

## **Seven Ways to Turn a Networking Event into New Law Firm Business**

By Margaret Grisdela

Here are a few tips attorneys can use to you turn a calendar of networking events into a powerhouse for new business development.

### **1. Arrange the Speaker**

Serving on an organization's Program Committee gives you the perfect chance to reach out to business and community leaders within the context of a professional, non-sales environment. You will expand your network while being recognized as a go-getter.

### **2. Invite People to Join You**

If you don't like to go to events alone, arrange for others to join you at the event or for a bite to eat prior to arriving. Once you get there, agree to break up so you can canvas the room separately. Share leads with your friends as appropriate.

### **3. Review the Attendee List in Advance**

Larger events frequently make a pre-show attendee list available. Check over registrant names, and send an email to those you know to suggest that you connect on site. Also identify people you want to meet, and try to arrange an introduction.

### **4. Connect with Prospects at the Event**

Work the room at every event you attend. Set a goal of collecting 5-10 new business cards. Talk long enough for meaningful mutual interactions, and then move on to new prospects.

### **5. Schedule Follow Up Meetings**

Ask for permission to contact a prospect or a potential referral source after the event. If they say yes, give them a call to schedule coffee or a lunch meeting.

### **6. Break the Ice**

One of the attorneys I coach has excellent networking skills, yet finds it hard to get into the groove of a 2-3 day industry conference. One technique she's developed to overcome this is to schedule a first day get-together for 5 to 10 people that she knows will be at an event. They might meet for a drink before the official Welcoming Reception, for example. This gives her a base of people she can stay in touch with over the course of the conference, while also reaching out to develop new contacts.

### **7. Find the Events Your Prospects Attend**

Invest some time to identify the organizations that offer you the best mix of maximum prospects with minimum competitors. Then work these groups for a long-term growth perspective.

### **Bonus Material: More Networking Tips**

Here are even more legal marketing tips you can use to maximize the benefits of a networking event.

- Approach people who are either alone or in groups of 3 or more. Breaking into the conversation of a twosome can be awkward.
- Help people to remember your name, and be sure to keep your name badge visible so that others can see and remember yours.
- Write notes on the back of business cards to remind yourself about the people you meet.
- Follow up by connecting through LinkedIn. This is so much better than a “nice to meet you” email, plus you can stay in touch electronically. You also get the benefit of a photo and profile to refresh your memory.

**About the Author:** Margaret Grisdela is the author of *Courting Your Clients* (now in its 2<sup>nd</sup> edition) and president of Legal Expert Connections, a national legal marketing and social media agency. Contact her at 561-266-1030, [www.legalexpertconnections.com](http://www.legalexpertconnections.com) or [www.courtingyourclients.com](http://www.courtingyourclients.com).