

7 NETWORKING TIPS

YOUR HOLIDAY NETWORKING GUIDE

BY THE AUTHORS OF *WORK THE POND!*

SHEPA LEARNING COMPANY

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& GAYLE HALLGREN-REZAC



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1. POP IN, POP OUT

The holidays offer some of the most active networking opportunities, but for most people it's also the busiest time for family and friends. Many people say no to invitations because they are worried it will consume too much time. ("A whole evening; I can't do it.") Our advice is this: If a client or customer has invited you to a business networking event, or holiday reception, show up even if you can only spend thirty minutes*. Make sure you use the time at the event to network effectively.

- Say hello to as many people as you can. In other words, don't get trapped in a conversation with one person! Of course, practice [Positive Networking®](#).
- Seek out the host and thank him or her for the invitation.
- If your presence will be noticed when you leave, let the host know that "it was important for you to stop by, even though you have a family commitment" – and yes, this could simply be decorating gingerbread cookies!
- It's uncool to say you can "only stay a short time because you've got other parties to go to" that night. It's better to say nothing.



*Obviously, if it's a sit-down dinner, or a very small group, then "pop in, pop out" isn't possible.

If it's a company social event, show up. Your attendance may **not** be noticed, but your '**no show**' definitely will be!



2. EASY-TO-DO & ESSENTIAL

Since you are going to take the time during this busy holiday season to do business networking, make sure you do the absolutely easiest and most basic thing – have business cards on you. Here’s how you can make sure that happens:

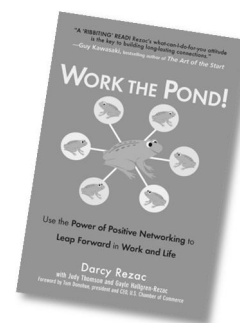
Take a look at the clothes you plan to wear during the month of December and put business cards in the pockets of every jacket. For women, put a stash of business cards in every purse you plan to use, including evening purses. The number of times we hear people tell us that they didn’t bring cards or, in the case of women, “I switched purses”, is mind-boggling.



3. THE BUDDY SYSTEM

If the idea of all this networking gives you hives, take a tag teammate to holiday business events. If the invitation says bring a guest, do so. If the invitation doesn’t mention a guest, ask the host if you can bring a guest. It’s a nice touch if you make sure that you give the name of your guest to the organizer. That way when you arrive at the registration table your guest also has a pre-printed name tag and someone doesn’t have to get out a Sharpie and make a handwritten nametag.

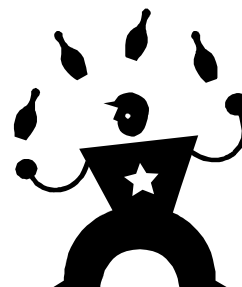
But, if you have to go **solo** learn the seven steps of *The Network Dance: N.E.T.WO.R.K.*® Read [Work the Pond!](#) e-book to acquire the foundation skills of networking. Whet your appetite for networking with [7 Secrets of Positive Networking](#)® (that’s free!)





4. NO EATING AND GREETING

There's always "something going around" during the holidays, and all the mingling and munching might make you nervous. Here's a simple thing to do – don't eat and greet at the same time. This healthy networking tip is pretty self-explanatory, but there's another reason to avoid the juggling act of canapés-wine-handshake. Think about how liberated you'll feel if you go to an event and can circulate with your hands free, or at least one hand free. Save the rum balls and shortbread cookie raid for your visit to the relatives.



5. DO SOMETHING SURPRISING

Send holiday cards! In this world of social media and long-winded but earnest musical e-cards this tip may seem like an antiquated idea. Who sends handwritten greeting cards anymore? That's exactly the point!

If you send cards you'll be memorable. Include a handwritten greeting in every card. Give the recipient a way to reconnect with you. Rather than putting a business card inside the card, you can put your contact information including Twitter, LinkedIn, right on the holiday card. Any printing company will customize cards for you.



If you are still not 'sold' on the idea of sending an annual holiday card, just remember **how hard it is** to find reasons to reconnect with some people in your network. The season is the reason.



6. SMALL GIFTS

Gone are the days of receiving the bottle of scotch in a purple velvet bag with a gold tassel or a monogrammed pen set for your desk. Think about a small gift that you can give people on your team, service providers and anyone else who has made your life easier this past year. Avoid dollar store fun gifts and knickknacks (Re-Gift Alert). A sweet treat is always good.

The Cookie Elf



In their former lives, Judy Thomson and Gayle Hallgren-Rezac had a symbiotic relationship. Gayle was one of the founders of [Cookies By George](#) and Judy was a chartered accountant who, in her role as Director of HR, was in charge of a large staff. Every year Judy would order small shiny red boxes of Gayle's famous cookies. Judy would make sure she arrived at work before anyone else, and would put these little boxes on each person's desk. She was the "cookie elf" and people looked forward to this small gift every year.



