

ROCKING LIVE BUSINESS EVENTS:

Make The Most Of Every Opportunity



Presented By Connie Ragen Green

Try Out Some Local Events and Spaces

When it comes to getting started with your first live business event, don't think you have to go to the biggest conference that lasts for a week or book an expensive room at a pricey retreat. You can go to a local event that's cheap (or even free) and only lasts a few hours.

Attending a local event gives you a chance to get your feet wet with offline networking. It can also help you to be more comfortable because you're in a familiar area and you don't have to worry about the cost of travel, like buying a plane ticket.

If you've never attended a live business event, here are a few perks of choosing a local one.



Find Help

You've been trying to update your website for the past week and can't figure out how to do it or you need a graphic designer to create an image for your new podcast. By attending local business events, you'll have a chance to meet with other business owners.

You may discover that someone else has a recommendation for an excellent graphic designer or you might bump into one while introducing yourself. If the graphic designer is in need of your skills in some way, you could even barter so you can get the help you need to build your business.

Get Referrals

When you attend a live event, you may find yourself getting referrals. You introduce yourself to another business owner who says, “I design websites. My client is looking for a good copywriter. Do you mind if I pass your name and number along?”

Referrals don't just happen during the live business event. They can also happen weeks or months after you attended the event. You'll get a phone call or email from someone who remembers your work and needs your services.

Grow Your Confidence



Don't worry if you're super nervous the first few times you go to an event. It's normal to be anxious when you're trying something new. Remember that the other business owners around you feel the same thing. Many of them are just as nervous as you are.

But the more live business events you attend, the easier it gets.

Pretty soon, you'll find yourself going to events and having fun without even thinking about it.

Where Can You Find an Event?

You can usually find local events through sites like [Craigslist](#) or [Geebo](#). You may want to search for [Facebook groups](#) in your area or use [MeetUp](#) to find business and career opportunities near you.

Don't forget about your local paper. They may mention upcoming group events or have a 'classifieds' section. You can also ask for recommendations if you have a few business friends in your area.

Business events can be fun and rewarding. You get to meet new people, share a bit about your business, and grow your confidence.

Journal Your Thoughts

1. Have you attended local business events before? If so, what was your experience?
2. Are there any local business events you know of that you'd like to attend? What's holding you back?
3. What's one thing you can do to increase your confidence before a business event? (e.g. Wear my favorite dress, put on my lucky socks, get a new haircut, etc)

What to Expect at a Conference

You're attending your first conference. You're looking forward to meeting new people and learning new things. But you're also nervous. You don't know what to expect or what you should do when you arrive. If that describes you, don't worry. Here's what to expect and how to handle everything...

Ask Questions Ahead of Time

Before you attend a business conference, there's usually a Facebook group or page to connect with other attendees. You'll most likely get emails from the conference coordinator. She might send reminders, directions, or maps.

But if some of the information isn't detailed enough or you still have questions, don't be

shy about reaching out. Reply to her emails or if there's a phone number, leave a quick message with your questions.

You should also ask the event coordinator about any advance virtual events, like webinars or live video streaming. Watching these events before the conference can help you know what to expect when you finally meetup in real life.



Registration Desk

Look for the

When you arrive for the conference, there will be a registration space where you can pick up your nametag and any materials you may need. At the registration desk, you can ask about the social or reception area. This is where other attendees will be mingling.

It's also where you can grab coffee and meet other people in a relaxed environment. Sometimes, the attendees will be meeting up at other locations before the conference kicks off. For example, most of the attendees might be going to restaurant across from the hotel for dinner.

Scout the Event Room

Some events are similar to theater setups. They'll be rows of chairs with a platform near the front of the room. Depending on the conference, there might be a podium for the speaker as well as a large screen for displaying visual content.

Other events may have you seated at a table where you can set up your laptop. This is helpful if the event is going to be a workshop where you'll need to use your laptop. Before you sit, pay attention to the shape of the table. A long rectangle means your devices are welcome if you want to use them. But a round table is usually set up for discussion and sharing. Using your laptop at a round table might be seen as rude by some attendees.

Take Note of Your Schedule

Large conferences may have several 'tracks'.

Tracks are events or workshops with a common theme. For example, if you went to a conference about online business, there might be a track that's focused on blogging, another one that's about advertising, and a third about creating info products.



With so many different events, it's important to check your schedule and decide which ones you really want to attend. Keep in mind that there may be some breakout sessions. These are short discussions around a central theme that's relevant to the conference. So if you're attending a blogging conference, then there might be breakout discussions about how to grow a mailing list.

Breakouts can give you plenty of inspiration and encourage you to look at your business with fresh eyes. They also give you the opportunity to interact with other attendees.

