



**The 12 x 12 x 12 Rule
for Networking**

Networking Education

The 12 x 12 x 12 Rule

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The 12 x 12 x 12 Rule for Networking

Isn't it great to be meeting people face to face again!? Our networking skills might have become a little rusty during lockdown so this a refresher on how to make a great impression in business settings, especially when we only get one chance to make a good first impression.

So, what is the 12 x 12 x 12 rule for networking? Firstly, apologies for the imperial measurements, metrically, it would be the 3 x 25 x 12 rule which isn't anywhere near as catchy. The 12 x 12 x 12 rule is a checklist for when you show up at business meetings or networking events for the first (or 100th) time.

The first 12 is how do you look from 12 feet away, the second 12 is how you come across from 12 inches away and the third 12 is what are the first 12 words that you say when you start talking about yourself? Let us dive deeper into each of these.



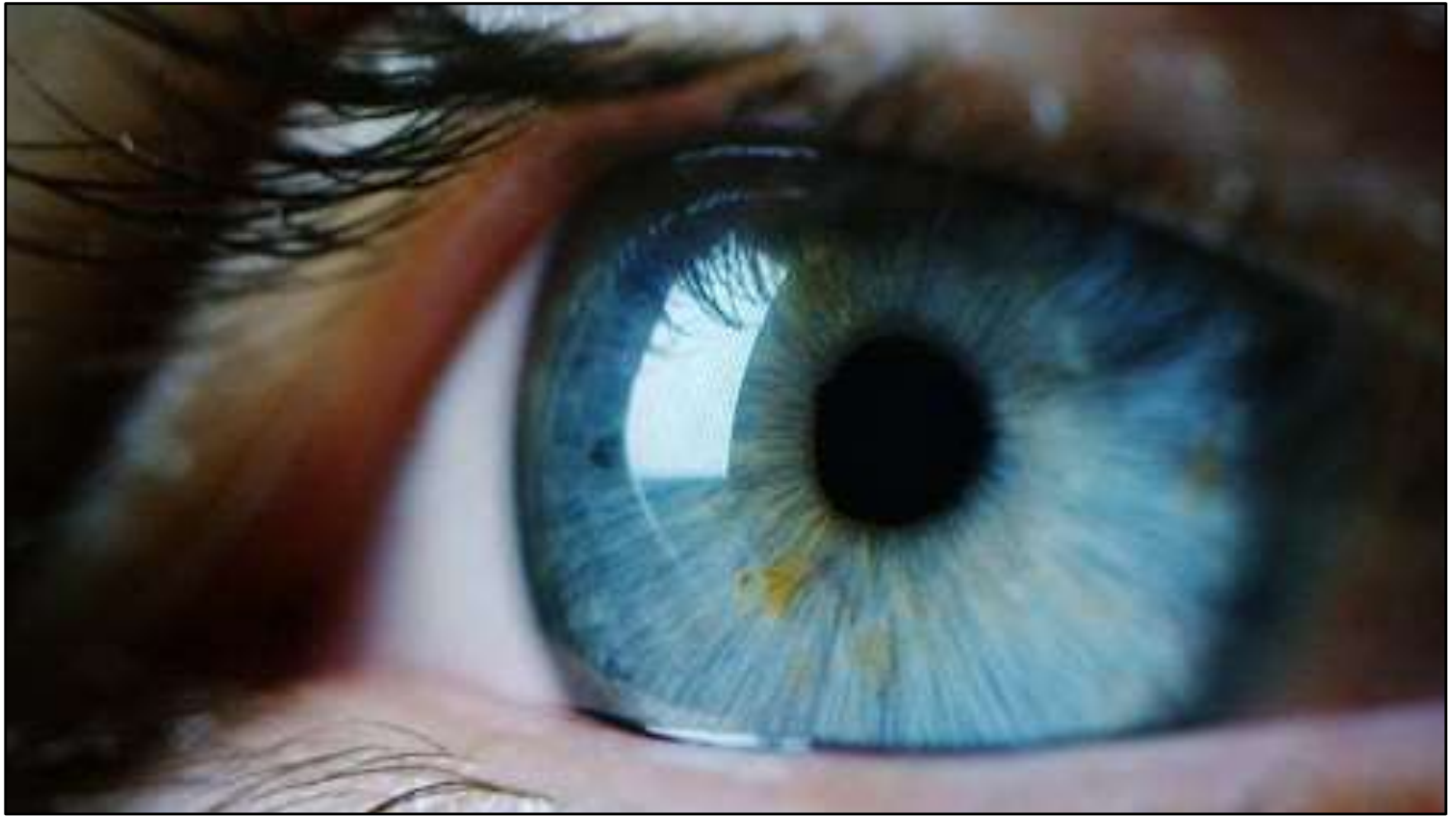
How do you look from 12 feet away?

There is a lot of research on how critical it is to have the right professional image and appearance.

It's the first part of establishing your visibility and credibility (after being on time).

As a rule, try to dress at or above the expected level of the audience or attendees.

Not all professionals have to stick to this, for instance a mechanic doesn't have to dress in a suit and tie but they can be well presented in line with the standards of their profession. Coming out of lockdown is a great time to review your image and appearance (and maybe to put the Hawaiian shirt away for another 10 years).



How do you come across from 12 inches away?

Okay, we aren't going to get 12 inches away from someone we don't know, especially during Covid-19 times. However, what we are talking about is the message your body language is sending.

Make sure your attitude sends the **right** message. This is especially true if the economy or business is bad and that is all we talk about. Focus on the positive when forming business relationships. Be open, trustworthy, friendly and sincere, not only through what you say but through nonverbal clues like posture, facial expression, hand gestures and eye contact.

Focus on being fully present with the person you are talking to.



What are the first 12 words that you say?

When you first meet someone it's crucial to let them talk first. Otherwise you'll immediately come across as only being self-interested. Of course, you don't want to stand there saying "after you, no, after you" but at least give them the opportunity to speak first before jumping in.

Once it's your turn and they ask what you do, think carefully about your first 12 words. Having a very concise unique selling point (USP) is critical to being remembered. A good USP makes people think about what you just said. It can be called the eyebrow test. Does what you say make their eyebrow(s) go up in such a way that means they are thinking "how do you do that? For example, instead of saying "I'm an accountant" you might say "I help people retire young, rich and free". That might make them ask "Oh, how do you do that?" whilst raising their eyebrows, rather than quickly finding they need to use the bathroom.

It's similar to what we should be doing in our weekly presentation or sales pitches at BNI.



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Summary

The 12 x 12 x 12 rule is a convenient way to think about how you show up to events, business meetings and take advantage of the open networking at your chapter meetings.

Now is a great time to do an inventory on your image and see if your perception of yourself is reality. Or even check that your perception of yourself is accurate with someone who will be honest with you.