7. BE A DO-IT-YOURSELF-ER

Be the one to organize a holiday get-together, in other words, be the connector. You don't have to foot the bill; you are just the organizer. You want to make this easy for yourself so find a restaurant with a private dining room. Restaurants will do a set holiday menu. Make sure they include the tip in the price. Let everyone know the cost up front.

Who to invite: Why not mix it up with a group of people who may not all know each other? Or, you can start a tradition of bringing a group of like-minded people together (example: you all work in the tech sector or it's a group of friends from university who are all working in different fields).

How to organize: Don't make the group too big – around 16, not more than 20. Why? Private rooms at restaurants are usually quite intimate. The restaurant will probably give you a number of options for fixed price menus. They do this regularly so can help you out with choices and logistics.

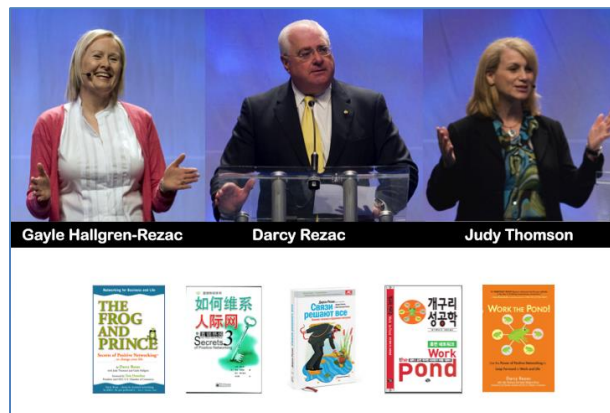


Do some ice-breaking before: If there will be people who don't know one and other (and that's always a good thing) you can help break the ice by doing pre-event introductions. Once people have RSVP-ed send everyone a short email. Ask them to answer a few questions. Here are some ideas:

- Does someone still fill your Christmas stocking? Yes/No
- How do you “earn a crust” (what's your job)?
- What's the one thing that most people don't know about you?
- Are you a fan of fruitcake? Yes/No

Ask everyone to include a 'selfie' with this questionnaire. Before the event send out this list (with selfies) to everyone. It will start some conversations! Hey, if you do an event, tell us about it: info@shepalearning.com

NETWORKING SPECIALISTS



Darcy Rezac, Gayle Hallgren-Rezac and Judy Thomson are speakers and co-authors of *Work The Pond! Use the Power of Positive Networking to Leap Forward in Work and Life* (Prentice Hall).

Darcy is The Storyteller, an inspiring keynote speaker on *Positive Networking®* and *Face-to-Face in a Digital World™*. He is managing director emeritus of The Vancouver Board of Trade, an internationally recognized business association, and he has held executive positions with the Canadian federal government, Alcan and General Motors.

Gayle and Judy are The Dynamic Duo, whose conference opener keynote *LeapStart!™* changes the dynamic of any conference or national meeting. Gayle and Judy are also known for their engaging interactive workshops on *Positive Networking®*, *Positive Communication™*, and *The Engaged Woman Leader™*.

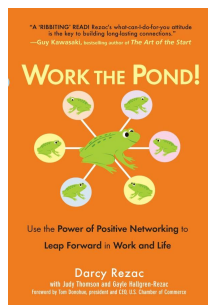
Gayle is an entrepreneur (founder, Cookies by George) and a recipient of the YWCA Woman of Distinction award. Judy is a chartered accountant and corporate director. Judy was part of the startup team of the world famous Rocky Mountaineer Raitours and held executive positions in human resources and administration with global companies in Canada and Asia.

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LEARN MORE NETWORKING SKILLS

Everything you wanted to learn about the foundation skills of networking is in this book.



WORK THE POND! Use the Power of Positive Networking to Leap Forward in Work and Life

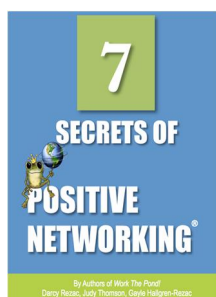
Darcy Rezac, Judy Thomson and Gayle Hallgren-Rezac

Available: trade paperback, e-book for Apple devices, Kindle version, and audio book.

<http://shepalearning.com/books/work-the-pond/>



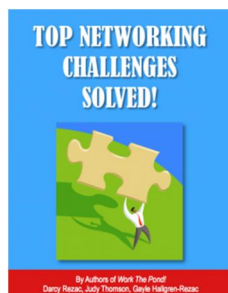
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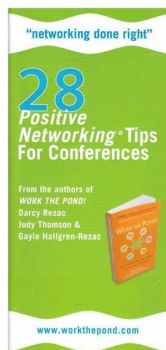
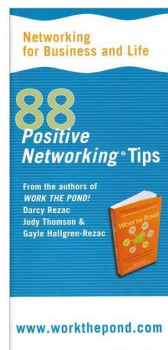


Everyone has networking challenges and we've solved the top ten challenges.

You can download it here:

<http://shepalearning.com/networking-challenges-eguide/>

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<http://shepalearning.com/quick-guides/>

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