

Membership Organizations

Another excellent way to network is by joining **associations** that prospective clients may belong to. Some examples include:

- **Civic and service clubs** (such as Rotary Club or Kiwanis Club)
- **Business organizations** (such as your Chamber of Commerce)
- **Clubs that attract the wealthy** (for example, golf, polo, yachting, and country clubs)

Membership fees may vary from \$20 to hundreds or even thousands of dollars (the latter if you want to join an exclusive country club or private golf club). The more expensive clubs usually require current members to introduce you and put you up for membership, so you may have to join some less exclusive clubs in order to meet people who might also belong to the more expensive clubs. Many less exclusive clubs will let you attend a few times for a nominal fee so you can decide if you really want to join.

You can find organizations by asking your friends and colleagues what they are involved in. You can also find them in your local telephone directory or online. Here are a couple to get you started:

Executive Women International <http://www.executivewomen.org>

World Chamber of Commerce Directory
<http://www.chamberofcommerce.com>

If you simply attend club functions without getting involved, the value of the membership will not be as great as if you truly pitch in. What sorts of things can you do to help out and gain the attention of others whose goodwill can help your business grow? Here are some suggestions:

- Serve on a **committee**
- **Write articles** for the association newsletter
- Volunteer to help out with the organization's events
- **Run for election** to the Executive Committee

Here are some additional networking tips specifically for meeting wealthy people.

Attend Openings

When a **museum** or **art gallery** has a new exhibit, they will hold an “opening” which may attract a crowd of wealthy and cultured people – exactly the type of people who could use your services. An opening usually combines a social event, such as a wine and cheese reception, with an opportunity for people to view the exhibit. For the museum or gallery, these events can be an excellent opportunity to make sales, attract donations, or simply get the word out about their new exhibit. Some museums and galleries hold several openings throughout the year.

There is usually no cost or obligation to attend. In some cases, getting invited to these events can be as simple as phoning and asking to be put on the mailing list. Another possibility is to visit local art galleries that are also dealers (retailers) and speak with the owner or manager. Ask to be put on their mailing list and notified of upcoming events.

Get Involved with Charities

Many wealthy and professional people attend charitable **fundraising events** such as fashion shows, teas, luncheons, dinners, etc. Attending these events yourself is one way to start connecting with the wealthy, but it can be very **expensive**. (Since they are “fundraisers”, getting into each event might cost you \$100 or more!) Plus, there may not be much time to meet and mingle with other attendees.



You will have a much greater opportunity to connect with people and support a good cause by **volunteering** to help with the event. As a volunteer you may work closely with the type of people you want to attract as clients. Many wealthy people don't just make financial donations – they also donate their time to charities, and are actively involved in fundraising and event planning.

Volunteer for activities that will bring you into contact with these people. In other words, leave the envelope stuffing to other volunteers and focus on helping organize events. In addition to serving on committees, see if you can volunteer the services of your event planning business.

This may be a wonderful opportunity not only to meet people, but to get the name of your firm in front of **every person** who attends the event! Most organizations publish a brochure or booklet to give to each attendee. This usually contains information about the event along with a list of suppliers – including the name of the company that supplied event planning services.

So which charities do your target markets get involved with? If you have read *Town & Country* magazine or the social column of a local newspaper, you have probably seen photos of wealthy people at charitable events. The rich typically are involved in **arts organizations**, including:

- ballet
- theater
- symphony
- opera
- visual arts

Many are also involved in **health causes**, such as organizations that work to find cures for AIDS or breast cancer. Others are involved with **political campaigns** (although technically not a “charity,” political campaigns do fundraising events where you can meet prospective clients). To volunteer, simply phone up the organizations in your community that interest you. You may be able to find them through word of mouth or listed in the Yellow Pages under a category such as “Societies” or “Charitable Organizations.”

You might consider getting involved with **cultural organizations**, as well. Organizations formed for a single purpose, such as running your city’s St. Patrick’s Day parade, are other places to find busy people who could benefit from your services.

When you choose organizations to get involved with, be sure that you have some interest in the work they do. Otherwise you will find yourself avoiding meetings and missing the chance to get involved in ways that can both help your business and carry out the mission of the organization.