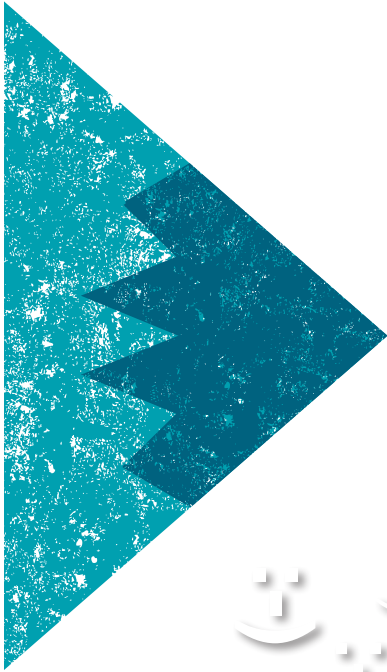


Networking – **beyond the wine and cheese**



- Why and where to network
- How to enter and leave a group conversation
- What to say about yourself and the firm
- How to follow-up

Why network?



Every major survey examining the origin of new work for lawyers indicates that personal referrals and word-of-mouth are by far the most important source.

If a client has a positive experience they will tell on average 2-4 people.

If, however, they have had a negative experience they will tell between 12-16 people.

It is therefore crucial that any ambitious individual networks to make new contacts, reinstate or build on existing relationships and in general maintain a high personal profile in the local marketplace.



