

Party your way into a job

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Singapore - While attending pink slip parties (PSP) are beneficial in a recession where jobs are lost and urgently sought after, few truly understand the value of these networking sessions.

Originating from the US, PSPs are networking marketplaces that link jobseekers and headhunters. Compared to job fairs which are typically held by companies seeking to fill available job positions, PSPs provide no clear line of sight to job openings. Instead, they offer the "potential for possible future jobs", says Patrick O'Brien, managing director of The Amanuenses Network.

O'Brien believes it is crucial participants have a "game plan" when attending a pink slip party, otherwise they would stand permanently at one spot and achieve nothing. They have to know what jobs they are looking for and which companies are going to be present at the event. They would also need to prepare a list of important questions which can turn things in their favour. Most importantly, they need to have their name cards at all times, as those are the key points of connection with the headhunters.

During a PSP, the aim of the participant is to make that brief connection memorable in some way. As headhunters are often in great demand at these parties, time is limited and "a little graciousness does get noticed", says O'Brien. Also, participants have to keep in mind that PSP is not a job fair. Hence, introductions should be done in a relaxed manner and not sound like a prepared speech.

Lastly, O'Brien lists a couple of common mistakes participants should avoid during PSPs:

Hitting on Everyone - Some participants believe they stand to gain by hitting on every headhunter in the room. They carry around a stressful aura, and are often avoided.

Being Too Relaxed - PSP venues are usually relaxing. With the availability of wine, some participants forget that their purpose is to connect rather than to consume.

No Understanding - Many participants assume that PSPs are job fairs, leading them to feel disillusioned when they are not offered jobs. Seeking consolation in discussions with other similarly disillusioned participants hinders new networking opportunities.

In Need of Catharsis - Some participants are still dealing with their own emotions from the career transitions, leaving them in a negative and unproductive state of mind. Avoid them to prevent getting sucked into their downward spiral.