Attending your first conference may feel intimidating, especially when you first arrive. But don't sit on the sidelines. Mingle with other attendees and start conversations. You may end up connecting with a potential client or a future joint venture partner.

Journal Your Thoughts

1. When you think about attending your first conference, what makes you nervous?
2. How can you overcome this fear? For example, "I'm nervous no one will talk to me. So I'll start conversations with three other attendees."
3. Who do you know in your business circles that's attended this conference? Is there a way you could ask what their experience was like?

The Clique Myth and How to Make Friends

When you're attending a conference and you see other people chatting in small groups, it can be tempting to think those other attendees are best friends. You may assume they've always known each other and that they have no interest in getting to know you.

Often, going to a big event triggers insecurities. You might believe that everyone else is part of the popular clique and you don't fit in. You may even want to withdraw from others because you're worried about being judged or rejected.

But don't let these fears hold you back from having a good time. There's no sign that says, "Go away. We're having fun without you."

Introduce Yourself

Instead of waiting and worrying about not getting noticed, be proactive. Introduce yourself to someone else. Ask another attendee where they came from or what their business does. Be friendly and give your full attention to the attendee you're talking with.

Be Aware of Body Language

Are you sending a mixed message to other attendees? Maybe you're smiling but your



arms are crossed. Perhaps you're answering questions but you won't look anyone in the

eye. When your words and your body language don't match up, other attendees will be hesitant to approach you.

Pause during events to tune into your body. You might be frowning or fidgeting with your hair. These behaviors could make it seem like you're not having a good time. When you find yourself doing them, take a deep breath and hold it for the count of three. Then release it and refocus on the person with you.

Join a Group

See a group that looks like all the attendees are having fun? Don't wait to be noticed.



When there's a pause in the conversation, introduce yourself. If you know one of the people in the group, say something like, "Hi, Maria!" This gives Maria the chance to greet you and introduce you to the group.

Set a Goal

It's easy to attach yourself to just one person throughout the whole event. Maybe it's someone you just clicked with or a solopreneur that has a similar business. But don't stop after meeting just one or two people. Set a goal to introduce yourself to at least

ten people the first day. If you feel a connection with someone, make plans to meet for lunch or coffee.

Then keep moving around the same space and meeting more people. Aim to gather 5 people for a meal. Doing this helps you to meet people and provides you with an opportunity to learn more about them.

Even if you consider yourself an introvert or wallflower, you should still make an effort to reach out to other attendees. Comment on the temperature of the room or the food being served. Tell a funny story about getting to the event. Compliment someone's

shoes or their outfit. Be willing to stretch out of your comfort zone and start a conversation.

Journal Your Thoughts

1. What insecurities do you have about social interactions?
2. How can you counter these insecurities? (E.G. *“Instead of waiting for someone to notice me, I’ll look for someone that looks like a wallflower and start a conversation.”*)
3. When you see a group in conversation, what’s your first thought?

Give Intimate Retreats a Chance

Sometimes, big conferences with hundreds or even thousands of people attending can feel safe. That’s because you can get lost in the sea of people if you want to. You don’t have to get too close or too personal with someone else. You’re just another face in the crowd.

But small retreats give you things a big conference can’t, like the ability to connect deeply with other business owners or the space to be vulnerable and talk about what’s really happening in your business behind the scenes.



Bold Breakthroughs Happen with Friends by Your Side



Experience Bold Breakthroughs at the Beach

I host Retreats in Santa Barbara throughout the year. We have three or four people who join me to work on their businesses.

Unlike a conference where there's often information overload, this time by the beach gives each entrepreneur the quiet space to evaluate their business. At a large conference, you can stay anonymous if you choose. But at a business retreat,

you get to hang out with other solopreneurs who are likely to become your friends for life.

It can be intimidating to go into a retreat with just a few people. But I know it's all about designing an environment that welcomes every person's potential and encouraging them to tap into that potential.

When it comes to a retreat, be sure to look for one that has a clear focus. For example, if you're looking for clarity in your business, then don't attend a retreat that's focused on gathering more customers. You're not at that stage and you won't get the full benefit of attending it.

Your Writing Adventure Awaits...

Other conferences that have a clear focus include writing retreats, where attendees gather to work on their books. Before the retreat begins, there's a mastermind session so you can decide which project you'll be writing on this year. If you don't know where to start or experience writer's blocks, this would be the ideal time to bring them.

The facilitator and the other authors will listen and share solutions with you. They can also help you brainstorm, outline, and start writing your next book.

Are you excited about the thought of attending a retreat now? That's awesome. To find one, ask other solopreneurs or business owners which retreats they've enjoyed. You might just find someone to go on a retreat with!

Journal Your Thoughts

1. Which retreats are you interested in attending?
2. What are you most hoping to get out of this retreat?
3. Who will be at the retreat that you want to connect with? Why?

