

Holiday Networking

By [LawVision](#) on December 12, 2013

Along with the holiday season comes the omnipresent holiday gatherings. Many of these gatherings can be fruitful networking events; particularly client or association events. Now, I'm not suggesting that you ruin the spirit of the holiday by attending these events with only the notion of business development in mind. However, I am suggesting that you not ignore this opportunity altogether. If you choose the latter, a couple of points to remember include:

- **Be realistic about what networking success is in this environment.** Although the ultimate goal is a mutually beneficial business relationship, there are many ways to measure business development success; particularly in a setting such as this. You should keep in mind that success is "moving the ball down the field." This could mean engaging in a deep business discussion with an individual who was so compelled with your "verbal business card" that they wanted to bear their business soul to you; it could mean an agreement by an interested decision-maker to get together in the coming weeks or; success could simply be an expressed willingness to make an introduction to someone for you. Any and all of these fall under the heading of business development success.
- **Be mindful (and respectful) of the fact that others are there to have a good time as they celebrate the holiday.** Don't force a deep business conversation. If the person keeps asking questions, then certainly don't cut them off and run away, but be cognizant that your attentive listener has likely come to the party to reconnect with people they know and to have a good time. Don't keep them from that. However, before you let them off the hook, tell them that you would like to get together in the coming days/weeks to share some insights that may be valuable to them, and ask them if they'd be open to it. If the answer is yes, then simply say that you'll "follow up next week to get some time on the calendar." Then, drop it and move on.
- **Prepare in advance of the gathering.** Sometimes this simply isn't possible, but to the degree that you can find out who is going to be in attendance and the more that you can know about their company/industry/personal life the more productive you will be. In many parties like this, knowing who you might run into isn't always predictable. Nonetheless, the more that you do prepare, the more confidence you'll have resulting in more people gravitating to you. Your "preparation" could be as simple as signing into LinkedIn to make a mental note of relationship connections that you have with attendees that you know will be there. It makes for a good conversation starter.
- **Relax and enjoy yourself.** This should not conjure up visions of a lampshade on a head or dancing on tables, but the more relaxed you are, once again, the more likely people are going to gravitate to your circle. By increasing the number of people with whom you interact, the more likely you will put yourself in a position to have casual conversations that turn into business relationships.

Have fun, be safe, happy holidays, and the best of luck with networking at your next holiday party.