



LET'S face IT

Networking is an important factor in the success of any business but it is probably fair to say that in Superyachting it is not only very important but essential for those crew seeking work. Top yachting journalists and superyacht industry commentators; **Frances and Michael Howorth** explain how and why.

The art of successful face to face business networking lies in the ability to meet the important people with whom you would like to work and to quickly impress upon them that you should work together. It is with this in mind that professional conference organisers create seminars, attracting people of similar interests to attend, to listen to industry leaders and invited guests as they make programmed presentations. Yet in poll after poll attendees of these events say that the real value of attending is not in what goes on during the sessions, but what happens between and after. It is, as the crowd spills out from a seminar for a beverage or a meal together that the networking begins and that, say attendees, is where the real value of attending these events lies.

There are an increasing number of specialised superyacht seminars, conventions, forums and promotional events being set up around the world. Many of them cost several thousands of Euros in fees just to get inside the door. Yet one of the most cost effective methods of networking with industry leaders whose interests lie in superyachting can be found simply by attending boat shows or going to social events organised for crew to attend.

Show Willing

Where better than a boat show to network? Where else in the world will you find the shipyards, yacht designers, principle brokerage houses, crew agencies and the best

superyacht equipment suppliers all gathered in one spot? Where else will you find such a profusion of owners, Captains and managers of superyachts walking the docks? The Cannes and Monaco Yacht shows are perhaps the best in this area. The MYS has, over the twenty plus years it has been in existence, built its reputation on the very simple knowledge that the principle players in the superyacht world attend each year because of what the event offers the world of superyachts. Walking on the docks and in the tents is a networking opportunity open to anyone but an invitation to one of the exclusive parties is better still. Security can be tight at events such as these and entry is permitted to only those whose names appear on official party lists and it

is definitely seen as bad manners to be employers for crew to gatecrash parties to which you have not been invited. The famous Monaco Yacht Shows Captain's Party is held at the prestigious Fairmont Hotel Monte Carlo on the last Friday of the show each year where privileged guests are invited by the party's sponsors to talk business and get networking while sipping champagne. Another important event, considered by those in the know to be a really hot ticket, is held at the prestigious Monaco Yacht Club. Dubbed the Charter Yacht Captains Awards Dinner and hosted by Fraser Yachts, they use the occasion to present awards to their top charter Captains and crews.



Royal family

Invitations to some after show evening events are a little easier to come by. Exhibitors often hold an evening drinks party and parties thrown each year in the Dutch, British and New Zealand exhibitor pavilions are popular. These have attracted a loyal following of people seeking to network and enjoy socialising with like minded souls at the same time. Lunchtime parties are frequently organised by professional groups whose interest lies inside superyachting. Chief among these are those organised by the top London law firms and they provide networking opportunities over a pleasant glass of wine and a bite to eat. Corporate Service providers and VAT experts Dominion Marine are known to throw a good

networking party in the evening and Awlgrip the paint suppliers throw a mighty good crew bash that is well attended by crews equally keen on working the net. Some of the easiest ways of networking do not even require an invitation at all. All the visitor needs to do is walk on to the stand of a show exhibitor ask a question and the networking opportunities open up. No matter how the opportunity initially presents itself at the Monaco Yacht Show it is always prudent to follow up contact after the event. This can be done by email, post, telephone or personal visits, what is important is that it is the Show that has presented the first contact point and to maximise on the value of networking the follow up actions need to be taken.

Other **DO'S** and **DON'TS** of networking include:

Do's:

- ✓ Look the part; people attending boat shows. Make sure your own appearance does not negatively impact on you.
- ✓ Take along a plentiful supply of business cards or CV's. It is better to have too many than run out before the show ends.
- ✓ Be patient; instant on the spot results are very rare networking is just the first step in creating a long lasting relationship.
- ✓ Be helpful to others at these shows, you never know who the person standing next to you on the dock is. He may be an owner or manager about to put a whole new crew on board a superyacht.
- ✓ Introduce yourself to the hosts of any of the parties you attend at the show. Thank them for having you and find out how you can be included at future events they organise.
- ✓ If this is your first visit to a networking event find a mentor to show you the ropes.
- ✓ Have fun! That is the principle, guiding factor behind the serious business side of any boat show. It is perfectly understandable to be nervous when first walking into a room full of strangers, but it really helps to smile and relax!

Don'ts:

- ✗ Do not try to meet everyone at a show. There are simply too many, so focus on a few and concentrate on spending quality time with them.
- ✗ Do not come across as being aggressive, instead, be casual when starting a conversation.
- ✗ Do not stay in a large group, instead, move around and try to stand out by yourself.
- ✗ Do not speak too loudly, it is easy to become animated but no one wants to be near to someone who cannot control their own volume.
- ✗ Do not spend too much time with one group of people, be respectful of their time constraints. If you want to have a really formal meeting, it is best to thank them for their time and schedule a more formal meeting for later on in the show.
- ✗ Do not be insincere, compliments are nice, but avoid over doing it.
- ✗ There are many specialist one-on-one training courses that explain specifically how to network and there are as many theories on how to succeed at networking, as there are books on the subject. One thing on which they are all agreed is that it pays to do your homework and choose events wisely.