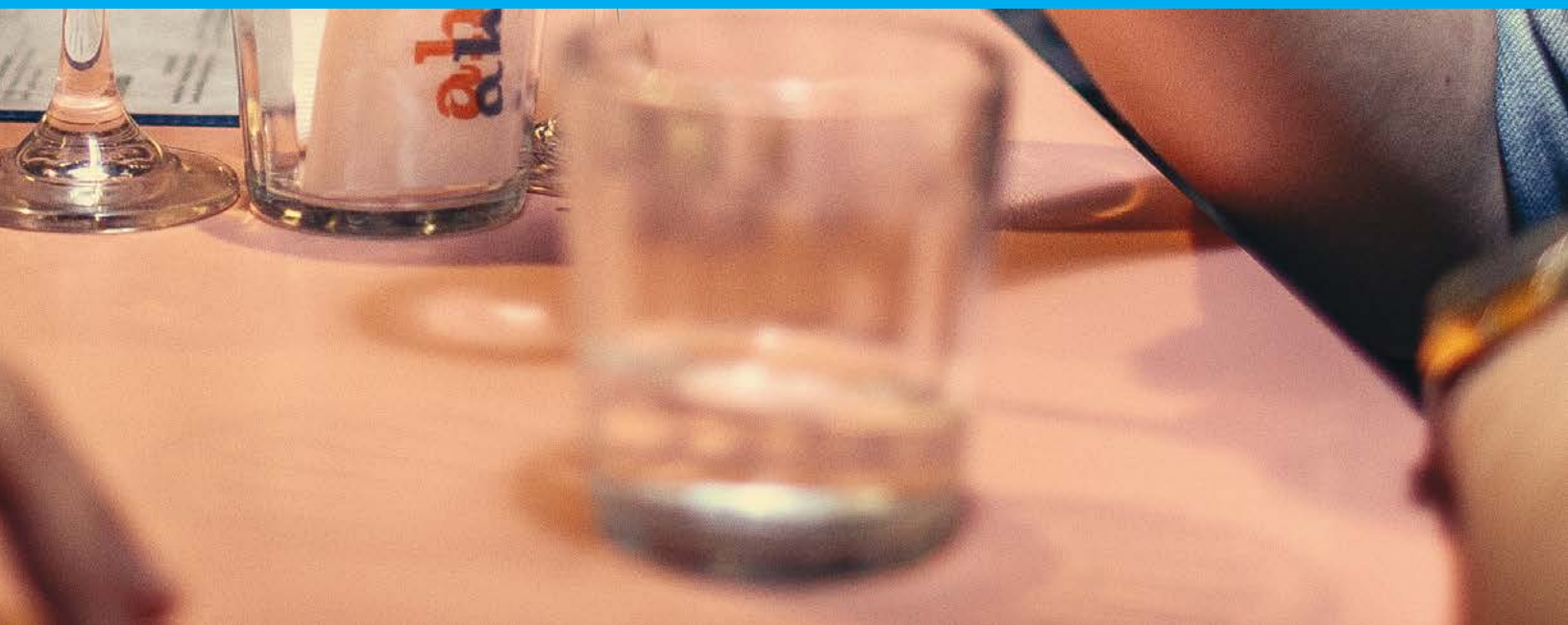# Gather

How to Host a Successful Networking Event

A Checklist of Tips & Reminders

How to Host
a Successful Networking Event

Hosting a networking event at your venue is a great way to get a new crowd through your doors. Networking events are ideal for professionals looking to meet others in their industry or area within an atmosphere that encourages mixing and mingling. While most private events are held on weekends, networking meet-ups are typically held after work hours on weekdays. Because of this, they're a great way to fill your Monday-to-Thursday events calendar.

To help you host the perfect networking event, we've come up with a checklist that highlights reminders and tips to ensure your client is happy and that guests form meaningful connections while having a great time at your venue.

Maximize movement within your space
Creating an open atmosphere that encourages guests to move around your space is ideal for this type of event. Opting for a few high-top tables instead of large tables with seating will make sure attendees feel comfortable mingling throughout the event.

Offer bite-size food options
Shaking hands with someone while holding a plate of food isn't the best first impression. Instead, consider offering your client a menu of bite-size finger foods (like a charcuterie board, bruschetta or meatballs on toothpicks) that guests don't have to eat with utensils. You may also want to advise the client to be wary of things with a lot of herbs that can get stuck in teeth — yikes!

Be thoughtful about drink options
Ask your event client if they want to consider stocking both non-alcoholic drinks other than plain water (like La Croix and soda) along with drinks like beer and wine. Additionally, you may want to caution them about having an open bar with liquor. Because some guests get nervous while networking and might accidentally drink too much, this increases the likelihood of an awkward situation (like the need to potentially take someone's keys).

Be clear about the limits of your space
It's important to be open with your client about how many people your space allows, so they have realistic expectations about how many guests to invite. Having enough room for guests to walk around while making business connections is key. In addition to the main space, having a smaller, quieter area outside or on your patio could help your guests chat more freely.

Double-check your A/V equipment

Whether your client has a playlist in mind or is interested in giving a speech at their networking event, it's important to make sure your sound system is working so you don't foster an uncomfortable moment. You'll also want to communicate your venue's public WiFi information, as guests will most likely want to connect to the internet (like when they're sending those LinkedIn requests).
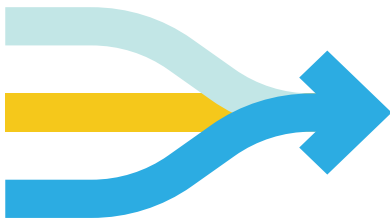
Have clear directions for navigating your space

Remember to be clear with your client about parking locations and car maximums. Having a few signs that direct patrons to and from the parking area will make it easy for guests to navigate around without taking awkward wrong turns.
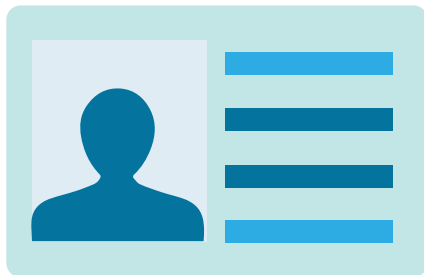
Staff appropriately

Having enough staff members to bartend, take food around and clear high-top tables for your guests will ensure your networking event goes smoothly and that your client leaves happy. Staff accordingly, depending on the final guest head count of the networking event. You can mention this during the beginning of the planning process, and request the final count around 24 hours prior to the event time.

The Checklist

☐ Maximize movement within your space

☐ Offer bite-size finger foods

☐ Be thoughtful about drink options

☐ Be clear about the limits of your space

☐ Double-check your A/V equipment

☐ Have clear directions for navigating your space

☐ Staff appropriately

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