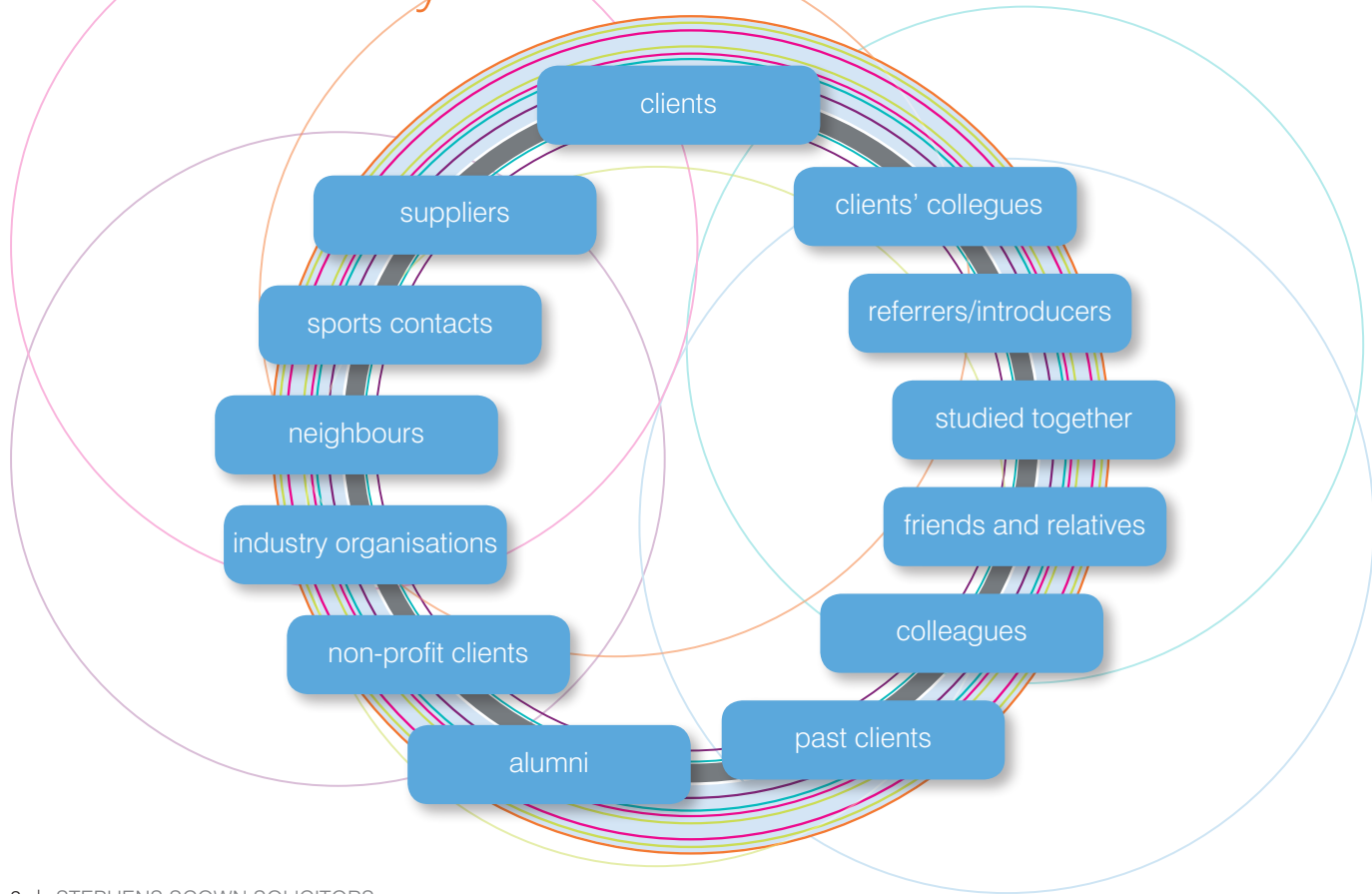
Relationships – not selling

One golden rule that will make you more effective at networking and will remove a lot of the discomfort that some lawyers face is that **networking is absolutely, definitely, not about selling.**

It is about building strong relationships with people who are likely to need your help at some stage in the future.



You already have a network...



Even before you embark on any networking in a traditional sense, consider the contacts you have already made in your personal and professional life.

Using the below as a check-list, is there anyone that you have an established rapport and credibility with, who has somehow slipped out of contact?

person	how can I reconnect?
<i>Eric Example</i>	<i>Through LinkedIn or inviting to our Business Class events</i>

Where should I network?



While dedicated networking events, dinners, hospitality and seminars are likely to be important elements of your networking plans – do not stop there.

Networking can take many forms, from saying goodbye to a contact in the car park, to attending a conference or simply bumping into an ex-colleague in a bar or on a train.

1

Attending

sector based events

will help to bolster your knowledge of that sector while displaying your sector commitment to clients and prospective clients.

2

Be supportive of our own

marketing activity

for example, support hosted or sponsored seminars and ensure that important contacts are invited to the right events.

3

Check out our

Networking Calendar

in the public folder in Microsoft Outlook – this highlights the key regional events and who from the firm is attending. If you plan to attend an external event please let the Marketing Team know so we can add it to the calendar.

Tip: *Network whilst delivering a piece of work. Who else within that organisation could you build a relationship with?*

Who do you want to meet?

Do not network purely with your peers.

Remember: Lions gather where the buffalos drink!

While it may feel comfortable to network with other lawyers, is this really where your clients are finding their suppliers?



Tip: *Ask a client which conferences and events they favour – as it is likely that their peers will do the same.*

The right event?

Not all types of networking or events will be worth leaving your desk, couch, family or cat for.

Give each event at least two chances and then review whether it is attracting the right type of delegates, from the right industries, with the right level of seniority.

Be prepared

Too many busy people dash straight from their desk to an event, often without doing simple things in advance which will make the event a lot more valuable.




Try to get hold of a **delegate list** and identify who you would like to meet at the event. Sometimes these lists are publicly available so you needn't feel you are asking for state secrets.

Google the businesses you want to meet and read their news stories as well as taking a look at their website.

What issues are they facing? Make sure you are familiar with stories of topical interest within their company, industry or geography.

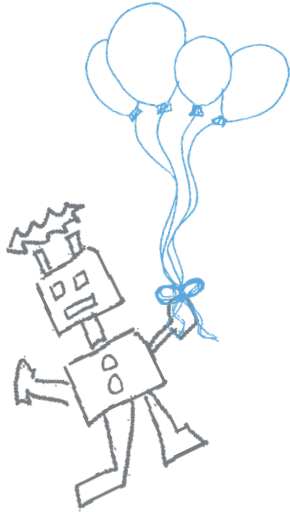
Think about how you could help the people that are attending – how can work that you and the firm deliver be applied and made relevant to this audience?

Things to take with you

-  A pen and paper
-  Lots of up-to-date business cards.
-  In general, taking marketing collateral will be considered too 'salesy' for a networking situation. Instead, you could offer to keep in touch with your new contact and send them on some relevant information at a later date.

