

# **How To Work A Room**

**presented by Jim Hollis**

Based on the book by Susan RoAnne

## **How To Work A Room**

The Ultimate Guide to Savvy Socializing  
in Person and Online

# Networking

- Conventionally, Networking is connecting with others for mutual benefit and enjoyment.....a win-win scenario. However, the win-win scenario conveys the concept of keeping score. “I did that for you; now you owe me.”
- Consider....Networking as connecting for the benefit and enjoyment of others. Expect nothing in return. Focus only on the needs of others. Your needs will be met.
- Networking is a journey; not a destination.....not an objective. Networking should be your paradigm, the way you live life.

# Working a Room

- Mingling, connecting, being memorable.....
- The ability to circulate comfortably and graciously throughout a gathering of people;
- Meeting, greeting, and talking with as many of the attendees as you can;
- Creating warm and sincere communication;
- Establishing sincere rapport upon which to build a personal and/or professional relationship;
- Knowing how to initiate, continue, and end lively and interesting conversations.

If others can tell that you  
are working the room.....  
you are doing it wrong!!!

**The Roadblocks:**

**Why We Hate To Go**

# Roadblock #1

## Don't Talk To Strangers

- Parental imprinting for children.
- Effective, appropriate for children.
- A roadblock, hindrance for adults.

## Roadblock #2

# Wait to be Properly Introduced

- The Scarlett O'Hara Syndrome

# Roadblock #3

## Don't be Pushy

- The Polite Posey Syndrome
- Good things come to those who wait....NOT!!!
- Good things come to those who INITIATE!!!!
- Don't have to be pushy, obnoxious to be proactive, demonstrate initiative.



# Roadblock #4

## **Better Safe Than Sorry**

- Reaching out to others, risking rejection is scary.
- The Wallflower Syndrome - low profile; shadows
- Siamese Twin Syndrome – safety; familiarity

# Roadblock #5

## **Mangled and Mixed Messages**

- Ineffective communication; Mis-interpreted signals; unintended signals.
- Self-perception; self-confidence; self-esteem....  
or lack thereof

# The Remedies:

## Removing the Roadblocks

# Remedy #1

## Redefine the Term “Stranger”

- Adopt “No Strangers” perspective; only friends you haven’t yet had the pleasure of meeting; look forward to that pleasure with excited anticipation.
- Focus on common ground that brings you together – a basis for connecting, conversation.

# Remedy #2

## Develop a Self-introduction

- 3 – 9 seconds....ONLY!!!....not an elevator spiel.
- Think Velcro.....offer a hook for other person's loop to connect with; highlight common ground.
- Adjust for the specific circumstances.
- End with an open-ended question.
- Think tennis.....serve and volley; object is not to win, but keep the conversation ball in play.

- Hi. I'm Jim Hollis. I played 3<sup>rd</sup> base in a money ball league with the groom. How do you know the couple?
- Hello. I'm Jim Hollis. This is my first meeting. I'm trying to learn the ropes. How do these events go?
- Hello. I'm Jim Hollis. I first met Ron and Sandy at Devil's Tower in Wyoming during a week Harley trip to Sturgis. How do you know them?
- Hi. I'm Jim Hollis. I'm a problem solver for business.....the Extra Strength Excedrin for business headaches. What business are you in?

## Remedy #3

# Move from “GUEST” TO “HOST” Behavior

- Guest relies on others to make them comfortable.
- Host makes others comfortable.
- When you focus on others' comfort more than your own, your self-consciousness disappears. You become memorable.
- Think Nike....Just Do It!!!! Don't wait, Initiate!!!

## Remedy #4

### **Eject the “Rejecter” .... And Move On**

- Fear of rejection can be a self-fulfilling prophecy.
- Sticks & stones.....; rejection can't hurt me.
- Rejecter may pre-occupied, focused elsewhere.
- Be gracious, polite, and warm, but move on.
- It's the Rejecter's loss; don't waste your time.



# Remedy #5

## Clarify Messages Sent

- Full time message streaming; communication is complex.
- Communication is 55% visual; 38% vocal; 7% words.
- Consider dress, body language, voice, words, gender, religion, ethnicity, touch, background, position, culture, others' agendas,.....
- Practice good manners and etiquette.
- Don't mix professional and personal agendas.
- You are known by association....be selective.

