



## Effective Executive Hosts Build Equity in Relationships

Much has been written about how to entertain clients. So much so that the core values of “hosting” often get over thought.” Your goal is to build equity in your marketing relationships.

There is no one set way to “Win Friends and Influence People” (to borrow a phrase from the great salesman and sale trainer, Dale Carnegie.) A benchmark of protocol does seem to prevail among successful executive hosts.

- Don't talk business unless your customer brings it up...and no sales pitches. When you do that, you harden the buyer/seller roles that each of you play. That's exactly the opposite of what you want to have happen. Instead, search for personal common ground – things that you have in common with your customer. You are trying to get to know each other as people, not as role-players.
- *When you are an executive host, you should attend to all the details. That means that you make the dinner reservations, you see to the parking and transportation. If you are at a sporting event, you have cash to pay for beer and hot dogs, etc. Think the evening through in detail, and prepare for all the contingencies.*
- *“Be gracious and moderate in everything you do. Strategic entertaining can be one of your most powerful strategies. It is a way to build relationships which provide you with a competitive edge, while, at the same time, meets the customer's preference to do business with people he/she knows.”*Source: **Dave Kahle Professional Sales Trainer and author of 10 Secrets of Time Management for Salespeople**

- Speaking of manners, do you have problems at the dinner table with which glass, what bread plate etc? Here's an easy tip to avoid making a bad impression. Under the table form a “b” with your left hand fingers; that's your bread plate on that side; form a “lowercase d” with your right hand fingers—that's your drink on that side. This may not be a winner for you, but at least you won't behave like a loser during your business meal.

So the advice in a nutshell is to think ahead, plan, attend to details etc, etc—WAIT—where does this time come from? And are you really an expert at choosing events, buying tickets, arranging limos? Is your secretary or administrative assistant—doesn't that person have line responsibilities too?

This is the perfect scenario to use an added value consultant expert. An intermediary such as Avanti has contacts, creative ideas, systems and procedures to save you money, time and improve your overall strategy. From where to sit at a stadium, to getting the tickets on time, are all details you can subcontract to help your business grow. In many cases, Avanti will be able to tie your needs into promotional, or advertising events. Do send invitations; present your tickets in an attractive package, do the things that communicate that you are interested in your customers well-being and that you attend to details and can be trusted with their business.

Finally, the bottom line is, hire a firm that can maximize your strategy; and make it a strategy—not a whim. See why Fortune 500 industrial and service companies look to Avanti for effective corporate hospitality and entertainment.