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When Sleigh Bells Ring, Opportunity Knocks...

Posted: 12/20/11 01:58 PM ET

What's on your wish list this year? If you're a small business owner or sales professional, it may be a new client. If you're a job seeker, you've probably added a new job to the list. Luckily, around the holiday season there's always an uptick in networking, which is one of the best ways to land a new client or a new job. If you're like most social Americans, you'll likely have the opportunity to attend a few holiday parties this season, so why not turn the opportunity to party into opportunities for you, your business, and your career?

Before attending holiday parties this year, you'll want to be prepared for the opportunities that may present themselves. First, you already know the importance of having a business card that identifies who you are, but what about having a business card that actually promotes who you are?

Here are some suggestions on how to create such a business card:

STEP 1: It should be double-sided. On the front, include your name, contact information, expertise (i.e. job title), and headshot. Even if you're unemployed, your former job title can easily convey your expertise. Your headshot is necessary so that when following up with the people you meet, they can easily put a name with a face and remember who you are.

STEP 2: On the back, include your 5-word personal mission statement. To do this, simply complete the statement: "I help companies . . ." The fourth word should be a verb, the fifth word a noun, and you want to sum up the result you create for companies, without revealing how you get to that result. Here are a couple of examples of personal mission statements:

- "I help companies increase profits."
- "I help companies drive sales."
- "I help companies cut costs."
- "I help companies increase productivity."
- "I help companies increase efficiency."

Remember, networking is a little like dating... you want to create a little mystery and leave them wanting more!

The party is just the first step to the opportunity. It's an introduction. You don't want to go into your whole life history and spell out the details of your resume; you just want to quickly give people an idea of what you can do for them, give them your card and say, "Maybe we can talk more about this some time." Remember, it's a party so you don't want to be overbearing, but you do want to take advantage of the new contacts you'll meet during the holiday season.

This special type of business card acts as a tool that will promote you when you're not around. With the short, to-the-point mission statement on the back of the card, you'll create curiosity that will motivate the people you meet to follow up and schedule face-to-face meetings to learn even more about how you can help them.

Try this tip this holiday season and raise your glass to the new opportunities that will come your way in the new year as a result!

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