Tip: *As soon as you can, write on each business card where and when you met them and any agreed actions. Then forward the card/details to Marketing to add to LawSoft. Also check with Marketing which events & mailing groups you can add them to.*

How to enter a group/conversation



For anyone who has stood at the edge of a crowded room, full of people who appear completely at ease, you may welcome the following simple tips:

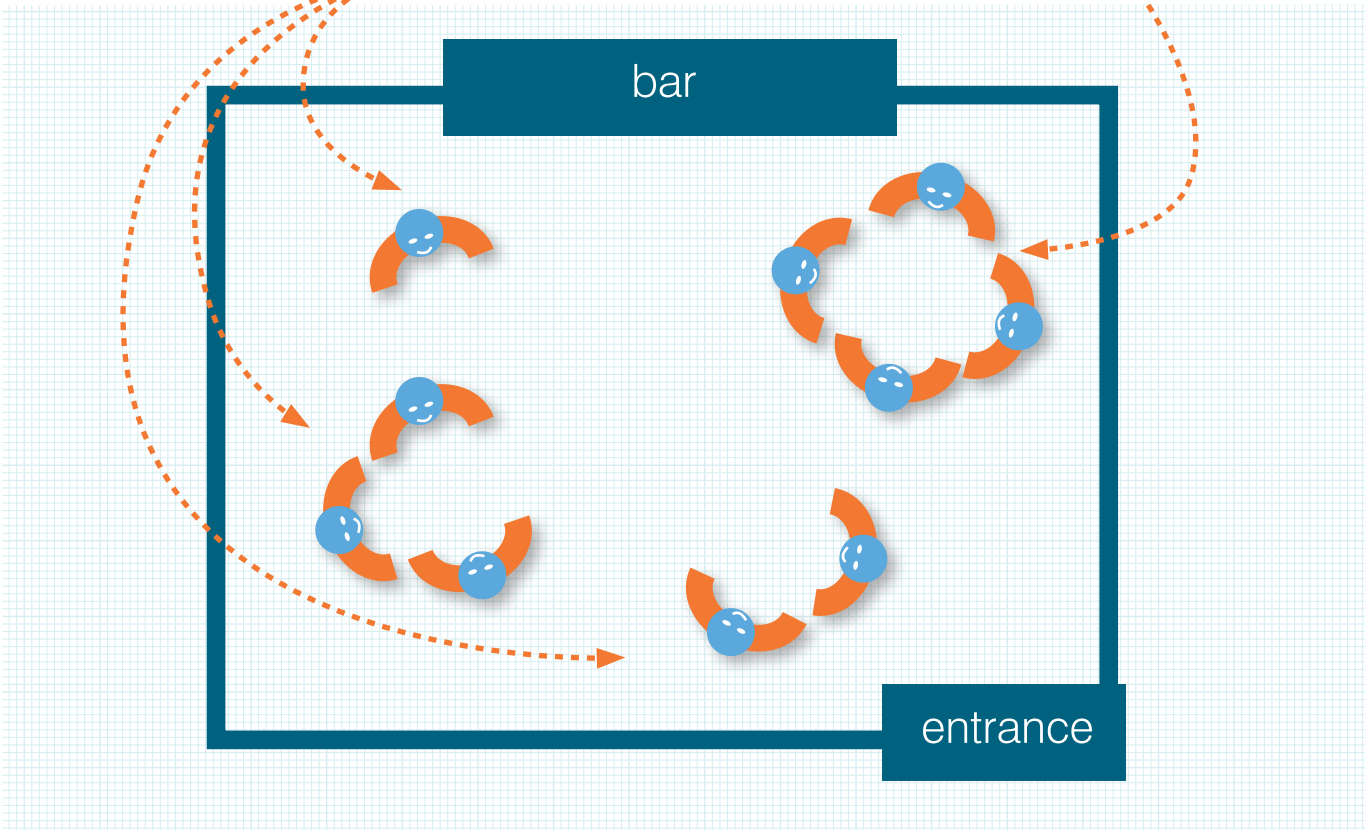
Do not compare how you feel inside, with how others appear. Often people will put on a confident front at networking events when deep down they will have the same perfectly natural hopes, fears and anxieties that you do.

