



May 2011

Golden Nuggets of Networking Wisdom

By Bruce Libman

**This month's Golden Nugget comes from an excerpt from the book,
*Total Networking Success A – Z.***

Bruce is the author of *Total Networking Success A – Z*, which can be purchased from
Amazon.com or the
CFL website: www.clientsforlifeconsulting.com

Alphabet for Networking Success

“H”

is for The Hired Help

In Chapter 8, we discussed the importance of arriving at networking events early, rather than “on time.” Among other pluses, your early arrival, particularly at an event you haven’t attended before, gives you the chance to meet the event sponsor(s), director, and other group leaders who should be there to greet the first arrivals.

But we know one Total Networker, a real estate executive, who arrives for events even before they start. She uses the time to speak to the people she says are just as important as the attendees... the employees who will be working at the event.

She tells us it’s a simple process:

“Most events are held at hotels or restaurants where networking sessions are almost an everyday occurrence. Employees see networkers coming and going throughout the week and have more insight into the various groups than you might think.



May 2011

“The first thing I do is go to the front desk of the hotel or to the maitre d’ and ask how I get to the room where the meeting is being held (even if I know where it is). Then I ask an innocuous question like, ‘Do these things get crowded?’ Answers could range from ‘not like that Wednesday group’ to ‘they seem pretty popular’ to ‘I never noticed.’

“Popular is good, never noticed isn’t good but that Wednesday group is the one I want to know more about. So I ask him about them.

“Once I get to the meeting site, I greet whoever has arrived sooner than I did (hardly anyone or I’m late). Then I talk to the people who are wheeling in the coffee urns and donuts. ‘It must get pretty noisy in here,’ I might say to one of them. A positive answer or nod is good, a shrug of the shoulders is neutral, a ‘sometimes’ or ‘not really’ is bad. And they’re uncannily accurate.

“The best people to speak with, of course, are the evening bartenders. They hear the best conversations. And, based on liquor volume and a simple comment or two (‘going to be a busy night for you, I bet’), they can tell you a lot about the group. Too much drinking, and it usually turns out I’m at a party, not a networking event. Too much bitching and moaning at the bar and I could be in for a long night of limited possibilities (ducking out early is allowed).

“The same two or three people at the bar the entire time add up to two or three people I don’t want to meet. An empty bar once the session begins, tells me this is a serious group of people who are there for serious reasons. It’s the kind of event I want to be at.

“The people who work these events may look (and be) bored, but you’d be surprised what they pick up week after week and session after session. I had one waiter tell me what a great speaker would be there that night. He was right. Why wouldn’t he be? Who would know more about these things? These men and women are practically professional networking goers.”