at your location/the city you are both visiting
 - v. Weather
 - vi. Hobbies
 - vii. Travel/vacation

6. Use active listening skills

- a. Listen to the answers to your questions and ask follow-up questions

7. Take risks

- a. If you are rebuffed, don't take it personally and try a different group.

8. Always close the conversation

- a. "It's been great talking to you"
- b. "I really enjoyed hearing about...."

9. Don't be afraid to practice!