



Officer Outlook

The Art of Networking

If you are not an extrovert, and feel awkward in social arenas, then you probably shouldn't be in the hospitality field. That being said, even those of us who are very comfortable in social situations may find it difficult to network, and even view it as not genuine.

However, today, networking is necessary. Research shows that professional networking leads to increased job and business opportunities, as well as quicker advancement in the workplace. By nurturing professional relationships, you will more than likely see an increase in the excellence of your work, and ultimately, your job satisfaction. This is known as *Operational Networking*, connecting with people you need to accomplish your assigned routine tasks. It's important to build strong working relationships with those who can assist you in your job. An operational network can stretch far and wide to include peers, and outside distributors, clients and suppliers. This type of networking helps to ensure that everyone is on board to get a job done, as in membership retention. I am sure we can all relate to that.

Networking doesn't have to be just professional....every day, I take the commuter rail to work. It's about a 45 minute ride, depending on which station I use. This is nothing new for me...I have been riding public transportation all my working years. You see the same folks all the time, and for me, it's just natural to smile and say hello. I talk to everyone. I can tell you, I have cultivated some of my best friendships with folks on the train...this is the truth. They are my "train gang"...we socialize for birthday dinners, holiday dinners, and celebrate distinct moments in everyone's life, i.e. weddings, grandchildren, deaths, etc. This is an example of *Personal Networking*...like-minded people outside your organization who can help you with personal advancement. I don't view my friends as an avenue to personal advancement, however, I can say that my friends have offered different viewpoints on situations that I would have never thought of. We all have situations where outside advice can be very helpful.

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