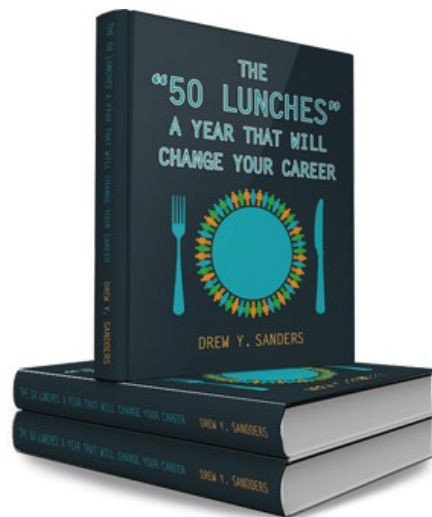


Growing Your Network



Fifty Lunches A Year That Could Change Your Career

By Drew Y. Sanders

Introduction

How are you going to grow your influence and your career? What is your plan? Our research shows most people don't have a plan and get stuck worrying about whether or not the boss has a favorable opinion of them. Keeping the boss happy is a good idea; however, we would like to suggest that you deploy an additional strategy. We believe you can expand and grow your career by establishing a simple plan of having one lunch a week with someone in your network of contacts.

In this white paper we will share with you how to set up your schedule, who to invite, and when to invite them. Further we will discuss where you should go to lunch and then dive into the details of the lunch itself. Finally, we will share how you should follow up after the lunch. We honed this knowledge over a 10 year period where we averaged 125 lunches a year, with a few lessons learned along the way. Your career is your own and it helps to have a wide and diverse set of people to work with to grow it. We also found that in general the hard truth is people don't care about your career, they care about theirs, and until you sit down with them and talk about their plans, they won't care about yours. So how are you going to grow the number of people who care about your career when you are eating lunch at your desk?

Going to lunch with a friend or colleague seems easy enough and yet the data suggests most of us eat with the same people and don't expand our networks over lunch. Why should you care about this? Taking a page from management sage Peter Drucker, most of us are going to have working careers of some sort for almost 50 years. If that is the case then it might be a good idea to get out of the building and meet some of those people you are commuting with.

Think about it, if you worked 250 days last year, how many times did you miss lunch? How many times did you not eat from between 10:30 am and 2:30 pm Monday through Friday? Chances are you did eat, either at your desk or at the company cafeteria or you grabbed a quick 'nap inducing' sandwich somewhere close.

Consider also the fact that it is often not the smartest practitioner who has the largest practice or the most influence. It is the combination of competency and relationships that make a difference. The ability to build and cultivate strong relationships across a diverse geographic and professional landscape is critical. While this is not breaking news to most professionals, few knowledge workers have a system in place for building their professional network. A lack of time is the common lament for most and yet right in the middle of the day sits a top relationship building event....**Lunch.**

Chapter 1: Changing Your Mindset

If you are like most people, you most likely live fifteen to sixty minutes away from work. Your home network or social structure may be diverse and wonderful. However the context of those relationships is driven by family and community initiatives. Being “Bobby Business” at the softball game could have people running for the dugouts. Home is not always the ideal place to build your career.

Turning our attention back to the work place, let’s look at your day. You arrive for work and fill your role for the company and work on your tasks. Your mind and your stomach feel the lunch bell ringing and you satisfy the requirement. You return to your desk and plow forward until it is time to commute home. Your day may have plenty of meetings, webinars, and phone calls, but your number of contacts isn’t growing.

If you work in a metropolitan area, as the majority of all knowledge workers do, you are spending 8 to 10 hours in a geographically dense area with similar professionals who all eat their mid-day meal at about the same time. Most of your fellow professionals have budgets, goals and initiatives that they are working towards, most goals involve people, yet day after day most professionals eat lunch...alone. WHY?

In interviewing hundreds of professionals we have learned that the biggest issue is a lack of time, followed by a secondary concern that the return on the investment of time is unclear. In short the non-tactical lunch is considered a luxury.

Digging a little deeper, what we found was that professionals have plenty of time to eat a 45 minute lunch with a colleague; it’s the time it takes to set up the lunch that most people miss-allocate.

We further found that adding in a pre-set date and time for lunch increased the chances that a person went to lunch with another person. These and a few other findings have led us to create this brief “how to” white paper focused on your calendar, your contacts, and your schedule. We will show you how to adjust all of those slightly so that you can fit in one lunch a week that, over time will hopefully help you add breadth and depth to your business network.

It is One Hour a Week, But is it Worth It?

For the skeptic, we cannot promise that the 1.25 hours you put in to the lunch each week will give you the maximum ROI versus eating lunch at your desk while you keep emailing and inspecting your people. However we would like share a personal story that we hope emboldens those on the fence to take the leap and ask someone to lunch.