People on their own are usually the easiest to approach – and will often welcome the fact that you have made the effort to initiate conversation. Simply shake their hand, smile and introduce yourself.



People in **'open'** groups are the next easiest to approach - usually they have left a gap and they are clearly open to being joined. Simply approach them and ask "May I join you?"

'Closed' groups are harder to join, but if you want to, catch the eye of whoever is speaking and others in the group will follow their gaze. Then wait for a natural pause in the conversation to ask if you can join them.





“Be a good listener. Your ears will never get you in trouble,” *Frank Tyger*

Think about some of the people you enjoy speaking with most. Are they great talkers or excellent listeners? Often it is the latter and the benefit of being interested – rather than trying to be interesting – is that you are much more likely to gain intelligence and insight from the people you meet.

Tip: *Ask smart questions and listen well. Be more Michael Parkinson and less Michael McIntyre.*

Here's some examples of the types of questions you could ask

- What's taking up most of your time at work at the moment?
- How's business – are you finding things picking up?
- What do you make of [relay local news story e.g. John Lewis opening; sporting event; national news topic]?
- How does working here compare with your previous life in London?
- Other clients are telling us that the toughest thing for them is retaining talented senior managers. Are you experiencing that too?
- How do you find working in (sector/company A) compares with your previous experience in (sector/company B)?
- Has Jeff (the new senior appointment) had a chance to make an impact yet?
- Most people we work with in (sector) are saying that the government initiatives to boost lending have had minimal impact – what do you think?
- How has the change of ownership affected you?



What to say about you and the firm

...once upon a time

Throughout history, people have passed views and information through stories (think fairy tales and folk music). A narrative is much more engaging than a list of features and processes.

You do not need to be the next JK Rowling. Simply, by relating stories around client examples you can help to engage clients on an emotional level and articulate how Stephens Scown can help them.

Here's two fictitious examples to give you an idea.

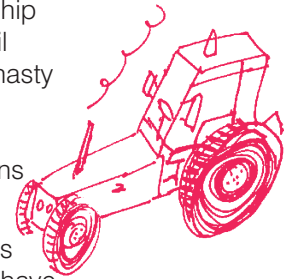
Story 1 – to illustrate our joined-up approach

There is a landowner in Cornwall, who we have been advising for the last 23 years on a whole range of commercial and family matters.

Usually a refreshingly upbeat and optimistic man, we noticed around 2 years ago that he has lost his usual gusto. He no longer had the same energy and said he was sick with worry and had lost his appetite for dairy farming. He'd been thinking of alternative land uses but felt other people were trying to force him down a particular route.

Phil Reed, the Partner who has a longstanding relationship with him, spent hours listening to his worries about retail pressures, succession and his desire not to make any hasty decisions – and decided to arrange a lunch with Sonya Bedford and Kirstie Apps (experts in renewable energy and holiday parks), off-the-clock to explore all the options open to him.

Since then, he has decided upon a creative but cautious re-use of 50% of his estate – and recently his concerns have been less about breaking even and more about investing profits... the beaming smile has returned and he is being an absolute joy to work with.



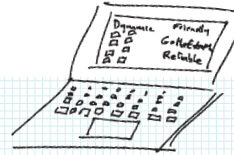
Story 2 – to illustrate how we can come-up with cost-effective solutions

One woman we've started working with recently, in a very similar position to you, had also built a hugely successful agency from scratch. However, she had let people issues spiral out of control and was losing sleep because she had one very disgruntled employee who was threatening trouble. She was really worried about the impact on other employees - and had no clarity on how much it would cost to deal with it.

We were able to offer her a fixed-fee service that quickly dealt with the immediate problems while putting her mind at ease that things would be run and documented in a much more professional way going forward.



What's your story?



Provide your story here...

Key elements of a story...

