

Networking Comfort

By Jeffrey M. Baill, Yost & Baill, LLP



At the recent Litigation Skills and Management Conference, a survey was conducted of the attendees to discover why they chose to attend the event. Of all the potential responses, the one that was chosen by the most people who participated in the survey: networking. I thought it might be valuable to explore what exactly that means.

The best definition I found for networking is: “interact with other people to exchange information and develop contacts, especially to further one's career.” How does exchanging information and making contacts further one's career? I have always suggested that each of us brings more value to the entities we work for by knowing as many people as possible. People are the single greatest resource to make you more valuable to your employer. The contacts you make are gateways to information that may help you solve the kinds of issues you face every day at work. Every person you connect with at a conference, including the speakers, are a gift that keeps on giving. Whether you are looking for legal theories to complex problems, new experts on esoteric issues, attorneys in new jurisdictions, all of these issues may be resolved by meeting key people at a conference.

I think the value of meeting people is especially true in the field of subrogation. We are in a very unique and esoteric industry. We do things that very few other people do. It is difficult to imagine going to an event at home where I will meet someone who provides value to my work life. When those of us in the Subrogation

world gather, we are truly in unique company. Everyone we meet has something special to offer in regards to our field. I don't care whether you are in insurance professional, attorney, expert, or other vendor, you all bring something special to the table that may help someone else at the event.

In addition to information, there is a different value to the networking that takes place at a NASP event; comradery. We work in a very distinct and complex world. I find it incredibly motivating to spend time with other people who work in our world. I have said that going to our conferences is a little bit like going back to summer camp. You see friends that you only get to see in person once or twice a year. This entirely human connection is very powerful. Just watching from a distance as people arrive at our event and greet people they have not seen in awhile is fun to watch.

I believe it is important for people working in an industry that very few people understand to gather and share their work experiences. It is uplifting to hear that you are not alone in the day to day struggles we all face. It is reassuring to know there are people you have a connection with that you can reach out to for advice on a difficult issue. It is also helpful to know from your acquaintances that there is no clear answer to the problem you are confronting and that you are not missing anything.

We are in a people business. Everything we do involves people one way or another. It is completely natural that we thrive on interacting and building bridges with each other. That is why the conferences NASP presents are so important to our field. Even with all the new technology available to us, much of which has been deployed by NASP, the need to congregate and network will not disappear. The bridges we build with each other are not only valuable but comforting.

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