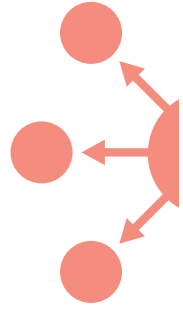
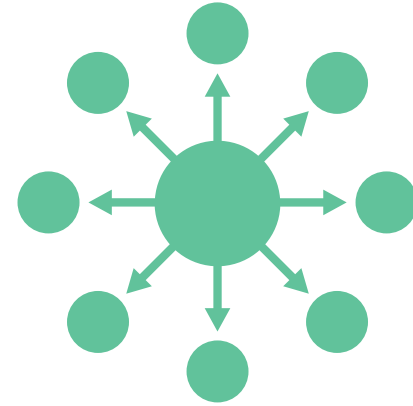
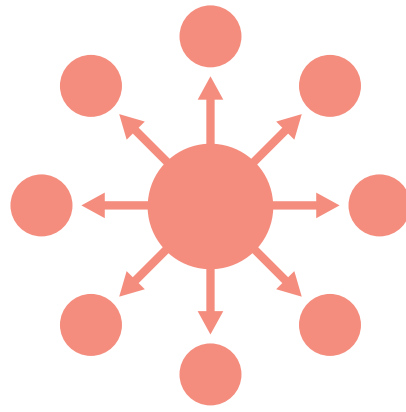
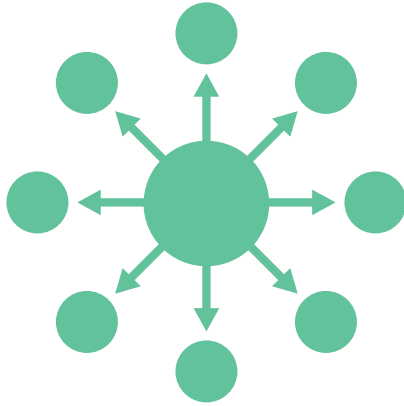


## NETWORKING



# Networking Know-How

## Are you doing enough to sustain your business?

By Angela Zaltsman

I have been planning events ever since I can remember. For most of my 22-year career, I have been planning events and booking business for others. For the last six years, I have been doing it for myself.

There is not much of a difference between looking for business for a hotel or venue, and looking for business for myself. Then, I'd sit for hours creating a marketing plan (a job requirement), I would hit the pavement and sell the venue, join an association, go to a board of trade meeting, pick up the phone and cold call. Now, I do all of that (although the marketing plans are less detailed) and make sure that I stay on top of my CMP (Certified Meeting Professional) certification, go to educational seminars and stay active on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Twitter and maybe even YouTube one day. . . .and so much more!

### NOW BACK TO BASICS.....

Let's start old school, with hitting the pavement and knocking on doors. Paul Verciglio, for those of you who remember him, was my general manager during my Park Hyatt days. He used to say that if the phone isn't ringing, you had better start making calls so that it will start ringing.

### TIME TO GET SOCIAL

I have made many warm and valuable connections over my years of working for others and for myself. If you don't yet have the right connections, knocking on doors is one way to meet new people and to sell yourself. These days, you don't even need actual doors to knock on. Social media is a fantastic entry tool. Familiarize yourself with social media sites. I recommend that you join one or two and that you keep your profile up to date.

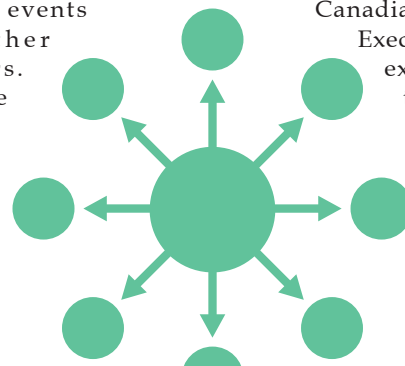
My favorite way to develop new business is to meet people at networking events. I don't expect to meet 50 people when I attend an event; I just want to meet one or two. If I can walk away with two business cards, I consider the event a networking success. I also go to networking events attended by other meeting planners. Other planners have reached out to me to help them with their events, or to give me business

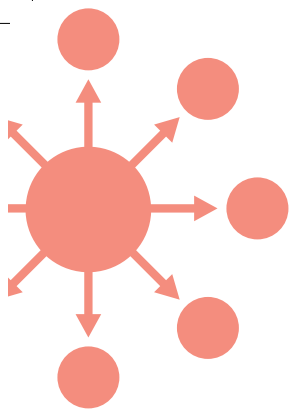
because they were unavailable and wanted to refer their client to a reputable alternate planner.

### AUTHENTICITY RULES

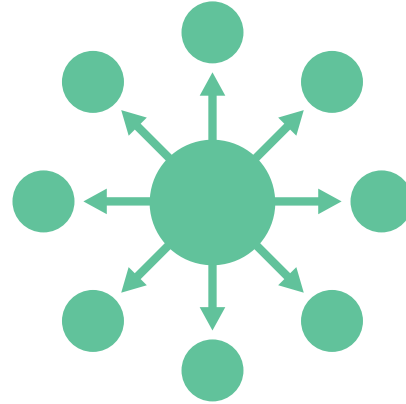
When I attend a networking event, I stick to being myself. I don't believe there is much to gain by pretending to be someone I'm not, simply in order to suit my audience. Remember, people don't always do business because of price; they do business with people they like and trust (another piece of advice from Paul!). I want to convey honesty and integrity and so far, that has been working for me.

Pick a networking event you believe your potential clients will attend. For example, if you wish to focus on the association market, you could join the Canadian Society of Association Executives. Developing niche expertise could allow you to become a specialized planner in your preferred area. Boards of trade offer great opportunities





## NETWORKING



to meet contacts and to build future business. It takes time, though! Don't give up after a year of membership. Business doesn't always come right away. The benefits you will derive from any membership or group will reflect the time and effort that you invest. Stay focused, stay patient and stay put.

### HEAD BACK TO SCHOOL

A client recently gave me a wonderful suggestion for how to be more visible in the charitable sector. As I have many clients in this area, she suggested that I take some courses and learn more about it. Now what a great idea – imagine me sitting in a classroom full of potential clients, while learning more about the clientele I would like to service more. I am definitely going to add that to my marketing plan.

Finally, in the words of a wise friend, you are only as good as your last event. Never forget the power of word-of-mouth. The best way to keep and to get more business is through the events you actually do. There are 200-1,000 potential clients or more, watching how you delivered at the event they attended. You will be remembered (for better or for worse) at every event you do, and at every function you attend. So do a great job, impress everyone, make your client look good and sweat the small stuff, so your client doesn't have to. ■

*Angela Zaltsman, CMP, is the driving force behind A to Z Event Management Inc. She has over 20 years of experience in event planning, sales and food and beverage. A to Z Event Management Inc. offers personalized service and creative, out-of-the-box solutions – a planning firm dedicated to the process of client satisfaction, of understanding client needs and of creating value-driven events through integral relationships with suppliers. For more information, visit [www.atozeventmanagement.ca](http://www.atozeventmanagement.ca) or contact Angela at [info@atozeventmanagement.ca](mailto:info@atozeventmanagement.ca); telephone 416-551-7441.*



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