



SEPTEMBER 2012

Issue No. 87

OREGON ATTORNEY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Welcome, Law Students

IN SIGHT for Oregon Lawyers and Judges

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF YOUR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE

INTROVERT'S SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR NETWORKING EVENTS

I'll admit it – networking is one of my least favorite parts of my job. I wish everyone just knew who I was, thought I was fabulous, and that my phone was ringing off the hook with more business than I can handle. Unfortunately, that's not the case. So every week I attend two to four networking events – even though casual chit-chat with strangers over mini appetizers is not necessarily my favorite way to spend an evening.

As an Introvert, You're in Good Company

Despite the fact that I'm a professional public speaker, I'm a big introvert. I dislike attending most events that involve large crowds because they make me feel claustrophobic. I am uncomfortable at events that are so crowded that you have to yell to be heard by the person next to you. When business groups try to entice me by telling me over 1,500 people will attend their event, I cringe. I take comfort from reminding myself that I'm not the only person who feels this way.

As a business owner, it's important to make connections within my community. Here are some of the lessons I've learned that help me navigate networking events as an introvert.

1. If the event room is loud and crowded, head for the hallway. You will find your fellow introverts there, enjoying their space and speaking at a normal volume for conversation.

2. If the event has an educational component, go to it. It will give you a smaller group to start with and a basis for starting conversations.

3. Go to events for business professionals, not just for lawyers. Lawyer groups can lead to referrals, but business groups will put you directly in front of potential clients.

4. Attend groups and events that interest you. When you're comfortable, you'll be more effective at networking. When you go to events that interest you, you'll be more likely to meet people who are like-minded and more likely to hire you.

5. Don't be afraid to branch out beyond the traditional networking events. Some networking groups do more unusual things like go-carts instead of happy hours. You can also network at sci-fi conventions, hiking groups, and book clubs.

6. Go to lunch and breakfast events. You might be more comfortable talking to people over a meal with your hands occupied with silverware. These events tend to be smaller, too.

7. Give yourself permission to leave early. It's okay to set a goal for the number of contacts you want to make and leave once you achieve it.

If you're ever uncomfortable at an event and you want to leave, it's okay. You can always say you have another event to attend. No one has to know that the appointment is with your family, a book, or your pillow.

RUTH CARTER

THE CARTER LAW FIRM

The author's weekly blogs can be read

OREGON ATTORNEY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

503-226-1057
1-800-321-OAAP
www.oaap.org
Helping lawyers and judges for over 30 years

- Alcohol & Chemical Dependency
- Career Change & Transition
- Gambling Addiction
- Mental Health
- Procrastination & Time Management

A free, nonprofit, confidential program for you.

at www.UndeniableRuth.com This post appeared in The Daily Dispatch, published by Attorney at Work, June 20, 2012 (www.attorneyatwork.com). Reprinted with permission.