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**CLIENT'S BUSINESS:** Gala Events  
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## **How to Get More Business through Hospitality...Without Turning the Day into a Sales Pitch**

The marketing team might be sitting behind their screens fretting about social media reach and engagement....

But, here in the real world, deals get done the old-fashioned way - on the strength of your business connections.

Corporate hospitality is a great way to build rapport away from the boardroom.

Champagne corks popping, the best seats in the house and mingling with celebrity guests.....

Shared experiences that make memories people won't forget in a hurry.

And when that contract's up for renewal, the bond you form could be the difference when competitors make their move.....

But, a hospitality event isn't going to work if you just cross your fingers and hope for the best. Or if you end up talking business non-stop.

So, here are 8 ways to help you get the most out of your day commercially - without the shameless sales pitch.

### **1. Match your event to your audience**

Take your golf loving clients to the rugby and chances are they'll be bored. Or puzzled. Or both.

Nodding politely as you make small talk during the stoppages, before they give up and slink off to the bar.

Because not everyone enjoys the nuances of scrummaging as much as you do.

So, there's a bit of groundwork to be done...

Sound your customers out first when you see them. Get to know them a little better beforehand and you won't be taking a shot in the dark with your choice.

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You might have to suck it up if it's not your thing, but they'll have a great time, which is kind of the whole point of the day.

Stuck for ideas? A good hospitality partner won't just take your booking and bank the cheque.

They'll talk things through over the phone, helping you match your group to the event they'll enjoy the most.

And when everyone's having fun, you'll be forgiven for talking shop.

## **2. Assemble your match day squad**

If you want to create an atmosphere conducive to having fun AND doing a bit of business, think like a football manager.

Put together a squad of introverts and things are going to get awkward, fast. Too many larger-than-life characters and you won't get a word in edgeways.

The mix of people you invite is crucial to the success of your day.

And who are you going to take from the office? It always helps to have genuine fan in tow.

So, your team sheet...

Your match day crew should contain the right blend of people who complement one another and get on.

And a resident expert whose passion for the game is infectious.

No personality clashes, no awkward silences, just good times, good people and good fun.

And that takes a bit of forethought and planning, so start working on it early doors.

## **3. Bigger isn't necessarily better**

With hospitality, the temptation is to dial up the glitz and the glamour in a bid to impress your guests.

An easy trap to fall into.

But the biggest ticket in town isn't necessarily the best.

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You don't need to charter a private jet to the title fight in Vegas to make your clients feel valued.

Something more down to earth and intimate usually works better anyway.

At a smaller event, with fewer clients, you'll find there's more time to talk one-to-one.

And when the ratio is right and you're not spread too thin, you'll have a more productive day commercially.

#### **4. Don't be a cheapskate**

So, you've decided to keep things smaller, but that's not an excuse to cut corners.

The bronze package might sound tempting, but if you pinch pennies, your guests are bound to notice.

A sorry looking buffet, a speaker you can't quite place and seats right up in the gods.

Thanks, but no thanks.

If the experience is second rate, you run the risk of doing more harm than good.

#### **5. Go easy at the bar**

The sun is shining, the company is good and the drinks are complimentary.

What could possibly go wrong?

Before you reach for that next beer, remember, it's a day to loosen your tie, not wrap it round your head.

Go easy, enjoy, but strike the right balance. You're representing yourself as well as the business.

More booze doesn't equal more fun, although it might seem like a good idea at the time...

#### **6. Think outside the box**

Hospitality? That's just corporate box, buffet and business chat?

And there's nothing wrong with that per se.

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But, some of your clients have seen this all before, so why serve up more of the same?

Innovative hospitality providers are mixing things up and reinventing the game - combining live action on the big screen, racing, recently retired sports stars and A-list entertainment for good measure.

A nice twist on the traditional formula that really does offer something for everyone.

Perfect for hospitality veterans or a group that's got you scratching your head as you struggle to come up with ideas.

### **7. Keep your event inclusive**

Offer your female clients a beery day out at the match and chances are they'll roll their eyes and pass.

Funny that.

So, if you're serious about building bridges, it's time to drop the 'wahey the lads' mindset.

Relax, there are plenty of great events that everyone can enjoy without cramping your style.

Think yachting at Cowes or a horse racing meet. And when you include everyone, well that's better all round.

### **8. Remember to follow up**

So, you had a great day catching up with your customers - pressing the flesh and getting to know them a little better.

The prospect of more business hangs tantalisingly in the air.

How are you going to follow up? That was all part of your plan. Right?

Sharing photos of your event gives you a great excuse to touch base afterwards.

Maybe not those fuzzy snaps on your phone though.

It's always worth checking to see if a professional photographer is included as part of your package.

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And goodie bags aren't just for kids' parties.

Put something together for your guests to take back to the office - think a pack of golf or tennis balls plus a few other bits and pieces.

Don't forget to include your business cards along with some kind of special offer - a lasting memento of a great day that could generate some welcome leads for you to follow up.

Finally, remember your Finance team is going to quibble the invoice and insist you show a return on the money you spend.

And no, not your winnings from the 2.30 at Aintree.

Mumbling something about building relationships isn't going to cut it. So, make sure you have a system in place to tag leads and trace orders to each event you book.

That should keep them happy.

So, follow these tips...and don't be surprised when they ask if they can tag along next time.

### **Ready to have some fun AND fill up the order book?**

**Gala Events Celebrity Sporting Lunches are the perfect way to entertain your clients and cement your business relationships.**

**Big screen sporting action, racing, top sports stars in attendance and A-list entertainment.**

**Book ten places at an event before 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017 and get 15% off your order.**

**Book ten places at four events and choose a sporting legend to sit at your table. FREE of charge. Saving you £2000 + VAT.**

**Call 0800 195 4250 to find out more.**

**Hurry, our legends are in demand and places are filling up fast.**

**Check this video <http://celebritylunches.co.uk/call-us> for more information**

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