



Virtual Conference Room – Networking San Diego

May 21st, 2011

As one of the principals of [Discovery Conference Centre, Inc.](#), I have had the pleasure of meeting dynamic, smart businesspeople who need a place to conduct business and/or trainings in a professional setting with all of the technology bells and whistles available to them. Many of our DCC clients are using our conference rooms to “network.”

I believe “networking” has become one of the buzzwords of 2011. It has always been considered to be an important part of business, getting out and about, shaking hands, but since the Great Recession, when businesses need to step up to get work (little to no low hanging fruit is available), meeting potential clients, finding referral sources, and getting your name out there, networking has become essential for survival.

Many of our clients are in the 2B2 world, service businesses. It can be uncomfortable for accountants, transactional attorneys, and stock brokers to have to go out and find business, meet strangers, learn the art of “cocktail party” selling, and create opportunity.

I have learned a trick or two in the art of networking, and I would like to share them. Remember, the goal of the Discovery Conference Centre is for anyone who walks through the doors to know SUCCESS.

Tip 1: Always come prepared with business cards that are easy to access. This might sound too simple, but I have stood there when someone asks for my [court reporter](#) business card and dug into my purse, opening my wallet, hunting in little compartments, and feeling generally foolish. Put business cards in a shirt or pants pocket or in a professional cardholder placed at the top of your purse ready to go before you get to the event.



Tip 2: Be conscious. Before you get to the networking event, sit still for a second and think about what you want to accomplish. Is there someone in particular you want to meet? Is there a type of businessperson or vendor you need to create a relationship with? Have a strategy in place.

Tip 3: Be kind. If someone looks a little out of place, shy or scared, go to that person, shake their hand, ask them who they are and what they do. Know that 95% of the people in the room are uncomfortable and a little shy. The person you meet might be a goldmine for your future.

Tip 4: Helping others needs to be part of your strategy. Once you meet someone, ask who they are, what they do, think if you can or want to help them with a tip or referral to someone else. I have found it is easier to help others rather than to think I have to sell myself in that moment. The person you are meeting is going to be grateful and probably will want to help you back. Human nature.

Tip 5: Know your business niche. Meeting someone new and saying, "I am a transactional attorney and do a lot of estates and wills," is kind of boring and generic. If you say, "I am a transactional attorney that helps people with their estates and tax planning and do a lot of work with people who own vintage cars" or "apartment complexes," that opens up the door for conversation. Add a little flavor and fun to your "elevator speech."

Tip 6: Elevator speeches are boring and usually obviously rehearsed and memorized and don't sound authentic. That is my opinion.

Tip 7: Move along. Know that everyone in the room wants to meet as many people as possible. If you meet someone that needs to know someone else in the room, make the introduction and move along. If someone gloms onto you, say, "I'm going to go get something to eat" or "Oh, there is Ted Smith. I need to talk to him. Excuse me." And then move on. No one should get their feelings hurt. Networking events are to conduct business.



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