

[Networking For Client Development: Right Events and Do it Well](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on December 6th, 2012

Recently I read an [Entrepreneur Magazine](#) article: [7 Key Habits of Super Networkers](#). It caused me to wonder if networking really works for lawyers. What do you think? Is networking a client development strategy? If so, how can you do it well?

I believe many, if not all of the “formal” networking events are a waste of time for lawyers. Have you ever been to a formal networking event when you thought great potential clients and referral sources were there? Second, do you think any client would hire a lawyer because someone you met at a formal networking event for a few minutes recommends you?

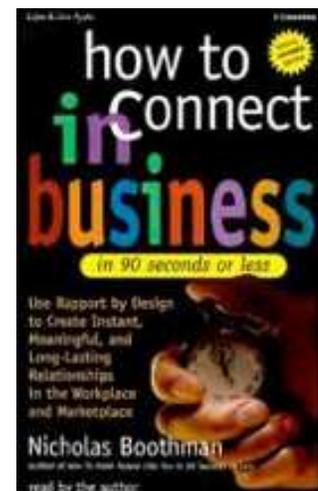
Even if you agree with me that “formal” networking events are a waste of time, you will still be “networking” and building your network. When you attend events where you can network it makes sense to have a game plan.

If you are able to find out who is attending, identify who you want to meet. What do you want to discuss with each person? Next, have your “elevator speech” planned. How will you respond when someone asks what you do. You have arrived at the event. What now? Years ago I read [How to Connect in Business in 90 Seconds or Less](#) by Nicholas Boothman. It is a short, easy read book and I found it valuable. In the book, Boothman gives some rules he learned from working as Francis Xavier Muldoon’s personal assistant. Muldoon’s rule number 1 was:

When you meet someone, look them in the eye and smile.

I believe that after looking the other person in the eye and smiling you should try to build trust, develop rapport and find common interests. One the best way to do it is to ask open ended questions that get the other person talking and allow you to get to know them.

If you are stuck on questions, here are [Bob Burg’s 10 Feel Good](#)



of

[Questions](#) from his book: [Endless Referrals](#).

Finally, find a reason to follow up with the people you meet at the event. It could be as simple as connecting with them on LinkedIn. But, if you paid close attention you likely heard something that gives you a way to connect with them again.

Cordell M. Parvin built a national construction practice during his 35 years practicing law. At Jenkins & Gilchrist, Mr. Parvin was the Construction Law Practice Group Leader and was also responsible for the firm's attorney development practice. While there he taught client development and created a coaching program for junior partners. In 2005, Mr. Parvin left the firm and started Cordell Parvin LLC. He now works with lawyers and law firms on career development and planning and client development. He is the co-author of *Say Ciao to Chow Mein: Conquering Career Burnout* and other books for lawyers. To learn more visit his Web site, www.cordellparvin.com or contact him at cparvin@cordellparvin.com.