



Do-It-Yourself: Creating your own Emerging Leadership Exchange

Before you get to the Americans for the Arts Annual Convention:

1. Identify:
 - Browse through the membership directory available on the Americans for the Arts Website. Do a search for the type of position or organization, a specific individual, or geographic region you are interested in. Or browse through your Contacts List to see if there is an established leader you already know who you would like to learn more about.
2. Make contact.
 - Send an email to and/or phone the established leader you have selected, and let them know why you have contacted them. Inquire whether or not they plan to attend the annual convention and if they are willing to establish an exchange.
3. Find a matchmaker.
 - Have a conversation with your supervisor about your desire to have an exchange with an established leader. Communicate to them the type of individual you are most interested in sharing time with. Ask if they have a colleague who might fit your description and who might be willing and available. If so, request that they formally introduce you to their colleague via phone and/or email.
4. Agree on the relationship.
 - Once you have agreed to have an exchange during the Convention, have a conversation about your mutual expectations, desired outcomes and any follow up that you hope to have happen following the Convention. You might want to agree on sharing time together during a session, a lunch and a social event. Or, you might request one-on-one time where you can have more of an interview session. Be specific in what you hope to gain from this experience, which will help you to agree on the most appropriate use of your time together.
5. Be prepared.
 - Have a list of questions you want to ask, thoughts you would like to share, information you would like to gather, and issues you would like to discuss while at the Convention together. Be prepared for everything they want to share with you that you had not considered on your list.

Once you arrive:

1. Pay attention.
 - Sometimes the most incredible learning opportunities come by watching and listening. How do they interact with their peers? How do they interact with their staff? How do they interact with leaders in more esteemed positions? How do they conduct themselves during the sessions? Social settings?