

This session is an opportunity for networkers to have short meetings with seven or eight others. Most delegates will be freelance editors and proofreaders, so this session isn't about meeting people who will give you work – although that might happen – it's about making connections and sharing experiences. You might meet someone who wants to get into a particular area of editing and can learn from how you went about it, or be able to give someone marketing tips. You might meet someone who offers a service that you'd like to add to your own portfolio and ask them questions about that, or talk to a more experienced editor about finding work. The possibilities are endless!

How the session will work

On arrival, you will be asked to take a seat on either side of a row of tables. Networkers seated on one side of the table will remain seated for the whole session. Those on the other side of the table will move along one place each time the bell is rung (every 7 minutes).

Preparing for speed networking

Each meeting lasts only 7 minutes, and both of you will want to introduce yourselves, and ask and answer questions. You might prefer to trust to serendipity, which is fine, or you might want to spend a little time planning what you will say and what you might ask.

Introducing yourself

- What do you want the people you're meeting to know about you? As well as your name, you could include where you're based, how long you've been editing, what services you offer and what subjects you work on, and any plans you have for developing your business.
- Remember to keep it brief! Your introduction should be 2 minutes maximum.

Moving the conversation on

The questions you ask and answer will obviously depend on your partner, and will be different in each meeting. But you can think about what you might ask, depending on what your partner tells you about themselves – as well as what you might have to say that could help them. Use the following questions to help you.

- What business or career goals do you want to achieve? You might want to branch out into, or develop, a new area of editing; offer a new service; get some more training; expand your client base; market yourself more effectively.
- Do you have any editorial problems you'd like advice on? You might want to talk about how to handle difficult authors; how others achieve (or attempt to achieve) a good work-life balance; how to juggle a number of different projects.
- What key questions do you have on the topics you have identified?
- What do you know a lot about? You might not feel like an expert, but if you've been editing or proofreading for a while, you'll have lots of experience to share. Even if you're a newbie, you'll have knowledge and skills that others don't.

Concluding the meeting

- If you want to keep in touch, how will you do it?

And finally

- Don't forget to bring your business cards and a means of taking notes!

Notes for the nervous networker

If you're nervous about networking, these tips might help:

- Smile – it will make you look (and feel!) more confident.
- Ask your partner about themselves. This will allow you to listen rather than talk. And you'll learn, which is what you came to this conference for.
- The chances are your partner is as nervous as you, but once you get started you may find it hard to stop when the bell goes.