

How to Scream “I’m Open For Business!”

By Shawna Schuh, CSP



Let’s talk about the nametag thing.

I’ve heard all the arguments against wearing a nametag...it’s inconvenient, it’ll ruin clothing, it’s hokey, it takes away from your personality, people look at your name or company and judge you. I also hear you don’t know what side to wear it on, it’s too big, too small, too hard to read, and on and on.

I’d like to address the valid arguments and acknowledge the purely ridiculous complaints. However, I mostly want to discuss the philosophy behind the idea that wearing a nametag, when appropriate, is the best thing you can do for your business in a social situation.

Let me repeat that! WEARING A NAMETAG IS THE BEST (AND MOST COURTEOUS) THING YOU CAN DO FOR YOUR BUSINESS IN A SOCIAL SITUATION! It literally screams, “I’m Open for Business!”

1. If you want people to talk with you, wear a nametag. Wearing a nametag is like wearing an invitation. It says, “Talk to me! I’m available!” It’s a clear signal to potential relationships that you are open for exchange. In today’s busy society sending clear signals is refreshing!

2. Build credibility by wearing a nametag. Have you ever been to a social event and known you’ve met the person across the room but you simply can’t remember their name? Somewhere in your consciousness you know the person is important to your business, but you hold back because you don’t want to embarrass yourself. If that person had a nametag on you could walk

over and speak with them knowing you could catch a glance at the tag before committing a business blunder and blurting out the wrong name. Well, people are doing the same thing to you. They don’t approach you because they can’t remember your name and don’t want to look like a fool. How much potential business have you lost because a nametag was inconvenient or could ruin your clothing?

3. The right side is the right side. If you’re going to wear a nametag for people to see and to help them feel comfortable approaching you, make it one step easier and wear it on the right side. Since we shake hands with our right hand, wear it on the your right side so when someone comes up to you, you can help them, and yourself, by grasping their right hand. Then you both can glance at your nametags and grin as you greet each other in a sincere and natural way.

The three steps again...Grasp, Glance and Grin. Got it? Get it? Good!

Note to women: It’s important to wear your nametag high enough on your right shoulder so that the person shaking your hand does not have to drag their eyes across your chest in order to glance at your nametag.

4. Make your own. Small hard to read nametags are almost like not wearing one at all. Do people a favor and make your tag visible or unique. I know people who print their name and business in a bold type or in a unique style and replace the one that is issued at most conventions.

Note: While at conventions nametags allow people at the door to know you are with a certain company, or allow you entrance into the food events. Keep the nametag that was issued to you behind the one you bring and actually wear.

Another thing people will do is replace the nametag they were given with their business card. If your business card is like most there is too much information on it and it’s too small to read unless you get up really

close and stare at it. People are concerned with only a few things when approaching you.

1. Your name.
2. Your company .
3. What you do.

You can also add your company motto when appropriate, especially if it’s something that will draw a comment or help people to know what you do better. Example: John Doe • ABC Tire Company • Where Rubber Meets the Road! This example may make someone smile, say something clever, or ask another question. This breaks the ice with others and shows your company’s personality. Everyone is looking for something to say so make it easy.

It’s a fact that the easier you make doing business with you, the more business you do. It seems like a no-brainer to use this simple marketing tool to your advantage. From a civility standpoint it’s even simpler. Ask yourself, “What can I do to make it easier for you?” In this scenario, wear a nametag that someone can read.

One last thought. If you’re really concerned about ruining your clothing with pinholes from nametags, purchase one of the new magnetic types and carry it with you. Just remember that magnetic nametags can demagnetize your credit cards!

The philosophy behind the nametag is evident. It doesn’t matter how you feel about nametags. The reasons you don’t like to wear one don’t count in business because the reason to wear one has less to do with you and more to do with serving your customers better. If by wearing a nametag you scream, “I’m open for business”, it’s a pretty inexpensive way to advertise, isn’t it?

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