For the past 10 years we have been going to lunch with people as a way to get to know them better and then seeing if we can help each other. Whatever could happen over a meal we have probably seen it; sauce on the tie, and coffee in the lap, laughter, and tears. What have come along with the laughter have been some amazing shared experiences and the creation of new friendships.

Of particular interest is the story of an elderly friend who we had gotten to know over the years. This gentleman was battling a late stage of cancer. From time to time he would reach out and ask if I would

have a moment to speak with him on a topic and I was always better for it. Late last summer the call came again, but this time it was that I needed to come to lunch to meet someone. “Drew, why don’t you come down here on Friday for lunch, I would like you to meet Matt” was the charge. The Friday happened to be the day before Labor Day weekend and Monterey is a two hour drive and traffic can be brutal when you are competing with everyone getting out of town.

Regardless we weren’t going anywhere for the weekend and this gentleman was battling cancer and he still was thinking how he could help me. I responded in the affirmative on the spot. The day came and I jumped in my car eager to get to Monterey and also hopeful that I would be back in my car by 2pm. That day at lunch I met a man who I ended up working on a large project with. He also had driven several hours at our friends’ request, without this lunch I am sure I would have lived the rest of my life and never met a current work colleague. Because of this dying man’s connective mind I am helped out in making a living. The memory of his graciousness inspires me.

As we said our goodbyes in the parking lot our host spoke about how he was moving to a full time care facility and they had a form for him to fill out.

His words still resonate in my mind, “They had a spot where they wanted you to list hobbies, and I wrote one word....People”.

That friend died in the coming months and I am sure I was just one of thousands of people connected by this gentleman in his lifetime. We share our thoughts on lunch for you and your career in honor of him and his legacy. His name you ask? He was loving husband and family man, ardent University of California Golden Bear, and life-long Community Bank Executive, Hugh Barton.

Chapter 2: Setting Up Your System for Success

You need to be able to answer three questions to efficiently set up a business lunch program. Who should I go to lunch with, when should we go to lunch, and why should they say yes to having lunch with me? Understanding the correct answer in each case will allow you to make good choices and build

momentum with your new effort. Ideally you would like to go to lunch with an interesting person that is active in their job and pursuits and discuss their current work projects, and schedule about 3 weeks out.

Doing this once can take a great deal of effort and appear to be not worth the investment. Setting up a system that identifies people like this, and having a spot on your calendar that is set aside for these lunches is worth the effort.

Monday	Tuesday Key Event/Call/Item	Wednesday Key Event/Meet/Event	Thursday Key Event/Call/Item	Friday Key Event/Call/Item	Top Of Mind List people to meet with by category
	3PM _____	Meet _____	3AM _____	3AM _____	Clients
	3PM _____	Meet _____	3AM _____	3AM _____	Key Influencers
	3PM _____	Meet _____	3AM _____	3AM _____	Long Shots
	3PM _____	Meet _____	3AM _____	3AM _____	Pipeline Missions
	3PM _____	Meet _____	3AM _____	3AM _____	Extras
	3PM _____	Meet _____	3AM _____	3AM _____	Themes for the Period and Questions to Ask

It also produces a constant yield of relevant business information and efforts with which to share with your network to benefit your lunch colleague. When it comes to finding the relevant information about the person you are inviting to lunch, LinkedIn has become a fantastic resource for relevant business topics to discuss.

With Whom Should You Dine?

Two paths appear when answering the question of who should you ask to lunch. The first is to write down the 10 most influential people you have met who would remember your name. Aiming high can have a big impact when you are successful, and we encourage people to do the research to make the lunch worthwhile for your high level contact. The second path takes a little more administration and also should yield a more consistent number of potential lunch mates.

First	Last	Email	Value	Strength	Pipeline
Kevin J.	McQuillan	kevin@f	1	5	1
Jeff	Weil	jeff.weil@co	1	5	1
Scott	Medlock	Scott@S	1	5	1
Viral	Mehta	viralmehta	1	5	1
Terrance	Odean	odean@ber	1	5	1
Stephen	Putt	sputt@en	1	5	1
Willi	Weisman	weserman@sin	1	5	1
Mark	Alessio	mark.alessio@	1	3	1
Joseph	Barone	baronein	1	3	1
Ellen	Bozzo	e_bozzo@va	1	3	1
Jennifer	Branchini	jbranchini@g	1	3	1
Peter	Butler	peterbutler@ca	1	3	1
Dina	Capaccioli	dina@gr	1	3	1
Peter	Chouinard	peterchou	1	3	1
Bryan	Colteaux	bryan_coltea	1	3	1
Mike	Connors	happ	1	3	1
Keith	Cox	coxkeit	1	3	1
Joe	Cristiano	jcristiano@	1	3	1
JANET	CRISTIANO	janet.cristi	1	3	1
Nathaniel	Crosby	natcros	1	3	1
Aram	Danesh	aramdanesh	1	3	1
Bryan	Draper	bdrape	1	3	1

Step one is to export your email contacts and your LinkedIn connections to a central spreadsheet. In step two clear out the duplicates and clean up the spreadsheet to include the basic information of name, email, and phone number.

