

## Networking as Leader & Business Owner

### How BATMAN helps me network!

Article for [Lynn Scott Coaching](#): June 2014

For the next two weeks I want to share the experiences of a favourite client of mine, Susie Burdekin. Susie was Director of multi-award winning Brand Partnership agency [Cherry London](#) and now runs the niche consultancy business [The Drill Company](#).

Last week I shared Susie Burdekin's fears and worries about networking – some familiar ground for many of us, I suspect.

This is how Susie worked to overcome those networking fears.....(in her own words)

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'I had to turn it on it's head....and over time (and practice) I tackled each area and gradually became more confident. I realised I'm not a loud extrovert that marches into a room and demands to turn heads – it's just not my style... and that's ok.

But I am now more confident about my ability to walk in to a room of strangers and spark a conversation. More importantly I focus less on myself and instead on the person I'm talking to – I'm interested in them and what they have to say. I don't need to shout the loudest to have presence in a room. I focus on being comfortable in my own skin and asking them questions and being present when they're talking

### Tips

1. Get the basics sorted
  - a. Be comfortable in what you're wearing. Sounds obvious but if you're not comfortable it'll ooze out from your body language;
  - b. Work out where you're going - nothing like last minute stress trying to figure out where the venue is to add to your nerves.
2. Do your research
  - a. Is there anybody specific you'd like to meet or talk to at the event?
  - b. If so, think about their attitudes/needs/expectations, what would they find interesting and how could you make them more receptive to you?
3. Reframe the event
  - a. Key one for me - you're looking to **build relationships**, have an interesting conversation - **not** do a hard sell on strangers.



4. Change your perspective
  - a. If you get nervous, then I think this can be a great tactic;
  - b. If you could be *anybody* (famous, fictional, dead or alive) going along – who would it be and what would they do?

*(Personally I liked Batman! The cape represented something different I had to wear and most importantly the element that I could literally just fly in and fly out. Just taking the stress out of the thought that I HAD to stay all evening as opposed to just 1-2 hours helped massively. Invariably I generally stayed the entire evening, but just thinking about it differently took the pressure off for me).*

5. Watch role models
  - a. If you know of somebody you really admire at such events, observe what they do.
6. Take the pressure off
  - a. My aim of a night is to have 1 or 2 interesting conversations. If I've talked to somebody about a holiday destination, news event or hobby, then I'm much more likely to remember them and want to keep in touch, rather than the person that wasn't interested in what I had to say and just wanted to shove their business card in my hand!
7. It's not about you
  - a. The final bit that helped me – ***it's not about you***. Stop putting the pressure on yourself and agonising over whether YOU'RE interesting, good, clever enough. Instead ask – '*how can I help somebody here tonight?*', '*how can I make someone's life here a little better?*' and that could be some interesting or useful information, a tip, book to read. Ask them questions and really listen to what they have to say.
8. Starter for ten...
  - a. Finally, if you're struggling to know what to say to start a conversation, state a mutual observation, talk about something relevant happening in the news or ask them a question about the event; what do you think of the speakers tonight? Great venue isn't it? If you can make it a question, then the easier it is for them to engage with you.