Packing for Confidence & Comfort

If it's your first conference, you may not know what to pack. Some event coordinators keep checklists of suggested items, so talk with your coordinator if you have questions.

As for the electronics you should take with you, that depends on the conference. If you'll be attending lots of workshops, your laptop is usually necessary because you're doing something with what you're learning. If there won't be workshops, then you may only need a smartphone or tablet with you.

Take a Jacket

Have a light wrap, like a sweater you can take on and off throughout the day. Conference rooms are notoriously cool. Usually they're coldest in the



morning and warmest in the afternoon.

Should You Bring Business Cards?

“Have business cards, but use them sparingly and with great purpose. Hand them to someone who you really want to connect with and the same for people you want to hear from,” advises Kelly McCausey.

Business cards are about making that personal connection more than swapping cards. Use them when you want to follow up with someone (e.g. have coffee together or connect after the conference via social media).

Don't Forget an Extra Charger

Bring an extra charger for your phone. You may also want an extra charging cable or portable batteries, so you can help others charge their devices. This gives you a great way to meet other people and interact with them.

Carry Cash

You'll want to have extra cash on hand to tip cab drivers, valets, and hotel concierges. You may also need cash if you want to grab a quick snack from the hotel store or when you're ready to tip the server at your restaurant.

Plan for Meals

Know where and when you'll be eating meals. Some conferences serve a light lunch or dinner and some don't. Look around for local restaurants so you know where you can grab a bite to eat. If you have food allergies, you may want to bring some of your own snacks from home to minimize the risk of an allergic reaction.

If you're given drink tickets, don't think you have to go with an alcoholic beverage. Most drink tickets will also cover the price of sodas and/or water. Just ask the server.

Extra Hair Products

Most hotels have a blow dryer you can use so don't worry about that. But one thing you don't want to forget is extra hair products. For example, if your conference is held in an area with high humidity, you'll want to pack some de-fizzing products and extra ponytail holders.

A Mini Toothbrush Is a Must

The [Colgate Wisp](#) may become your favorite conference item. It's a tiny toothbrush with a toothpick attached and a tiny bead of toothpaste. So after you go to lunch, you

can give yourself a quick freshening and make sure you don't have anything in your teeth.

Keep Chocolate in Your Bag

Chocolate makes friends. Mini candy bars like fun-size M & M packets are great to have on you. You can snack if the munchies hit and pass them on to other attendees. Do



avoid candies wrapped in cellophane packaging because they make noise and may disturb those around you.

Take Walking Shoes

Don't use the conference as a place to break in your new heels. You may be invited to the Greek restaurant "right around the corner" which turns out to be five blocks away. You'll be glad you chose your walking shoes.

Don't fret if you forget something major. Most hotels stock basic items like shampoo and soap. You can also ask the front desk about local stores. As you become more comfortable attending conferences, you'll learn what to pack and what to leave at home.

Rocking Live Business Events Packing Checklist

Whether it's your first conference or your fiftieth, don't forget to bring these...

- ☐ Business Cards
- ☐ Your Smartphone
- ☐ Your Laptop/Tablet/Chargers
- ☐ Spending Cash
- ☐ Your Regular Medications/Vitamins
- ☐ Extra Hair Product/Ponytail Holders
- ☐ Mini Toothbrush/Disposable Toothbrushes
- ☐ Walking Shoes/Jacket or Sweater
- ☐ Water bottle
- ☐ Extra Gum/Mints/Candy/Snacks
- ☐ Hand Wipes
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Tissues

Journal Your Thoughts

1. If you've attended a conference in the past, what do you wish you'd known before going?
2. Have you ever gone to an event and found you forgot something important?
3. What small item could you carry to hand out to other attendees (gum, mints, etc)?

About the Author

Connie Ragen Green is a bestselling author, international speaker, and online marketing strategist who is dedicating her life to serving others as they build and grow successful and lucrative online businesses. Her background includes working as a classroom teacher for twenty years, while simultaneously working in real estate. In 2006 she left it all behind to come online, and the rest is history.

She makes her home in two cities in southern California; Santa Clarita in the desert and Santa Barbara at the beach. In addition to her writing and work online, Connie consults and strategizes with several major corporations and some non-profits, as well as volunteering with groups such as the international service organization Rotary, the Boys & Girls Clubs, the Benevolent Protective Order of Elks, the women's business organization Zonta, and several other charitable groups.

As the 2016 recipient of the Merrill Hoffman Award, presented to Connie by the Santa Barbara Rotary Club, being honored with this award has strengthened her resolve to serve others around the world in any way she is able to by using her gifts, talents, and experiences in a positive and sincere manner.

Please pick up one or more of my books as a way to get started on the path to online entrepreneurship. If you're not sure where to begin, simply hit "reply" to any of my email messages and I will respond to your questions promptly.