- Easier to stay home; not risk rejection.
- Learn to approach every event with purpose and enthusiasm.
- Having fun and meeting new friends can be as valuable as striking deals.
- We all have something to contribute. List and review your experience, interests, preferences so you are comfortable in what you have to offer.
- Identify potential benefits before you go – personal and professional.

# Reasons to Attend Event

## **PROFESSIONAL**

- Assist others; give back
- Be perceived as a leader, in control, connected....
- Expand resource base, potential clients
- Gain insight; learn new information
- Increase business opportunities
- Differentiate yourself
- Be positively memorable
- Have FUN

## **PERSONAL**

- Assist others; give back
- Make others comfortable
- Build self-confidence
- Develop personal comfort
- Make new friends
- Pursue personal interests
- Acquire new knowledge
- Develop new interests
- Do a scary thing today
- Have FUN

# Chutzpah + Charm = Magic!!

## Chutzpah

- Desire to go
- Boldness to converse
- Courage to connect
- Cornerstone of confidence
- Intestinal fortitude
- (Traditional negative connotations – gall, rude, brassiness, intrusive, offensive)

## Charm

- Warmth
- Good Nature
- Positive attitude
- Good sense of humor
- Charisma
- Spirit
- Energy
- Enthusiasm
- Interest in others

- Be keenly aware of others' feelings, regardless of title or position.
- Remember the gatekeepers who influence decision makers. Also, today's gatekeeper may be tomorrow's decision maker.
- People remember people who make them feel special and comfortable; who are conversant; whose demeanor makes them smile.

# The Sleaze Factor

## How NOT to Work a Room

- Being obvious in working a room.
- Make others feel uncomfortable.
- Be self-absorbed.....I, me, me, I,.....
- Push their own agenda, product, or services.
- Drink too much.
- Tell off-color, inappropriate jokes.
- Have no interest in those who can't help them.
- Just work to make their contact quota.
- Make fun of others as a “conversation ploy”.
- Size up people based on “titles”.
- Looking beyond person to see who else is in the room.

# Prepare Before You Go

- Adopt a positive attitude.
- Identify benefits of the event.
- Take your business cards.
- Prepare for small talk.
- Make eye contact and smile.
- Practice your handshake.

# Strategies for Working a Room

- Plan your entrance
- Use the Buddy System
- Rescue a White-Knuckle Drinker
- Leverage name tags
- Develop name and face recall skills
- Practice great opening lines....simple works
- Joining in – breaking and entering
- Moving on – extricating yourself and others



# Plan Your Entrance

- Google directions to event to relieve stress.
- Be on time – avoid grand entrances; being a little early facilitates an informal host role.
- Walk well into the room....no wallflowers; don't block the entrance, don't monopolize greeter, registration area.
- Survey the layout – greeter/host, food, bar, registration, seating, tables, dance floor, restrooms, entertainment, name tag color conventions, special features,.....

# Use the Buddy System

- Arrive together to feel more comfortable.
- Introduce each other.....your own PR person; can flatter you in ways you cannot.
- Don't become Siamese Twins.
- Split up to meet twice as many people; introduce each other later.....host role.
- Develop a "Rescue Me" signal to extricate each other from boring, negative situations

# Rescue the Wallflowers and White-Knuckle Drinkers

- Be a host to persons standing alone; helps you mingle, meet newcomers, and connect; they will welcome the attention.
- When you focus on others' comfort more than your own, your self-consciousness disappears.
- You will become memorable.

# Leverage Name Tags

- Gives permission to address; offers an immediate connection; minimizes threat
- Use name; we all like to hear our name.
- Creating our own name tag gives latitude in providing memorable hook for others.
- Place name tag on right chest for highest visibility when shaking hands.
- Wear a name tag even at “no name tag” times..... read Hello, My Name Is Scott, by Scott Ginsberg, The Name Tag Guy.

# Forgotten Names and Faces

- Admit memory lapse.....with humor, smile.
- Offer your name to avoid other's memory lapse....make them comfortable.
- Slowly, clearly, distinctly pronounce your name.....give a hook for unusual names.
- Repeat other's name; assists memory; makes others feel important, respected.