- A problem/pressure/issue that needed to be addressed
- Key messages related to the point you wish to make
- A human interest angle
- Descriptive language to paint a mental picture

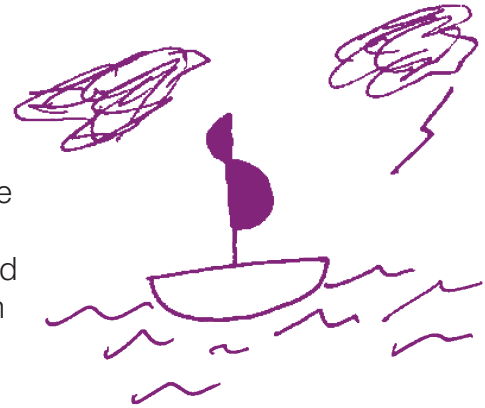
Can you relate a story which...

...illustrates the benefits your legal expertise can bring?

...displays how our sector or client service approach can benefit clients?

What's the firm's key messages?

- **We will always put the client at the heart of what we do and provide exceptional client service** – use our Scownie Stories to demonstrate this
- **We take a holistic approach to our clients' needs** – we take the time to understand your business and personal affairs, offer advice and we have the local connections to help you further
- **We are committed to delivering solutions** – we will invest the time getting to know you so we can be more effective and help you even more
- **We will provide the right person to manage our clients' relationship** – we will give you one person to manage your relationship and act as a conduit to our legal expertise across different areas
- **We are committed to the South West** – whilst many other legal firms are moving to London, Bristol etc we are proud of our west country roots and will invest time and resources to help the region become more successful



Scownie Stories

The key priority is to support the firm on its focus of improving client service as this will help us to retain clients, win new clients, differentiate our offering compared to our competitors and help to grow the firm.

Ask the marketing team for our Scownie Stories of exceptional client service and recount the story. Also, please let the team know of any of your own success stories.



A conversational check-list

Do

- Listen first: keep what you say meaningful to them
- Explain your point using Scownie stories about how you/the firm are able to help
- When asked what you do, keep it short and results focused
- Be knowledgeable about industry concerns
- Be enthusiastic
- Smile: they will smile back!
- Remember names
- Remember Stephens Scown's key messages
- Do what you say you will do

Tip: *Think about what impression you are leaving people with after they have met you. What would you think of you?*

Don't

- Interrupt or monopolise conversation
- Spout your 'rank, file and serial number' e.g. I'm Richard Spout, an Associate in the dispute resolution team in Truro
- Share a stack of marketing literature
- Try to close a sale there and then
- Give 'soggy' or over-bearing hand shakes
- Waste time
- Be a bore
- Try to out-do others or offer advice if not invited to
- Promise things that you can not deliver

How to leave a group or end a conversation – all good things must end...



Tip: *Whenever you want to move on, where possible, introduce a new person to the conversation and then leave. This will remove any social awkwardness and if done well, you will have displayed that you have listened to what your new contact is saying, you will display that you are keen to help and each side will thank you for the introduction.*



Determine if contact is likely to be useful & if not then politely move on

Old Boots?

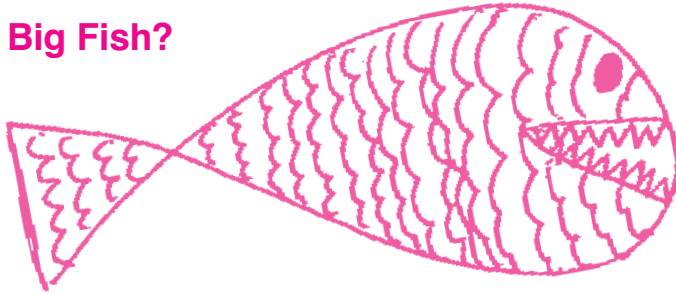
This is not always possible though and exiting a conversation at a networking event can be just as hard as starting one – here are a few pointers to help

- A desire to visit the bar or bathroom is fine – but if overused, will raise a few eyebrows!
- Be polite but firm and confident, exchange business cards and arrange a follow-up 1-2-1 meeting (if relevant).
- If you have seen someone else you want to talk to simply say *“I’ve just seen someone/John who I need to talk to, so would you excuse me and I will hopefully catch-up with you later.”*
- To simply recognise that the purpose of the night is to network - and then move on - will usually suffice. *“Well it’s been good to talking to you but since I am here I must do some networking.”*
- Or you can use the excuse of getting another drink / food, *“It was good to talk to you but I’m absolutely starving so I must go & grab some food. Hopefully I will see you later.”*



Tip: *When you do leave a conversation, move at least a quarter of the way across the room so that you are not standing side by side while choosing who next to speak with.*

Big Fish?



