

[If You Want to Build Business Relationships, Go for Small Gatherings](#)

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Every few years, I decide I'm going to attend the annual dinner of one of the charities I support. The event is touted as a great place for lawyers to meet each other but in truth, it's really a lousy way to meet new lawyers. I go because it provides me with a quick way to shake a lot of hands (i.e. I know a lot of people in the organization so I see people I already know).

In sharp contrast, I joined a tiny Squash and Tennis club in my hometown and on the first day I went to work out, I met more new people than I ever do at one of these gala events.

I have nothing against large events. And I think this charity is extremely effective and does good work (and I'll continue to support it.) But I don't think I'm coming back. It's just not worth the time and effort.

The reason is simple. Large crowded rooms filled with a lot of people you do not know are generally not a good environment for relationship building. If your objective in getting involved in non-profits is to make connections while doing good, aim for committees, projects or much smaller events where you will actually have the chance to connect with people you want to meet.