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Strongest ingredient in a networking event recipe?

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You're hosting a networking event? Count me in. That has been my response for the better part of three years working with the New England Real Estate Journal. Networking events by and large are what you make them. However, there are some where the event itself allows for easier conversation and better connection development. Most events follow a certain recipe or formula. First comes cocktail hour or reception networking hour, followed by a meal depending on the time or speaker, a panel, or expo, and finished by post networking event or cocktail hour. There is nothing wrong with this formula as it has shown time and again to be effective, but for me the three events that stand out the most to me are the Building Impact Big Non-Gala, IREM Hypnotist, and the NAWIC bowling fundraiser.

Building Impact's Big Non-Gala stands out because of the relationships I made during the course of the event. While making items for those in need there was this sense in camaraderie in achieving a goal. Everyone was on the same team and that made for easier communication and openness. Not only did it help my work life but, it helped me personally too as, many clients became friends.

IREM's hypnotist event stands out not only because I got hypnotized but because of the environment of the event. This was an intimate setting where business professionals relaxed and made themselves more open and unguarded. The event was so memorable because after the show communication was at an all time high. Everyone was so relaxed that anxiety had completely left and engagement took over the room.

NAWIC's bowling fundraiser stands out because it not only allowed for introduction and networking amongst industry professionals, it also strengthened the bonds within our own companies. Some of us bowled with co-workers in different departments that we don't get to work with on a regular basis. This was a great way for us to cheer each other on and compete together against others. It is fun when there is an activity with a little competition mixed in because it allows for some fun banter which relieves the room of anxiety and opens people up to engagement.

Want my advice? When you're planning your next networking event, don't forget the strongest ingredient: collaboration. Each of the events that stand out are ones that feature an activity involving teamwork and collaboration.

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