# Great Opening Lines

- No Lounge Lizard, pickup openings.
- Simple works!!!
- Smile and make eye contact.
- Positive, upbeat, enthusiastic, energetic.
- Provide hook around common link – event, organization, view, venue, food; avoid negative, too personal insight.
- Use Observe, Reveal, Ask Technique.

# Joining In – Breaking and Entering

- Include versus intrude.
- Note body language and verbal tone for clues whether to approach or pass.
- Select groups of 3 or more having fun.
- Position near group periphery.
- Give only warm, positive, open body language signals.....no verbal interruptions.

# Joining In – Breaking and Entering

(Continued)

- Only when group member invites via verbal, eye, or physical gesture, are you free to join.
- Smile, greet, confirm permission to join.
- BRIEFLY acknowledge current topic.
- Do not change the topic.
- Do not hi-jack, monopolize the conversation.



# Joining In – Breaking and Entering

(Continued)

- Be open to inviting others into group – makes you memorable for being gracious.
- Don't interrupt a member's comments.
- At a lull, step back to widen circle, welcome, greet, receive the newcomer.

# Conversation Interrupters

- Be gracious, but firm.
- Acknowledge the person, by name if possible.
- Smile. (You can say almost anything to almost anyone without offending if delivered with a warm smile.)
- Thank person for saying “Hello”.
- Indicate your need to complete your current discussion....”With your permission,....”
- Convey that you will catch up with them shortly.

# Moving On - Extricating Yourself and Others

- Not rude to move on; you are expected to mingle and circulate.
- Dwell only 7-9 minutes maximum; may return later.
- Always personally thank the formal host or whoever is in charge before you leave.
- Avoid lengthy exits – when ready to leave – **LEAVE!!!**

# Moving On - Extricating Yourself and Others

## Extrication Strategies

- Exit One – at break; extend your hand/offer wave gesture; say great talking; smile; go.
- Exit Two – if with a bore or closed person, say “I hope you enjoy the event”; smile; go....move at least  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the room away.
- Exit Three – Be a host; “rescue” another of the group along with yourself; say “Excuse me, I’d like to introduce Joe to Hank over there”. Your kindness will be memorable.

# Keys to Lively Conversation

**Conversation changes the course of history.**

- Sincere interest in people - most important characteristic of a good communicator.
- Enthusiasm is contagious.
- Be in the moment; not mentally distracted.
- Small talk is not small.....builds big business, strong relationships.
- Information is power.
- Use humor.....prudently.
- Listen actively.

# Prepare for Conversation

- Read newspaper daily – all sections.
- Read newsletters, professional journals,...
- Take notes, record, clip and collect.
- Monitor current fads for awareness.
- Use humor.
- Observe other good conversationalists.
- Learn to listen and comprehend.
- Practice, Practice, Practice.

# Humor

- Humor is the Soul of Life.
- Just let go. He who laughs.....LASTS!!!!!!
- No Hillary cackles....record, listen to your laugh.
- Humor is the quality of being funny; having the ability to perceive, enjoy, and convey that which is widely received as funny by others.
- Critical that it be appropriate, tasteful, timely.
- Learn to laugh at ourselves, or we will miss most of the humor in life.
- Some just don't get it!!! Don't be that one.
- Practice, practice, practice.

# Active Listening Skills

- Eye contact.....not deranged serial killer stare.
- Nodding.....acknowledgement, not “OFF”.
- Smile, laugh.....with, not at.
- Ask relevant questions; indicates interest.
- Make statements reflecting similar experiences; builds connections.
- Body language – open, receptive, positive.
- Bring the conversation full circle.....participate.



# Fatal Conversation Errs

- Lack of preparation
- Not being well read
- Overwhelming conversation - question barrage.
- Being a know-it-all.
- Being argumentative, complaining, neagative.
- Competing by one-upping others.
- Interrupting.
- Not listening.
- Putting down another individual.

# ETIQUETTE and MANNERS

- Etiquette – usages and rules for behavior in polite society, official, and professional life.
- Manners – wonderful combination of courtesy, caring, and common sense.
- Manners say volumes about us, our character. Manners and character are inseparable.
- Know and stay current with the constantly changing rules of etiquette.
- Observe the rules.
- Do so graciously.