

editor's note



MY NAME IS SCOTT, SCOTT MELNICK. I'm the editor and publisher of *Modern Steel Construction*. And when I'm not writing about steel, I enjoy refereeing soccer and collecting kaleidoscopes.

If you're like me, self-introductions are a difficult if commonplace part of your day. That's why I was thrilled to discover Lisa B. Marshall's blog (<http://publicspeaker.quickanddirtytips.com/bio/>). She offers wonderfully practical yet eminently readable advice.

For example, in her advice on introducing yourself, she stresses use of the other person's name, communicating the proper body language (including a firm handshake and always carrying breath mints) and building rapport through common ground. "The goal is to establish common ground and make a connection," she states. "It can be anything you're both interested in. It doesn't have to be business-related. It doesn't even have to be of great importance."

Lisa stresses the need to be both brief and conversational. It's often useful to include a question in your introduction, which can help start a conversation. If you're at a conference, you can ask someone if they've heard any good speakers yet. If you're at a meeting you can tell them where you're office is located and ask about theirs.

Group intros often seem stilted and Lisa recommends choosing three factoids to make yourself memorable (hence my intro above focusing on steel, soccer and kaleidoscopes; now the next time we meet we'll have topics to talk about—in addition to our kids, of course).

It also goes without saying that you need to listen to the person you're meeting and pick up conversation from their introduction. With practice, you'll gain comfort. (And if introductions make you downright jittery, Anne Scarlett's column on page 24 provides tips on channeling your anxiety into positive energy.)

I look forward to meeting you—and learning three (or more) things about you!

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