

## Richard Gee

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G'Day!

That's Aussie speak for Hello!

### Update from the USA!

Well I had no 'white Christmas' to report in Philadelphia but we did have a lovely time celebrating the holidays with people we love. One of my highlights was spending a day in New York with my dear friend and colleague Joan, we treated ourselves to a show and lunch it was the perfect way to start the holiday celebrations. I also closed my office and took off two weeks and enjoyed relaxation, catching up with friends, reconnecting, going to the movies, rearranging and clearing and setting new goals for 2008. It is important each year to allocate time to refresh and refocus. 2007 was an incredibly busy year for me with huge growth that saw me traveling all around the US and Canada most weeks to meet with fabulous new clients. In all of my meetings last year I identified that companies in the US still like to do business predominately over breakfast or lunch. To ensure you are being productive and your 2008 business development goals can be achieved I have created strategies you can apply when organizing your next lunch appointment - enjoy!

### How to Host a Productive Business Lunch

Although I wasn't a huge fan of lunch meetings because so much time can be wasted, it surprises me how so much business is still conducted at these types of meetings. If you want to build your business and connections this year decide to include lunch meetings in your business development strategy and make the time productive.

#### Before the Lunch

**Select your outfit** - as you only have 7 seconds to make a first impression you want to ensure it is the best one every time. In that 7 seconds people assess your age, your income, your marital status and your income... all that in 7 seconds! For a lunch appointment choose solid dark colours and slim sleeves. You will be seated so make sure your top or shirt has simple clean lines with no fuss or frills pay special attention to your sleeve length to avoid any embarrassing incidents with your sleeves in food or drink. The only clothing and jewellery details your client can see is from your waist up so pay special attention to your tie choice, scarf or jewelry to ensure you don't look cluttered.



#### Recommended Product of the Month



If you want to boost your business development activities in 2008 buy this book today.

**Select jewelry well** - if you are eating lunch you want to ensure your jewelry doesn't distract your clients. Have an elegant watch (sports watches are not acceptable), no more than one ring per hand and bracelets should not make noise or touch the table when you eat.

**Develop relationships** - develop strong relationships with several venues to assist a successful business lunch. Choose a cafe, mid priced lunch venue and an expensive lunch option. Get to know the staff, servers, host and menu. This will ensure every time you host a client or colleague at these venues they will provide you exceptional service.

**Know the menu** - be familiar with at least 3 options from each menu at your chosen locations that you want to take your clients. This will impress your guest when you can make several recommendations for them when you are first seated.

**Invite and pay** – if you invite a guest to join you for lunch you pay. It is simple. Let them know you would like them to join you as your guest for lunch; these simple words avoid confusion of who is paying for the meal.

**Don't 'pick someone's brains'** – this is one of the ugliest statements I have ever heard. It isn't the impression (or visual) you want. If you are inviting someone to lunch to seek their advice, get their feedback or to brainstorm with them, let them know that is your agenda. I would prefer people are clear about what they need and how I can best help them when I get invited to lunch by someone else.

**Reserve and request** - when you make the reservation advise the venue you are hosting an important client and want their best table for quiet, productive conversation. Place a request for their best table where possible.

**Book and advise** - when making the reservation also advise the venue that you want to leave a credit card when you arrive to ensure no check is brought to the table. Ask them to be discreet while serving you as it is important that the client is focused on the conversation not the disruption.

**Arrive early and pay** - When inviting a guest to lunch arrive early and advise the host not to bring your check to the table. Advise your server to place all charges plus a 20% tip on the credit card and advise you will collect the receipt when you leave. This simple act is elegant and avoids any awkward conversations at the table. Note: My clients call this 'pulling a Neen' as I do it frequently and they now do it with their own clients and important meetings.

**Arrive early and pay for your first drink** - if you arrive early and order a drink before your host or guest has arrived, pay cash for your first drink.

**Don't be seated** - if you are waiting for your guest don't wait at the table (unless they are running extremely late) wait in the bar area or reception for them so you can be seated together.

**Enjoy the view** - if there is a view from the restaurant always allow your guest to have the best vantage point to enjoy the view.

### **At the Lunch**

**Don't drink at lunch** - this standard was very obvious to me when I first moved from Australia to the USA. In Australia people order alcohol at lunch and dinner with clients. In the US it seems most acceptable to order iced tea or sparkling water. I would highly recommend in the US that you don't order alcohol at lunch and stick to safe choices like sparkling water, iced tea or soda.

**No smelly foods** - never order foods with a strong smell i.e. seafood, asparagus, egg, onion. These foods have a strong smell when raw and cooked so you want to avoid your breath also smelling after eating these

items.

**Avoid mess** - never order food that requires significant effort or can potentially spill or cause mess i.e. spaghetti and sauce, noodles, corn on the cob, crab and other seafood choices. Save these food orders for your personal time, not work time.

**Take charge** - as the host your guest is looking to you for direction. As soon as you are seated place your napkin in your lap and pick up the menu and make suggestions for them. By investigating the menu first you can get this out of the way and then talk about business.

**Set an agenda** – once you have discussed the small talk and the menu take the opportunity to explain to your client why you invited them to lunch. Be clear and concise about your agenda and focus on the relationship building for the remainder of the lunch. This will maximize your time and they will appreciate your clarity.

#### After the lunch

**Tip well** - if your server has assisted you by being discreet and handling your check tip them well. Send a thank you note - if you received exceptional service and had a great experience, send a thank you note to the venue. They will remember you and provide exceptional service again next time.

**Buy gift cards** - if you eat at a venue regularly, buy gift cards that you can keep for future lunches and also to give away to clients. Occasionally when I take someone to lunch and they have really enjoyed it, I send a follow up note saying "I really enjoyed meeting with you at "insert venue name". As you also seemed to enjoy it, I have enclosed a gift card for you. Enjoy! " This always delights my guest.

Applying these simple strategies will ensure you are polished, productive and achieve your business goals. Now who should I take to lunch tomorrow?

## Recommended Events

Save the Date - if you are within walking or driving distance make a note in your calendar to attend the Women's Resource Center Luncheon on May 22nd at the Union League of Philadelphia - you can find out more at [www.womensresourcecenter.org](http://www.womensresourcecenter.org)

## Recommended Websites

Thinking about sending Valentines Day cards or flowers to your clients and friends? Consider something more permanent than flowers and plant a tree in their name. Find out how you can help save the environment and make someone feel special this Valentine's Day - check out [www.futureoflife.org](http://www.futureoflife.org)

What are you doing to be more 'green' in 2008? One of my favourite daily updates is from Ideal Bite - they have quick green tips that take only 1 minute to read each day but can have a huge effect on our environment and our buying behaviors - check them out at [www.idealbite.com](http://www.idealbite.com)

## A Productivity Tip from Neen's

### Virtual Assistant, Maria Novey



Need a luncheon or dinner reservation in Philadelphia or any other major city and can't find the restaurant's phone number? Visit [www.opentable.com](http://www.opentable.com) -- you can make a reservation online and receive a confirmation. You even receive dining points by booking online.

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