



## Marketing, Managing and Growing a Profitable Law Firm

### 5 Tips To Maximize Your NACBA Convention Experience

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Why go to a NACBA convention? You can get the sessions on tape, pick up the materials and generally get the meat of all of the sessions. But is that the real reason you go to these things?

This coming weekend in San Francisco the National Association of Consumer Bankruptcy Attorneys will be holding their annual convention in San Francisco. There's a good chance that you'll be there if you're a consumer bankruptcy attorney.

I'm excited to go to the convention this year, as I am each year. Not only because I'm going to be speaking and moderating a panel on violations of the automatic stay and discharge injunction with Chuck Newton and Pete Barry (though that's going to be very cool and informative), and not because of the infamous listserv party I am organizing with the folks at Hummingbird Credit Counseling (once again tons of fun).

The real reason I go to the NACBA convention is what goes on outside of the sessions.

Recently I listened to an episode of [Media Hacks](#) where this was called (by [CC Chapman](#), I think), "Hallway Magic."

Think about it for a minute. You travel across the country to go to a high-priced location, leaving your business and your family for a beautiful springtime weekend. You spend a ton of money on the convention, airfare, food, hotel and what-not.

The hallways are where the action is. It's where we bump into one another, catch up, shake hands, and connect in real life. We trade war stories, share tips for handling difficult situations, and gain guidance on a bunch of different levels. You realize you're not alone in what you do.

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You can't get that out of a book, and you can't even get it online. You need that real-time interaction, that connection with your colleagues. So here are my 5 tips on making the most of the NACBA convention.

1. **Dress For Comfort.** Little known fact for NACBA newbies is that we don't dress to impress - we dress for comfort. Some of us wear loud Hawaiian shirts (a certain [Detroit bankruptcy lawyer](#)) or shorts. As for me, I've been forced to retire my faded Napster t-shirt. If you put on a suit for any part of the weekend we will think you're from the federal government and are looking for people to randomly audit.
2. **State Breakfast.** Saturday morning will be a breakfast held to bring the members in each state together. Tables are set up with placards showing your state name, and your colleagues will be there to chat. Be there. Introduce yourself. Sit down and make some local friends - you never know when you're going to need coverage in court, or be in a position to help a colleague with a last-minute problem.
3. **Pick A Good Table.** Every year it's the same thing. People show up, dump their stuff at a chair, and then disappear. Don't do that. Pick a table and introduce yourself to the rest of the people there. Ask them where they practice, what kind of bankruptcy work they do, and learn about them. We all do the same thing, so why not take the time to learn about how others get their work done?
4. **Stop And Say Hello.** If you see someone you recognize, stop them and say hi. Bankruptcy lawyers are some of the friendliest people I've ever met, and none of them has such a big ego as to require you to bow and kiss their ring. We all want to help one another, and there's no better way to form a connection than to show your face.
5. **Hit the Hotel Bar At Night.** Even if you don't drink, there are always groups of us hanging out in the hotel bar during the evenings after dinner. Find an empty seat, introduce yourself and join the fun.

The bottom line is this - the real reason to be at the NACBA convention is what you learn from people in the trenches just like you. We all face the same problems, but operate largely in our own little worlds. Getting together and making a connection are the best ways to ensure your continued success as a consumer bankruptcy lawyer.

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[By the way, remember to enter the contest to win a copy of The Whuffie Factor by clicking here!](#)

The picture of me and [Charlotte bankruptcy lawyer Susanne Robicsek](#) was taken by [Sara Harrington](#).

*Photo courtesy of [yatoobin](#).*

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