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Samuel Johnson



A note or two from your South Coast NSW, Regional Coordinator



SURVEY CONCLUSIONS >>>

You said we should meet via zoom on a Tuesday or Wednesday, but let's have dinner now and again with a guest speaker

My interpretation is that you want meetings to be held via Zoom on a Tuesday or Wednesday, 3 times per year and one meeting per year to be held on a Monday to be inclusive.

You will also attend at least one face to face dinner meeting per year.

I will try to organise guest speakers. Please let me know what topics you what covered. There has already been a request for a presenter on advertising & marketing.

The Survey

Become an expert Celebrant.

Communicate, learn, support

What do you want & need in meetings?

As your AMC Regional Coordinator, I sent you a survey recently to explore what you want and need in meetings. I did so because there had been a low attendance to meetings to date and so it was apparent that needs were not being met.

Specific results are below but here is a commentary, summary & interpretation upon the results.

1. I did not take part in the survey because as coordinator, I need to know what you need and want.
2. The survey was sent to 17 Celebrants, two of whom are not AMC members. Remember that whilst this is an AMC group, it is open to other Celebrants as the purpose is mutual support and growth for the betterment of Celebrancy overall.
3. The survey was not sent to an 18th celebrant who, though an AMC member on the south coast, has strongly declined to participate in our Celebrant's mutual support group and seemingly was unaware of being an AMC member.
4. There was a total of only 6 responses to the survey which is the equivalent of those who have attended meetings in the past, but it also means that whilst 35% responded, 11 group members failed to respond or contribute, without explanation.
5. The majority chose quarterly meetings, with a variable agenda. on a Tuesday or Wednesday but one person wanted Mondays.
6. All agreed to meet via zoom but would like a face to face, dinner meetings about 2 or 4 times per year. You might recall that the last time a dinner meeting was held, only one Celebrant, attended, driving for over an hour each way just to be there. It was though a wonderfully enjoyable evening and excellent meal.
7. All want guest speakers, but the responses were divided evenly as to whether members would present a topic personally.

Why Network?

What's in it for me?

Article based on training, experience &:
<https://www.michaelpage.com.au/advice/career-advice/career-progression/benefits-networking>

It's a question that you may ask when considering whether to take part in a mutual support group such as the AMC South Coast Region, but also ask yourself, "How can I contribute?"

I have been a member of business networks for all of my professional life and benefitted from all. One business network resulted in a number of lifelong friendships and for me as a Celebrant, has also resulted in about 6 ceremonies so far while another network has given me about 15 referrals over time. Each ceremony you do, creates opportunity for the next.

We are all members of networks from birth, beginning with family, school, friends, clubs, sports and work. Each has its benefits when beginning with trust and support, and when it comes to a professional network, being willing to learn and to contribute, can be the difference between a mediocre and a professional.

Here are some advantages of being a part of a local Celebrancy support group.



1. Overcome isolation & Gain friendships

Isolation has two forms, physical and emotional.

It can take 3-4 hours to drive from one end of our region to another and so maybe there are no backup celebrant close by, so there are great benefits in knowing who else is around and what their style of delivery is. Only another celebrant can help you in such a circumstance.

It is wonderful delivering a ceremony but can be exhausting. Only a Celebrant knows the foibles, emotions and exhaustion experienced by the delivery of a ceremony. You can debrief with a walk, partner, spouse, or bottle of wine but it is your Celebrant buddy who will best

understand how you feel when your mic crackles and the Bluetooth fails.

That like mindedness can also lead to long term, strong friendships.

2. Strengthen in local connections

If you are to go to a new venue or deal with another vendor, other local celebrants might be able to give you guidance to help you get the most out of the occasion. e.g. when I by chance met Robyn Foster at a site she knew well, she was able to give me some valuable tips and tricks unique to the site.

Networking is about sharing, not taking. It is about forming trust and helping one another toward goals. Regularly engaging with your contacts and finding opportunities to assist them helps to strengthen the relationship. By doing this, you sow the seeds for reciprocal assistance when you need help to achieve your goals.



3. Get fresh ideas

Other Celebrants can be an excellent source of innovative ideas and trends to help you in your role. Exchanging information on challenges, experiences, venues, vendors and goals is a key benefit of being a part of this group as it allows you to gain new insights or alternate ideas that you may not have otherwise thought of.