Step three includes adding in 2 columns, one marked "value" the other marked "strength".

The value column is where you are going to rank your contact by the value they may have to your initiatives, and the strength is where you rank your relationship. Step four is where you give each person a score of 1, 3, or 5 with 1 being the highest. Step five identifies these diamonds when you sort your contact list by value and strength. Once completed, this 2 hour exercise gives you a large list of people who you can invite to lunch. You don't have to recreate the wheel every time you come up for air and think you should be reaching out to people. When you deploy the "coming up for air" strategy our research shows you have lunch with the same 7 people over and over again instead of diversifying with a sound strategy.

You are not looking to create a definitive difference between contact A or contact B, this is an exercise that helps you identify the people you know well, but it also does something the first list doesn't. It identifies the diamonds in the rough that you are neglecting.

Chapter 3: Why the Time of Year Makes A Difference

Organizational trainers and behavioral coaches often will back their way into the number of times you should do something, with the assumption that all months, weeks, and days are the same. While the sun may rise in the east and set in the west every day, every professional know certain days of the year are more important than others. Clients and prospects are hard to find in August, are at a party in December, and are laser focused on work in January.

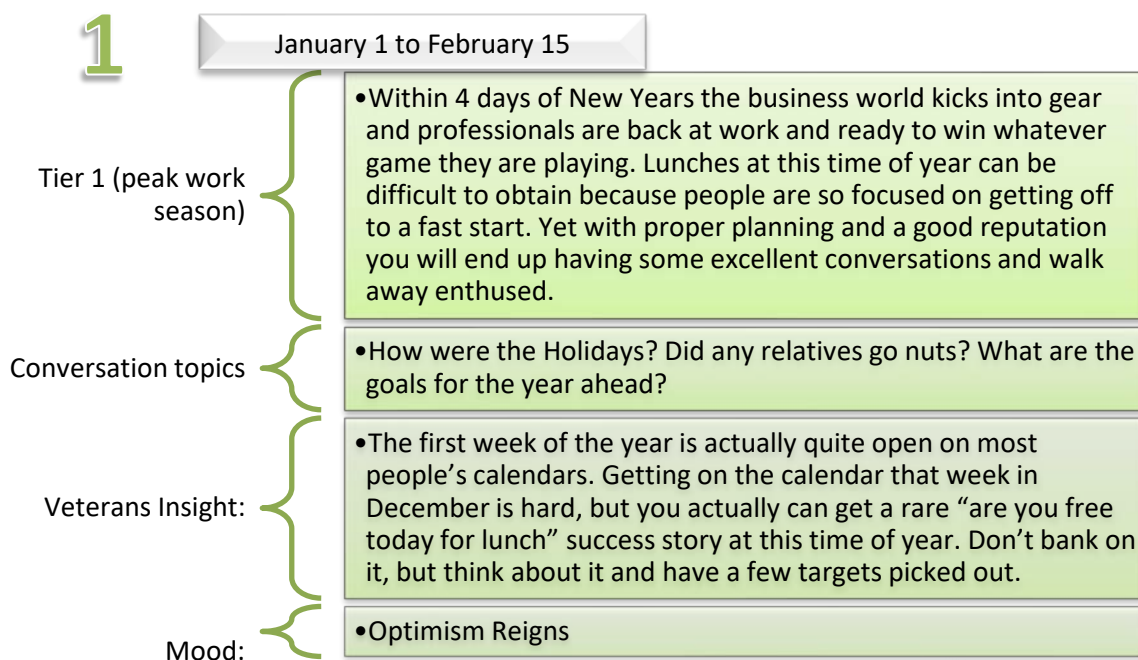
With this in mind we have developed the 8 x 45 day calendar. It is born from 10 years of tracking when people would meet with us, and what the tenor of the conversation was like. The data shows there are 3 different types of 45 day periods. We will describe them here in Tiers and refer to them throughout the document.