Suggest a meeting.

“It’s been great to meet you. Maybe we could meet-up for a coffee to talk further. I’m really interested in X / I could explain how x could work to your benefit in more detail.”

Or ensure that you follow-up after the event.

How to follow-up

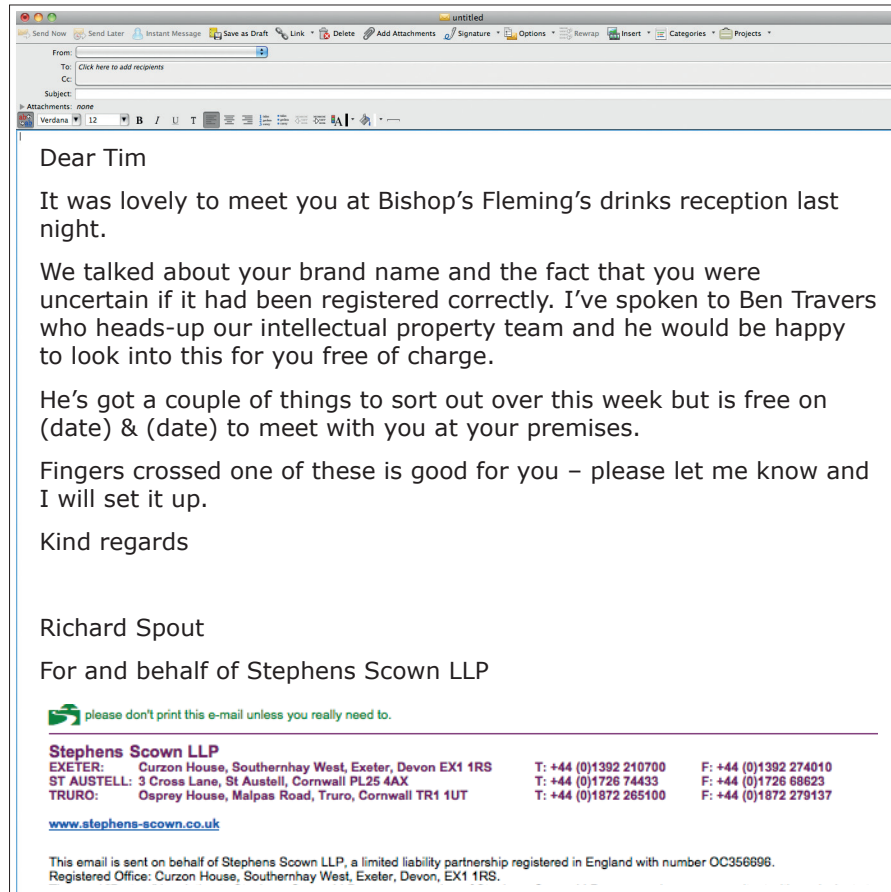
The post event follow-up is as important as the event itself.

