

See You at the Forum!!

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Some 20 plus years ago 'Networking' became all the rage. One used any venue or gathering to achieve one's networking goals as business moved into the era of the marketer. Everyone had to be one and it was of greater importance than almost anything else one did in business. Soon after this followed the specific networking function, the networking component, and even the speed networking event!

What was almost lost in this process was the individuals need to learn and grow, functional attendance was more marketing and learning was relegated to specific training courses or programmes.

However what one must not lose sight of is the true benefit and value of Peer Forums, Discussion Groups, Industry or Regional Think Tanks and even Collaborative Board Programmes. These are all vehicles through which individuals can learn and grow both professionally and as a member of society. We are all human and thus we are all prone to making the odd mistake. In these small groups the individual is offered a real opportunity to test their ideas with others without formally putting them into process first. There is a real ability to both learn from others mistakes and constructively contribute to their professional development and minimise their mistakes.

These sorts of venues or activities also creatively develop the individuals reasoning and debating skills as the nature of the activities promote thought and reasoned debate. The value of these skills should never be underestimated and are vividly missing in those that have only been developed by a training style teaching environment. They truly allow the potential future business leaders to blossom and develop amongst their peers.

One increasing style of opportunity that is developing is the various Collaborative Board Programmes run by either specialist operators or local Chambers and the like. In these a group of commonly around 10 to 14 business owners or leaders are put into a singular gathering that then becomes a 'de facto' Board for each of the member businesses. The groups consist of non conflicting businesses and the business leader has the opportunity to raise issues and problems that they would not be able to raise in their normal place of business. Very effective when well run but completely ineffective if the mix of members is not right.

Even with all of the benefits and practicalities that are offered above, for those that are still die hard marketers; well these groups will also offer you an opportunity to network and sell your wares.

So for an evening of fun and frivolity, interest and learning, knowledge and experience, with a little splash of marketing, let's do like the Roman's and see you see you at the next business forum!