#	8x45 segments	Tier
1	January 1 – February 15	Tier 1
2	February 15 – April 1	Tier 1
3	April 1 – May 15	Tier 2
4	May 15 – July 1	Tier 2
5	July 1 – August 15	Tier 3
6	August 15 – October 1	Tier 1
7	October 1 – November 15	Tier 1
8	November 15 – January 1	Tier 3

Tier 1 is ‘peak work season’ when everyone has their business hat on and it can be difficult to meet with people because of the increased focus on getting work done. However, lunches during this time can be the most productive, so we focus on the quality of the interaction. Tier 2 we see as ‘moderate work season’ which are transition periods where meetings can be scheduled easily but may not be as productive as in Tier 1. Finally, in Tier 3 there are the ‘low work periods’ where having a business meeting with a qualified target can be quite challenging as most are on vacation or are in between trips and trying to catch up. Lunches during Tier 3 times can be long and relaxing but obtaining them can be difficult.

By changing your point of view on the calendar you can see that attempting to put a yearly goal of behaviors across each week evenly will lead to disappointment. We have found that 40 weeks a year move the meter for most industry segments and by planning ahead you can deploy your strategy of asking interesting people to lunch at the right time during the right season of their year. Looking back at the original premise that most coaches and trainers espouse, there are clear differences in people’s availability and interest in joining you for an open ended lunch. Plan around these slow times and make sure you aren’t resting at the wrong time. You may get a steal on an airline ticket and that condo in Hawaii but the meetings you are missing back home are costing you thousands.

We see a quick snapshot of the 8 segments by Tier in the sidebar graph; let’s dive into some longer insights to our 8 x 45 calendar system:



2

February 16 – April 1

Tier 1 (peak work season)

- The Presidents birthday holidays float a bit but by mid Feb many of your targets will have real momentum going and your biggest obstacle during this period will be their travel. We have found this to be a very impactful lunch period but you have to plan ahead.

Conversation topics

- Skiing, winter break, get-a-ways and how Q1 is shaping up.

Veterans Insight:

- When having a lunch with a really influential contact, this is the time of year when they are probably planning something really fun that you may not be able to afford yet. People who plan big trips love to talk about them, be ready to ask questions.

Mood:

- What are the themes for the year? Are there any new threats to the economy?

3

April 1 to May 15

Tier 2 (moderate work season)

- The start of Q2 and the warmer weather will create a lunch focused on the coming season of summer and also the pending end of school. Lunches are easy to come by in this period and with the passing of Tax day many will be looking to talk opportunities for growth.

Conversation topics

- Taxes, Baseball, Summer Plans

Veterans Insight:

- For many this is the final 45 day of their real fiscal year. If the money isn't made by this time, they aren't going to find it during the summer. In fact they spend the summer looking ahead to the next year. Understand the seasons of your contacts and pose your questions correctly and the conversation will flow.

Mood:

- Focused, but ready for the long days of summer

4

May 15 to July 1

Tier 2 (moderate work season)

- We have found the end of May and early June to be a time of great distraction. Targets are planning summer vacations. The summer experience of having difficulty finding people in the town may start to be a problem, but when you do meet with people the conversations can be quite varied.

Conversation topics

- What are your summer plans, is anyone in your extended family off to a new school “college” this fall, and finally how has the first half of the year been are great lunch questions.

Veterans Insight:

- Graduation time makes for easy conversation. If your lunch guest has a child graduating from Kindergarten to Graduate School bring it up and watch your friend come to life. This is also a great time of year to ask about future plans as summer leads to contemplation.

Mood:

- Can be disratcted and ready for a rest

5

July 1 to August 15

Tier 3 (low work season)

- This is the slowest time of year for most industries unless you run a summer camp. For the rest of us skinned knees and bug bites from being outdoors are the norm. When people are in town they should have time because they customers are on vacation as well.

Conversation topics

- Stories from time away abound and the ever nearing fall rush is in the back of everyone’s mind.

Veterans Insight:

- Go big game hunting at this time of year and if you need to throw in a breakfast that is real close to where they live. Even for the titans of industry the summer slows down and a well-timed request may just land you eating with a king.

Mood:

- Slow

6

August 15 to October 1

- Tier 1 (peak work season)
 - Welcome back to prime time! With schools pushing their start dates further and further into August this 45 day period has started to rival the first 45 of the year for effectiveness and activity. Business can dominate this lunch as plenty of people will have an initiative they would like to accomplish by years end.
- Conversation topics
 - What needs to happen by the end of this year? Football, and the growing season is coming to an end.
- Veterans Insight:
 - When you plan ahead and get your lunches set up early, this can be the best time of year for high impact meals. Plans that seemed far off at the beginning of the year are now front and center. Decision makers will be more apt to move forward.
- Mood:
 - Focused

7

October 1 to November 15

- