

AFWPI Newsletter - 3rd Quarter 2003

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Ask Julia

by Julia Markel, Vice President,
[AFWPI](#)

When you started your business-or started in the wedding industry-chances are you didn't have a lot of formal training. That is not to say you haven't paid to learn-the "School of Hard Knocks" is an expensive education. And your education continues, even after you have been in the profession for 20+ years.

That's why we decided to start this column in the Professional Connection. You still have questions and we want to help you find the answers.

Our first question is from a photographer. He asks: "I sometimes work at a wedding all day without eating. I don't have time to run off and pick up food. How do I ask the caterer or facility if I can have something to eat?"

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No Nonsense Networking

Cost Effective Marketing

by Andre L. Beaudoin,
[AndreInspires.com](#)

Networking can be the most cost effective tool in a company's marketing program or a major waste of time and resources. Network and association meetings will fail to produce viable prospects unless attendees master and use essential techniques for making and managing new contacts. Showing up at meetings doesn't make you an effective networker any more than wearing a baseball uniform makes you a professional athlete.

Have a goal!

Measuring the success of your networking efforts is impossible without clearly defined objectives; You don't know if you've arrived if you don't know where you're going. Goals should be set for particular events as well as for bottom line results. Total dollars sold or number of sales made to prospects found through networking can serve as quarterly or annual objectives. New contacts made (business cards collected) may serve as a goal for a single event.

Before entering a room where people have gathered, you need to know what you want to accomplish. Are you there to find your next client? If so you're not networking, you're prospecting. Are you there to chat with people you haven't seen



Well, I asked one facility representative and he said, "Just ask." I consider that a nice gesture, and if you already have a good working relationship with them, just asking would probably work. However, I have a feeling it won't work at every facility or with every caterer.

While it may be considered bad form by some professionals, the practical way to handle this is to go through the bride. I'm not suggesting you ask her for a free meal—quite the contrary. You will be working for it. Make it part of your fees and include it in your contract.

You will want to explain to the bride (and/or groom), when they are booking your services, that part of what you will need is a quick meal break. You don't want to leave the wedding to go get food, so you'll ask that they order a meal for you from the facility or caterer. This is a part of what they will pay for your services.

If you feel uncomfortable asking the bride for the meal, remember that there is a reason labor laws require a meal break for employees who work six or more hours—if you're exhausted and hungry, you just can't do your best work.

If you have a question you would like answered, please email me at Julia@afwpi.com or send your question to

AfWPi
Ask Julia
2740 Arden Way Ste 100
Sacramento CA 95825

If you aren't comfortable at all asking the bride for a meal, contact the facility or caterer directly at least a week before the wedding. Ask if you may order one extra meal for that wedding and offer to pay for it.

since the last meeting? If so you're not networking, you're socializing. If you're there to make new contacts with people who are in some way connected to your ideal prospects, you're in the right mindset to do some "No Nonsense Networking."

Develop a plan!

Knowing what you want to achieve is only the first step. Designing a "Strategic Networking Plan" is the next. Your plan should include: the number and type of meetings you will attend each month, the number of contacts to be made at each meeting, a way to sort low- from high-potential contacts, the number of one-on-one meetings you will arrange with high-potential contacts, an agenda for one-on-one meetings, a system for following up with leads provided by your new contact, and a way of building relationships with the best of your high-potential contacts.

"Before entering a room where people have gathered, you need to know what you want to accomplish . . . If you're there to make new contacts with people who are in some way connected to your ideal prospects, you're in the right mindset to do some 'No Nonsense Networking.' "

Limit the number of meetings you attend to a useful level. If two meetings per month will provide the maximum number of new high-potential contacts you can follow up with within one or two weeks, attending a third meeting is a waste of time. Commissions are paid on dollars sold not on the number of business cards piled up on your desk. Your time is better spent developing a relationship with someone connected to your ideal prospect than meeting more people with whom you don't have time to talk.

Meet new contacts. Don't spend your time chatting with people you already know. Be prepared to introduce yourself effectively in 60 seconds or less. More important, have a prepared set of questions to ask people that will help you determine if they are high- or low-potential contacts. Many people are not prepared to explain who they are and what they do in an efficient manner. Having prepared questions allows you to control the conversation and find out what you need to know quickly and efficiently.

Determine who the high-potential contacts are, enter their data in your contact management system, and set up a one-on-one. This meeting should allow sufficient time to get to know each other and determine how you can be of mutual benefit. Some people prefer a breakfast or lunch meeting while others, including myself, prefer to meet at the contact's place of

My recommendations are meant for any professional who works at a wedding for six hours or more (including set-up).

One last suggestion is that you find a place away from the guests to enjoy your meal at the wedding. It just wouldn't be good manners to take a place at a table meant for a guest.

If you have a question you would like answered, please email me at Julia@afwpi.com or send your question to AFWPI, Ask Julia, 2740 Arden Way, Ste 100, Sacramento CA 95825. Please contact me, as well, if you have any comments or would like to add your suggestions to this issue's answer.

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Sun City Roseville Mixer Recap

by Ian M. Holt, Master Planner,
[Carriage Trade Floral & Special Events](#)

As usual, this crazy group had a great time on Thursday, October 2 at the Timber Creek Ballroom in Sun City Roseville.

Jenny Giallanza, the director of catering at Sun City Roseville was our gracious hostess and her terrific staff took very good care of us.

A special thank you goes out to Music on the Move for providing great music to network by, and to Darcie Wagner with Slip of Elegance for doing such a wonderful job decorating our chairs.

Our featured members of the evening, Acti-Video & DVD Productions, Sewing by Susan, and Beautiful Weddings and Events, provided excellent information

business. Visiting their business will often reveal more about them than can be discovered through discussion only.

Once a comfortable relationship is established and leads are offered or exchanged, act on them. All previous time has been wasted if you don't make use of the information you have. When possible arrange to have your new contact introduce you to the person he is referring you to. This can be done in person, over the phone, or with an introductory letter. This type of introduction adds the value of preferred status to a standard referral. Consider how you would react if a trusted vendor of yours called you to introduce someone he felt would benefit you verses receiving a call from a stranger saying that same vendor said he should give you a call.

Maintain and build the best relationships. Keep the people who supplied you with leads informed about what's happening. Get together periodically to compare notes and explore what additional contacts you can share. Never, never, forget to say thank you for a lead, regardless of the outcome.

Execute the plan!

Clear goals and a flawless plan have no value until the plan is executed, and quite often, modified to meet unanticipated circumstances. Get to the meetings. Meet new people. Set up some one-on-ones. Exchange leads. Follow up and repeat.

Like all skills, effective networking requires practice. Don't let limited success on your initial attempts defeat you. The more often you introduce yourself, the better you will become at it. The same is true for approaching new people, sorting out the best contacts, effectively developing relationships, and following through on opportunities.

Now you know what to do, make your next event productive by doing some "No Nonsense Networking."

Andre L. Beaudoin is a nationally recognized professional speaker and author who inspires organizations to exceed expectations. For additional information visit his website at www.AndreInspires.com or call 800-205-6958.

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and resources for us to utilize.

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Just a reminder to all of you who cannot attend this year's World Wedding Conference in Jamaica, the 2004 conference is going to be held in San Mateo. This means no excuses for not attending the excellent opportunity to learn and network.

We look forward to seeing everyone at Virga's Catering on November 6th, another opportunity for us to enjoy each other and a fun venue with terrific food.

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Conflict: A Pro's Approach

by
[Rev. Soleil Tranquilli](#)

It happens. Headbutting with a professional at a wedding. Sooner or later it's bound to happen in any event requiring 2 to 20 independent vendors to work together. We are all separate but equal, each jointly depending upon the other for a whole picture. This makes us coworkers, like it or not. What is the glue that makes for cooperation, communication, cohesion amongst us? How do we protect our resources of time, energy, creativity and professional honor in the face of contention?



Your best protection is your working contract. If there is a liaison between bride and vendors, a detailed written agreement should inform the coordinator of your job particulars. If there is no go between, Joel Gibson, bandleader for Springwater Express gives priceless advice for any relationship, "Don't play telephone with anyone, go directly to the source." Get a list of vendors and take care of details the bride can't know or even be aware of. Keep a record of contacts and verbal agreements, even sending out letters of confirmation to a vendor, taking care to include a "cc" to your client, the bride. Joel had his own brother John sign a contract when he agreed to bring the band for his wedding in Napa Valley. "Hey, we have other band members to be paid; we didn't charge John a travel fee and I didn't charge my own personal fee, we just wanted to be clear all around." You owe it to yourself and to your bride.

It's all about communication. On the wedding day, arrive early enough to connect with other professionals, better yet phone them weeks ahead to work out any questions or concerns. Special stresses like theme weddings, unusual traditions and locations require more communication and creativity amongst the chosen pros.

Lora Ward of A Day to Remember sees a wedding as a string of events. Each vendor is a lovely pearl carefully knotted into place on the strand. She suggests: "Acknowledge to yourself that each of us is a dedicated specialist his own field, and stay within your own area of expertise." Respect each other's professional ground, and tread lightly where the boundaries mesh, especially in cases where you may work in

close proximity and use the same resources, such as photographers and videographers. Ask appropriate questions, check out the timing needs of the others, then find your place on the string.

Assume the best, that we all wish to give our very best service, for our bride and groom, their families, and our ultimate client, our own personal sense of honor. This sets you up for winning both ways.

Be aware when you are angry or anxious. Irritation is like fire, easily fanned and spread, so keep it to yourself for the time being.

4th Quarter Events Calendar:

- October 28-2:30-4:30 p.m.
 - "Marrying Technology with Sales and Marketing"
 - seminar and trade show
 - The Sterling Hotel, 1300 H Street, Sacramento
- November 6-5:30-7:30 p.m.
 - "An Evening of Intrigue at Virga's"
 - monthly networking mixer
 - Virga's Cafe Americain, 1501 O Street (corner of 14th & O), Sacramento
- November 18-2:30-4:30 p.m.
 - "Personal Development"
 - seminar
 - location to be determined
- December 14-6:30-10:00 p.m.
 - Annual Christmas Dinner and Dance
 - DoubleTree Hotel Sacramento, 2001 Point West Way, Sacramento

A "time-out" in a quiet alcove could make the difference between raging ego wildfire or carefully banked passion for your work. Remember that worry and anger are real drains, a drag on your creative, professional and health energies.

Try to put ego and personality differences aside momentarily and do focus upon the wedding at hand-and your important part in making it happen beautifully. It may be easier for you and all involved to simply back off. Let the other person's momentum take them where it will and find your place again in the reshuffled string of events.

Make lemonade with your lemons-be creative when the chips are down, there is a gift within every challenge. Chances are, another bride will soon choose you to fill out her dream team of wedding professionals, and your difficult person is there too. Personally, I used a fussing vendor in the background as an excuse to cut a wedding ceremony short, making the decision literally in mid-sentence. The professional was stressing about time, and with a dangerously nervous groom on my hands, I decided to take matters into my own hands by leaving out a large portion of the ceremony. For me, I was having trouble separating from my co-worker's anxious presence in order to serve my couple, so I simply bowed to his needs and cut my own stress. A grateful groom sought me out later to fill me in on the nervous breakdown he narrowly escaped! And the worried vendor? Well, we still don't see eye to eye. I honor that he feels his job to be the most important part of the wedding day, he has to have this attitude in order to do his best work! I simply try not to be so affected by it whenever we work together.

