



AND THE ART OF LEGAL NETWORKING

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INSIGHTS & COMMENTARY ON
*Relationship Building
within the International
Lawyers Network*

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The Value of Conference Networking

BY LINDSAY GRIFFITHS ON MARCH 24, 2016



Next week, I'm heading to Tokyo for our Asia Pacific Regional Conference, and the following week, I'll be off to Austin for the Legal Marketing Association's Annual Meeting (and yes, I'm running my half-marathon in between those two, in a city that is not my home). Because of this, I've got conference networking on the brain. Much of what I want to say about conference networking I've already said here at Zen, so instead of

rehashing it, I want to round-up some of my favorite posts and advice for networking at conferences right here for you. I'm also throwing in a couple of posts related to general networking, and adding in how you can apply the advice to conferences:

Networking Hacks from Undergrads

The two tips in here are to embrace Facebook (really, social media in general) and that business cards are back. In terms of social media, you want to be using this before, during and after a conference – before the conference, use the tips suggested in the post to find and connect to the speakers and attendees at the event that you'd like to meet, and set up networking opportunities. While things can happen organically, wouldn't you rather make sure that you didn't leave them up to fate? During the conference, do the same. When you meet someone, or see a speaker that you like, add them to your LinkedIn connections with a personalized note reminding them of your connection or complimenting them about something that they said. After the conference, add anyone that you missed and arrange to follow up with them where appropriate. Ensure that you have plenty of business cards with you, that they're up to date with your current information, and are memorable – people were clamoring for my unique cards at the recent awards ceremony I went to in London, even though they were already members of a competing network.

Networking SUCKS. Now what?

It's only the end of the first quarter, and it feels like conference and networking season is just getting underway. But that doesn't mean that networking burnout doesn't happen to the best of us. So remember that when you're feeling like networking sucks, there are things that you can do. If you've been good and making yourself meet new people at the conferences you're attending, you can periodically give yourself permission to spend time with the people you know and like – there is value in renewing the relationships that you already have, as long as you don't ONLY spend your time with those people. Take a break from all of the hustle and bustle from the conference and head to the nearest Starbucks for the morning coffee break, or get out of the hotel for lunch instead of joining everyone else. You'll feel like you're playing hooky, and you are, but it may refresh you enough to jump back in for the next round of networking with a better attitude. And consider revamping your elevator speech before you get to the conference – read the tips in the accompanying post to give yourself some new ideas on how to describe what it is you do every day. Also check out the link to the conversation starters in the post that may save you when you're running out of new things to talk about!

The Unconventional Guide to Networking

This post is also about changing up your networking, and it may make things more like a game for you. You can network by characteristic (pick everyone in the room wearing a red shirt for example (especially since in the legal industry, we know how many people are likely to show up in black!)) or you can find a friend, and use them to network by courses during meals or by proxy (acting as your friend's networking wingman or

woman). It adds another element to your networking that may help break you out of a rut, and will also make you more memorable to the people that you're meeting!

Let's Be a Little More International in Our Networking

Whether you're traveling to a foreign country, or even visiting another state, it's a good thing to remember that cultures are different everywhere, and that will have an impact on our networking. I'm particularly sensitive to this as I travel to Japan, but it's just as important when traveling to the LMA conference where we welcome delegates from around the country and the world. There are some things to keep in mind, including the idea of doing your homework about the individual, the business, and the place that you're visiting, learning how to build trust through personal connections, creating relationships instead of trying to make a sale, being clear and concise, and not assuming – particularly not assuming that we have the answers or know the best, or only, way to do something. Read on to get the full commentary on this subject.

And some tried and true helpful networking tips, advice, and experience:

- [Dos and Don'ts of Conference Networking](#)
- [Two for Tuesdays: Pro-Networking in 2015](#)
- [Two for Tuesdays: Networking Mistakes](#)
- [Two for Tuesdays: Networking Negatives](#)
- [Two for Tuesdays: Start Your Networking BEFORE a Conference](#)
- [Best Practices in Effective Conference Networking: Don't Skip Anything](#)
- [Let's Get Networking!](#)
- [Two for Tuesdays: Post-Conference Networking](#)
- [Two for Tuesdays: Networking Follow-Up](#)
- [Wondering Wednesdays: Networking Dos and Don'ts](#)
- [Five Tips for Networking Success](#)
- [Networking Tips for Lawyers](#)