

### THE ART OF NETWORKING AT PEAK 2024

*Lara Durben, Midwest Poultry Federation*

PEAK 2024 – the trade show and convention powered by the Midwest Poultry Federation – is coming up this spring in Minneapolis and now is the perfect time to make plans to attend.

It is also a great time to consider how best to make connections in the poultry industry as you are walking the trade show and attending the education sessions.

Like any trade show, PEAK 2024 is a vibrant hub of industry activity. Professionals gather in Minneapolis to showcase their products, share their insights, and forge meaningful connections. However, mastering the art of networking can be challenging – whether you're a seasoned veteran or attending PEAK for the first time. Here are some effective strategies to help you navigate and succeed:



#### **Prepare with Purpose:**

Before stepping foot onto the trade show floor, take the time to set clear objectives for your networking efforts. Define what you hope to achieve, whether it's expanding your professional network or fostering partnerships. Research the exhibitors and attendees who will be present via the PEAK website ([www.midwestpoultry.com](http://www.midwestpoultry.com)) and the mobile app (coming soon!) and identify key individuals or companies you want to connect with. This preparation will provide direction and focus, ensuring that your networking efforts are purposeful and productive.

#### **Craft an Elevator Pitch:**

An elevator pitch is a concise and compelling introduction that succinctly communicates who you are and what you do. Craft a memorable elevator pitch that highlights your unique value proposition and resonates with your target audience. Keep it brief, engaging, and tailored to the context of the trade show. Practice delivering your pitch with confidence and clarity, leaving a lasting impression on those you meet.

#### **Be Approachable:**

Approachability is key to successful networking. Wear a welcoming smile, maintain open body language, and exude confidence in your interactions. Initiate conversations with fellow attendees by asking open-ended questions and actively listening to their responses. Show genuine interest in their work and accomplishments, and look for common ground to establish rapport. Remember to be authentic and personable, as people are more likely to connect with those they perceive as genuine and relatable.

*Pro Tip:* Join PEAK's complimentary Business and Leadership Track to learn more about how to make meaningful connections through conversations. Speaker and trainer Brian Fretwell will walk us through a variety of methods of asking questions and listening exercises that will transform the way you network professionally and connect with people on a personal level. Learn more at <https://midwestpoultry.com/schedule/>.

#### **Utilize Digital Tools:**

In today's digital age, leveraging technology can enhance your networking efforts at trade shows. Utilize social media platforms such as LinkedIn to research and connect with exhibitors and attendees before, during, and after the event. Join relevant groups or discussions to engage with industry professionals and exchange insights. Additionally, use PEAK's mobile app to facilitate connections and schedule meetings with potential collaborators.

Find Midwest Poultry Federation on LinkedIn here: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/midwest-poultry-federation>

#### **Follow Up with Purpose:**

Networking doesn't end when the trade show concludes—it's just the beginning of building and nurturing valuable relationships. After the event, follow up with the contacts you've made in a timely and personalized manner. Send a brief email or message expressing gratitude for the conversation and reiterating your interest in staying connected. Reference specific points discussed during your interaction to demonstrate attentiveness and reinforce the connection. Maintain regular communication and seek opportunities to further engage and collaborate with your newfound contacts.

Networking at trade shows is a valuable opportunity to connect with industry peers, explore new partnerships, and advance your professional goals. By preparing with purpose, crafting compelling introductions, being approachable and engaging, leveraging digital tools, and following up with purpose, you can master the art of networking and unlock the full potential of trade show participation.

PEAK registration for college students is complimentary and we invite you to attend and take in all there is to see and do. For all the details and to register online, visit [www.midwestpoultry.com](http://www.midwestpoultry.com). See you at PEAK 2024 – April 17-19 at the Minneapolis Convention Center!