

## Optimising Aust Cham Sundowner Events

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Business networking functions can be a minefield of successes and not so much. One can come away from these events with a feeling of accomplishment and a wallet full of business cards, or a nagging feeling of opportunities lost. Below, we discuss three points that may provide you with some insight as to how you can employ networking events as a tool that will offer you the best outcomes: that being an enjoyable experience and of course useful contacts that will further your business interests.

First. Attend as a non-member first. By attending in this way you can ascertain if this is the type of group you wish to be involved with. The AustCham Sundowner is well known as being the best business networking event in Bangkok. But it's always a good idea to have an initial attendance to see if this is the type of target group you and your business could benefit from.

Second. Arrive early. This is when the guest speakers and function coordinators arrive. This is a perfect opportunity for you to introduce yourself if the situation arises, whilst the function organisers are completing their set up. It also means that you have access to the most important people. Also by arriving early, you will find that the venue will fill up around you, so you are not walking into a room full of strangers. It may seem that everyone knows each other in these situations, but that is not usually the case. Indeed, that is the whole idea of a networking activity.

And lastly, business card exchange. Each culture has its own way of dealing with this. Certainly, in this part of the world, the business card is used as a preemptory introduction and is presented with great courtesy and pride with two hands. However, this can be a little premature. Sometimes it can be more prudent for others to gain your trust by introduction through a conversation. This might cover some middle ground, during which you may gain an insight into whom you could possibly deal with in the future. This then may present some understanding that you have created an initial trustworthy relationship to be called up in any future negotiations. At the end of this casual meeting, a business card may be proffered as a realisation that this contact would be worthwhile to your mutual business endeavours.

Business networking events can be beneficial to everyone. One just needs to be prepared to listen, learn and be mindful of what they can offer, not always what they need in return. In the long term, these strategies are what good business relationships are built on.