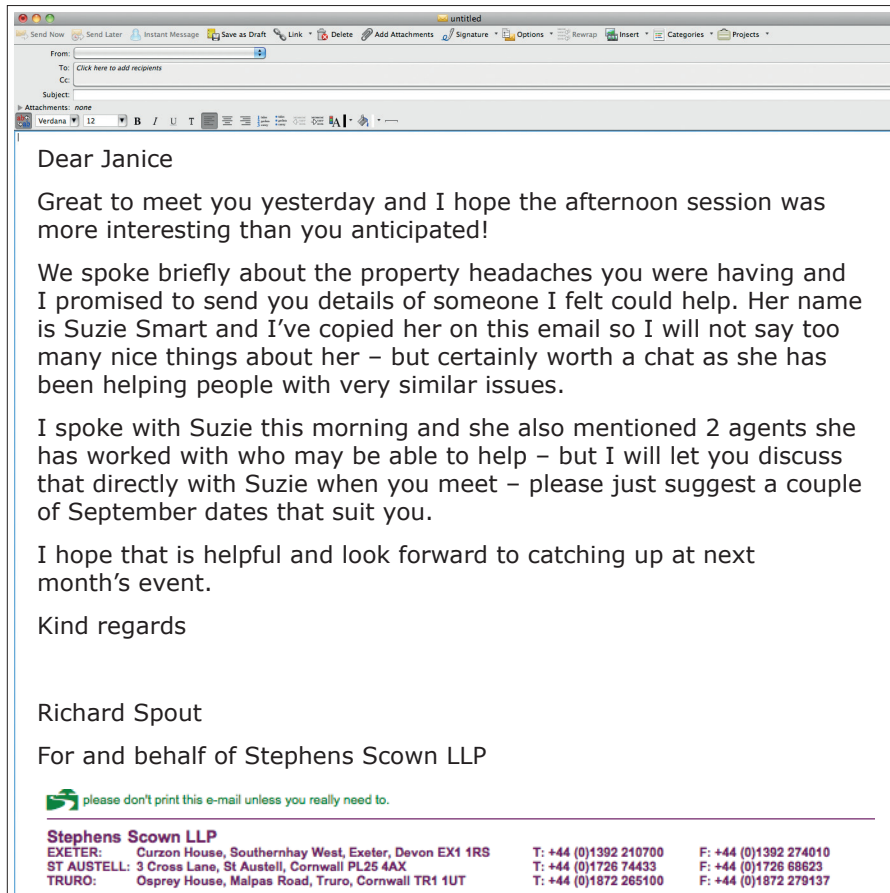
Prompt and relevant communication will ensure the success of your time spent networking and help sow the seeds of your relationship.

- Connect with your new contacts on LinkedIn.
- Check on LawSoft if someone at the firm already has a relationship – if not then pass the details onto Marketing who will add them to the system against your name.
- Arrange 1-2-1’s (meetings, coffee, lunch etc) with those you wish to meet.
- Identify things that may be useful to them – an interesting news article on an area that you discussed?
- Review the success of the networking event. Would you attend again? If so, add future dates to your diary and allow preparation time in advance.

Tip: *You cannot force someone else to take action, so if you are intent on building a relationship, it is up to you to take the first step and engage in a way that is useful and valuable to the other person. If done well, they will usually reciprocate... and the relationship begins.*

Here's a couple of follow-up email examples:





untitled

Send Now Send Later Instant Message Save as Draft Link Delete Add Attachments Signature Options Rewrap Insert Categories Projects

From:

To: [Click here to add recipients](#)

Subject:

Attachments: none

Verdana 12 B J U T

Dear Keith

Good to see you last night at the seminar – and thanks for briefly sharing your plans.


As was clear, it was not the right place to discuss things properly so why don't we have a proper meeting here for an hour – there are a couple of my Partners who we may be able to call in if helpful – and after that we can have that long overdue lunch.

How do 10th, 18th or 19th September suit?

Kind regards

Richard Spout

For and behalf of Stephens Scown LLP

 please don't print this e-mail unless you really need to.

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Networking FAQs

What do I do if a competitor joins the group?

There are various options depending on the situation. You can:



Acknowledge their arrival and excuse yourself from the group as it was time to move on anyway.

If in conversation with someone in the group you could move them to one side or suggest you grab a refill to continue the conversation.

If you want to build a relationship with someone in the group but can not pull them to one side, you could say how much you enjoyed meeting them, suggest a follow-up meeting and hand over your business card – they will normally do the same – and say that you will drop them an email/give them a call.

Stay in the group but always remain courteous towards the competition.

What do I do if someone becomes over friendly or makes me feel uncomfortable?

This is rare but can happen. Politely make your excuses (get a drink, toilet etc.) and leave. If the person gives you their business card do not reciprocate – you could make an excuse about having just ran out of cards.

What if there is someone on the guest list I really want to meet but I don't know what they look like?

You could ask colleagues if they know the person, Google for information and check their company website as there may be photos online.

Failing that you could mention it to the hosting organisation or those manning the registration desk if the person arrives would they point them out to you. You can then check at intermittent times if they have arrived.

If you don't manage to meet them – it's a good opportunity to send them a letter or email stating you were hoping to see them at the event but unfortunately you missed them and then follow-up with a phone call to arrange a meeting.



If you have any other questions, then please do contact the Marketing team.