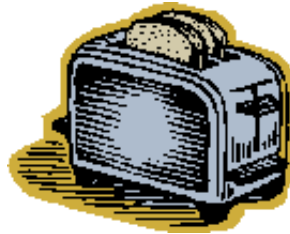
Follow-up: it's a lesson in personal responsibility. An incident has occurred. The question is: What is my part in this? Figure it out, own it and make amends the best you know how, honestly from the heart. Sometimes, if

your client has been involved, amends should be made with them also. No matter how the apology is received, you can see the gift in the situation, then let it go. Easier said than done, but this process can really free up your creative energy for your current projects and customers. There are no mistakes here, only results. Professionally or otherwise, if you don't like your results, then change your approach until you get what you like.

Weddings are a one shot event, we only have one chance to get it right, and our couples will remember our work forever, while any difficult circumstances behind the scenes will fall away from memory like dried petals from an old bridal bouquet.

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A Toast To . . .



Michelle Klaff, owner of Elegant Events, was recently upgraded from a Novice to a Consultant Level in the Association of Bridal Consultants. Michelle passed a series of tests, some with honors, to upgrade. Michelle started Elegant Events three years ago.

Dale Tomy, producer of Party & Wedding Faires in the East Bay and Central Valley, recently won the "Spirit of BSPI" award! This prestigious award is given by the Bridal Show Producers International only when they determine that someone has demonstrated the true spirit and ideals of this professional organization.

Rev. RoxAnn Conley, Marriage Minister, was awarded the title of "Certified Wedding Specialist[®]" by Weddings Beautiful Worldwide, after completion of comprehensive study and practical applications. "Certified Wedding Specialist[®]" is Wedding Beautiful Worldwide's highest recognition.

Acti-Video & DVD was awarded an "AEGIS" Award for its video production "Little Moments, Big Magic." The video was produced for the Non-profit organization "Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Sacramento." The "AEGIS" Award is the only national video competition that features actual peer judging by fellow directors, producers, writers, editors, cameramen and other professionals who work in the videography industry full time.

We are pleased to announce that Ian M. Holt of Carriage Trade Floral and Special Events has been awarded the title of Master Event Planner by the Disney Institute in Orlando Florida. This title is given to senior Walt Disney Company Cast members upon completion of 350 hours of site specific practical experience and 150 hours of class room time culminating in a written and oral exam. Only 5 MEP titles were awarded for calendar year 2003/2004.



Alterations

Rev. RoxAnn Conley, Marriage Minister has a new telephone number. The new number is (916) 780-WED-U (780-9338).

Something New

Celebrity Limousines acquired Players Limousine Service and Absolute Perfection Limousines from Mr. Larry Scott on May 1, 2003. Mr. Scott had been in business for 13 years.

Rollz Royce Limousine Service has grown in just 1-1/2 years from 2 vehicles to 17 and is now the nation's largest Rolls Royce vintage limousine service. They are the only vintage service that covers the entire state of California.

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A Mile in Your Shoes

by Joel D Canfield, President,
[Our Hearts Entwine](#)

This month's [article on conflict](#) raises an important issue: cooperation with our fellow wedding professionals.

Have you ever wished your fellow professionals could 'walk a mile in your shoes' and see just what it takes for you to deliver the level of professionalism we all like to be known for? While it's not feasible for us all to swap sentences of indentured servitude, wouldn't it be nice if we could still benefit from exposure to other disciplines and trades within the wedding industry?

Here's your chance.

The Association for Wedding Professionals, International, would like your help in conducting a slightly experimental research program to allow each of us the opportunity to share what we do to make each wedding a special event. Here's how it works: our assigned correspondent (me) will assist you in whatever manner seems reasonable during an upcoming event, and then write an article to appear in an upcoming issue of the AfWPi newsletter.

Because each discipline is unique in many ways, some up-front planning will help make each 'research project' a success. Our goal is not to learn all the details, but to get a flavor for what it's like to be you for one day; the little frustrations, the obstacles to overcome, the feeling of triumph when it all comes off just as you planned.

Think of it: free publicity, free slave labor, and perhaps a bit more empathy from your fellow professionals. What more could you ask for?

If you're interested in participating or would like more information, please contact me directly by e-mail:

Joel D Canfield
joel@ourheartsentwine.com