

Wise Networking For The Silly Season

The festive season has arrived and that means end of year parties.
As well as socialising it's a great time to build and foster contacts.

*'TIS the season to be jolly,
tra la la la, la la la la.'*

November and December is a great time to reconnect with those you know and to make new contacts. Social functions are in full swing as businesses strive to thank supporters such as customers, clients, suppliers and service providers.

The tendency at such events is to mix with our friends and good acquaintances that we see often, but I suggest getting out of your comfort zone to mingle and network. Take the opportunity to not only socialise and enjoy yourself but do some 'strategic networking'.

01 End of year functions are a great time to reconnect with contacts you have made throughout the year or previous years. Where possible review the attendee list before the event. Not only will this help you be aware of who is attending but also assist you to remember names as name tags are not always supplied. Take note of a few

significant people you would like to reconnect with and do a little research beforehand on things such as how their business is progressing, new innovations in their company or personal details such as a promotion or other interesting information. Why bother going to this effort you ask? Everyone likes to be remembered and feel important.

How good would one of your contacts feel if you welcomed them by name and were able to congratulate them on their new role within their company or discuss one of their hobbies. Reconnect with contacts and make them feel important.

02 Follow up those you have reconnected with at end of year events by sending note or a card saying how much you enjoyed catching up with them again and to stay in touch. A handwritten note stands out in a time of endless business emails. It also shows you took the time to personally acknowledge them. Those in business like to receive Christmas cards and display them proudly in their office. Make the effort to stay in touch throughout next year and don't just wait until the following 2010 festive even to reconnect.

03 End of year events are a great opportunity to meet new people and create new contacts and business leads. Review the attendee list to see which attendees you would like to meet. Find out who knows this person, such as the organisers, and ask if they could arrange an introduction. Again do a little research so you have something in common to discuss. Social functions are not always a suitable time to discuss work, so see if you can find out something personal to discuss such as how their favourite sporting team went for the season, upcoming holiday plans or if they have some interesting hobby.

04 Remember new contacts. Immediately after the event write a few notes regarding this person on the back of their business card – date and where you met plus anything of interest. I suggest following them up with a personal phone call rather than an impersonal email. People tend to be busy as they wind up the year, so why not arrange to meet and celebrate the New Year over drinks, coffee or lunch. This is a great opportunity to get to know your new contact in a relaxed environment after the 'silly season' is over.

05 Eat, drink and be merry – although not too merry. This is a time to reconnect and meet new people in a social situation, not to party hard – leave this for family and friend functions. I suggest eating something before you attend evening events as there may be finger food, but it is often scarce or may not be served until later in the evening. You want to enjoy quality and interesting conversations and leave your companions with a good impression, not be remembered for behaviour you would rather forget.

Have a great day and
keep connecting!



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