Celebrants usually love helping others and most enjoy being asked for help as it can be flattering and makes them feel useful. Offering helpful ideas in return is an excellent way to build your reputation as an innovative thinker.



4. Raise your profile & Reputation

It is often said that all advertising is good advertising and the other group member, rather than being your direct competition, may be a source of inspiration and good for business.

Being visible, by regularly attending professional and social events will help make your face known and getting noticed is a benefit of networking that's essential to business growth.

If I have a couple who want a ceremony on a beach two hours south of me but don't have the budget to cover my travel fees, I know there are other Celebrants I can refer them to. That keeps the business on the South Coast, benefits a group member, and instils a level of trust that will be remembered so that when that same client has friend who wants another ceremony, that client will know two celebrants that they can refer, and I have confidence that the other celebrant will reciprocate.



5. Gain more knowledge

Samuel Johnson is quoted as saying: "Knowledge is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it."

This group and the wider AMC are an incredible opportunity to exchange best ideas, trends, practical knowledge, techniques and so much more.

None of us has all the answers but collectively but the knowledge of the many, is far greater than the knowledge of the one.

6. Get advice and support

Gaining the advice of other Celebrants is an important benefit of membership.

You can gain guidance by discussing familiar challenges and opportunities while gaining an incite problem solving. Offering genuine assistance to your contacts also sets a durable foundation for receiving support in return when you need it.

1. Build confidence

By stepping outside your comfort zone you can build on social skills and self-confidence. The more you network, the more you'll grow and learn how to make lasting connections.



2. Gain a different perspective

It's easy to get caught up in the day-to-day and end up in a rut or writer's block. By sharing with other Celebrants, you can gain insights that only come from viewing a situation with fresh eyes. Asking for opinions from contacts you trust or admire can help you see things in a new light and overcome roadblocks that you might not have known how to circumvent otherwise.



3. Get an answer to every question

As long as you have a strong network of professional connections, you can be confident that someone within your sphere will be able to answer even your toughest questions. And, if there's no definitive answer, you'll have a solid sounding board to bounce ideas off and put into action step-by-step plans to tackle bigger problems.

4. Maybe get referrals while building trust

If I have a couple who want a ceremony on a beach two hours south of me, but they don't have the budget to cover my travel fees, I know there are other Celebrants I can refer them to. That instills a level of trust that will be remembered so that when that same client has friend who wants another ceremony, that client will know two celebrants that they can refer. If there is a double booking at a venue, your being able to refer the venue and/or

client to another trusted celebrant in the region can build trust and faith in your ability to deliver and that celebrant is then more likely to reciprocate.

If a couple is not a good fit for you, or you not for them, referring them to another local celebrant who you know will be a good match, highlights your professionalism while instilling a level of trust that will be remembered and when that same client has friend who wants another ceremony, or the other celebrant finds themselves in a similar circumstance, you can be confident of a cross referral.



MARKETING TIPS



Ask questions instead of giving information.

Seems odd to write when I am bombarding you with information but let's put it into context.

Time and time again, we are all willing to bombard clients with information but if you rephrase statements to questions, your client gains the perception that you are interested in them. e.g. instead of saying "When you walk down the aisle, you will walk to the ceremonial space", you say "Would you like to walk down the aisle to the ceremonial space?". It is subtle but effective.

When a study was conducted, it was found that when the client was given loads of information, they were confused, but when they were asked questions giving the same information, they believed that they had been listened to and been given a voice.

Set your fee to cover your costs and give you a profit?

What? How is that marketing?

Your clients will have a budget in mind and if they find that you are too high or too low, they will avoid you but if you price without profit, you will find that your business will fail.

I regularly get bookings well away from my home and clients are happy to pay the extra fee even though they could have booked someone closer at a much lower fee. Couples have said that they had researched prices for celebrants and decided they didn't want a bargain priced ceremony, they wanted quality and happily paid without hesitation.

If you focus on price, so will the client, but focus on your delivery and they will as well.

Be confident!

Make it work!

Know & target your market



Sounds obvious but is so often ignored.

Ask why couples have booked you.

Review all of your past bookings and look for commonality.

What is it that has attracted couples to you and what have they said in their reviews?

You might be surprised.

All of my couples are over 25 and all want a fun ceremony and so my marketing targets those aspects.