



STOP GOING TO NETWORKING EVENTS AND GET MORE BUSINESS

A few days ago I returned from my annual National Speaker's Association (NSA) conference in Atlanta. The educational sessions were OK, the hotel was so-so, and the town was lacking in exciting things to do, but my experience was stellar. How is that possible?

Though I am often accused of being an extrovert, I consider myself quite introverted, as I truly dislike social events and networking gatherings where I am forced to meet new people and mingle with individuals whom I don't know. You know the feeling - that insecure child inside of you automatically assumes that you won't like anyone new and that they probably won't like you, either. It's simply safer to stick with people with whom you already have a relationship.

Of course, the adult inside knows that to grow as a person (and as a business), you must meet new people, network effectively, and experience new challenges. So, what do you do?

As an introverted defense mechanism, I learned that becoming involved with committees, task forces, and boards, I could meet a lot of people without the painfulness of cold networking. Joining committees provides the unique opportunity to hide behind the tasks of the group to meet others until you feel more comfortable and less socially awkward. It allows you to get to know someone well, while working together on a joint effort. What a concept!

My NSA convention was a huge personal and professional success because I am actively involved with one of the charitable events surrounding the organization. My involvement with this group gives me the avenue to meet people whom I would have never even met under normal convention circumstances.

Some of my closest friends, mentors, buddies, and clients have come into my life as a result of being an involved member of an organization. Though, of course, being involved often means giving up a significant portion of time working towards the greater good of the organization, but it provides a unique opportunity to meet people who can make a difference in your life.

So, if you are like me, and don't enjoy business card exchanges, networking events, baby showers, or standard social gatherings, then by-pass them all and join a committee or get on a board. It will be your quickest and most effective path to meeting people with whom you can connect personally and professionally.

It will impact your business and your life all while working on a worthwhile project. How fantastic is that?

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