

## Attending Trade Shows

Conventions for the hospitality industry can be a great place to connect with vendors and find associates who may need some help. You can find out about upcoming events through your local Convention & Visitors Bureau, or do a search for upcoming events at:

**Trade Show Exhibitors Association** <http://www.tsea.org>

**Bridal shows** are also a great source: caterers, florists, restaurants and facility owners may be looking for event planners to help during peak months. Besides, a visit to these shows is a great time to fill your Rolodex with potential vendors for upcoming projects and can provide you with inspiration for your next event.

## Networking Clubs

A valuable form of networking is through a **networking club**. Some of these are general business groups, but many have a target group of clients and include one member from different industries (e.g. insurance, financial planning, law, professional photography, real estate, etc.) to reach those in the target group. Each member of the club is expected to bring a certain number of leads to the group each week or month.

Fees will vary but can be as low as the cost of breakfast once a week or breakfast plus

a membership fee. You may also be required to serve on the executive board after a time. In addition to the marketing opportunities, benefits of joining networking groups may include **discounts** on services provided by other members of the group.

To become a member you are either recommended to the group by an existing member, or you might approach the group and ask to sit in as an observer for a meeting or two, and get accepted from there. Most groups will allow a trial period before demanding that you join or stop coming to meetings. You may be asked to give a short presentation about your own business, and on what business and personal skills you can bring to the group.

The types of participants will differ with every group, so **don't settle** for the first one you visit. Check around first before deciding which one to join. Make sure the members represent the kind of very busy people with reasonable incomes who might become clients for you, or who would know others who could benefit from your services.

One way to find a networking club is through **word of mouth**. Ask individuals in sales jobs — such as insurance agents, financial planners, computer sales professionals, car salesmen, and travel agents. You can also look for networking groups online. **Business Network International** has more than 2,300 chapters in cities around the world.

**Business Network International** <http://www.bni.com>

