



South Portland, Maine
207-221-3492

The Pros and Cons of Networking Opportunities

Community Organizations (Chambers of Commerce, Rotary, Kiwanis, etc.)

Upside: Attending community sponsored events is a good way to establish a local reputation and develop a local client base. It's also good for developing networking skills.

Downside: Local events may not be worthwhile if your client base is more regional and national rather than local.

Don't forget to... Arrive early and stay late to avoid cliques.

Cocktail Parties

Upside: The informal format allows for the most schmoozing opportunities.

Downside: Happy hour events tend to draw younger crowds, so don't plan to meet many decision makers at cocktail parties.

Don't forget to... Stand near the bar. You'll see everyone, eventually and many will congregate there.

Larger Social Events (Fund Raisers, Openings, Etc.)

Upside: These events tend to draw the wealthier, more senior level, connected people of the community.

Downside: People that attend the more exclusive social events tend to group with others who regularly attend these events. It can be difficult to break into the cliques unless you are part of the circuit.

Don't forget to... NOT talk business at these non-business events until invited to do so. While networking isn't limited to official networking events, trying to talk business with someone before you have earned their trust or their invitation will do more to hamper your efforts than help.

Breakfast Events

Upside: Early-morning events are popular with the decision makers who tend to start earlier in the day. (If you want to catch them on the phone call them between 7:00 and 8:00 a.m. or 5:00 and 6:30 p.m. You'll be surprised how often they will pick up the phone.)

Downside: Breakfasts are often sit-down affairs without much time for working the room.

Don't forget to... Snag a seat at the table where your desired contact is sitting. Remember your objective. Be smart, Be Bold and go for it.

Trade Association

Upside: Trade events draw a high concentration of like-minded businesspeople.

Downside: Competition can be stiff and people “on guard” for the rabid Booth vendors.

Don't forget to... Get the pre-package to the event or call the event coordinators ahead of time to find out as much as possible about the other people expected to attend, including names of specific companies and executives.