

Participating in a networking event can help you make new connections, engage with business leaders and industry experts, hear about emerging trends and solutions, while learning from others who do what you do and face some of the same challenges. This could be a local small business association meeting, an ag tradeshow or a larger trade industry group's conference (see sidebar). At agricultural events, you'll be surrounded by like-minded people who understand the importance of building relationships. Come to these events prepared to network and be networked. Have a few talking points prepared, such as how you've solved a problem that others might be facing, a tip for generating business leads, something that makes the products you offer unique or a trend you're seeing in the industry. You can use these points as conversation starters with people you meet.

Try digital networking

Even in a personal industry like farming, not all networking takes place face to face. Digital and social media platforms let you keep in touch with professionals in your area, reconnect with old friends and colleagues or start new conversations with people you meet on the job or at one of those networking events. LinkedIn is one of the most powerful platforms for networking with people in our industry and at other B2B companies. See our article about LinkedIn marketing in the October *Groundwork*. Facebook – your page or someone else's – and its comments sections lets you initiate conversations with those you follow or who follow you. These platforms, as well as Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), Snapchat and others, have private message options that offer another way of reaching out.

Networking gives you and your customers opportunities to meet new people, hear other's viewpoints and learn about industry trends and opportunities. In a business that's built on relationships, it's a crucial skill to develop.



Why not try our networking tips at one of these upcoming industry events?

ATSA Field Crop Seed Convention

December 5-8, 2023

Orlando, Florida
betterseed.org

IPSA 35th Annual Conference

January 15-18, 2024

Indianapolis, Indiana
ipseed.org

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