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# A GIFT FROM THE SAN ANTONIO PROFESSIONAL COACHES

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*This month's technique*

## ***Ten Great Ways to Make the Most of a Networking Event***

***Offered by:***

Leslie Cardinal, PCC

Email: [Leslie@LeslieCardinal.com](mailto:Leslie@LeslieCardinal.com)

Website: [www.LeslieCardinal.com](http://www.LeslieCardinal.com)

Networking Events are a great place to meet people and attending them can be a strong part of your marketing strategy. It is not enough just to attend the events though. To get the best results for your networking time and money, consider the following tips.

1. Whenever possible, arrange your schedule so that you can go early to the networking meeting, or so you can stay late, or both. As long as you have taken the time to go to the meeting and have paid to attend, you might as well get as much benefit from it as possible. By being there early or late, you have time to meet and talk at greater depth with several additional people.
2. Take lots of business cards to the meeting with you, far more than you think you will need. Bring brochures or flyers if you have them for your business. Bring a pen and folio with a tablet with you too, in case you hear ideas or resources that you want to remember later.
3. Bring a door prize to contribute if the networking event includes a door prize drawing. Be creative—a door prize does not have to be expensive. It can be a gift certificate, a small product, a small box of candy or snacks, a promotional-type product. Include your business card with the gift. This is another good opportunity to make your business visible.
4. Look around for people who may be attending the event for the first time. Take the first step to welcome them. Introduce yourself and then introduce them to other people around you. Invite them to come back for another meeting. Wear a name tag, if you have one, and wear it high on your right shoulder so that it is easy to read.
5. You may want to set an intention to meet and talk at a bit more depth with fewer people rather than trying to meeting everyone in the room. It will be easier to follow-up and cultivate a relationship because you have begun the process at the meeting. If you are attending the meeting with a friend or colleague, split up and circulate in different parts of the room. Ask the people you meet for two cards and share the extra one with your partner later. This will help to maximize the total number of people you meet.



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(Page Two)

6. Choose something easy to eat and drink. Remember your primary goal is to meet and talk with people, and the food is secondary. If you must stand and carry a drink, hold it in your left hand so that your right hand is free for handshakes.
7. Be ready with a ten to thirty second introduction. Tell people the type of people you work with and the kinds of challenges you help them with. As you meet others, ask them what type of person is a good referral for them and what types of problems or challenges they help people solve. Listen attentively, without letting your eyes roam around the room.
8. Visit a variety of events, to meet a wide range of people. Choose events that people in your target market are likely to attend. Choose events that are easy to get to and that fit well with your schedule. You will be more likely to attend them regularly. You may eventually want to select a handful of events that you enjoy attending, and attend them regularly. If possible choose events that have a good mix of people who attend often as well as newcomers. You will become a "regular" and at the same time you can still meet a variety of new people.
9. At the event, listen for several things in addition to looking for people who may be good prospects for your business. Listen for ideas, helpful resources, services you need for your business, and resources and services that would be helpful to your clients or prospects. Whenever possible help connect people at the meeting with other people at the meeting who might be helpful to them. Praise the person or their products and services whenever possible.
10. After the meeting, think about the people you met or spoke with. Jot notes on their business cards that will help you to remember them. Choose three or four people that you felt a good connection with and follow-up with them. Send a card, make a phone call, or send an email. By choosing just a handful of people, the task of following up is more manageable and enjoyable.

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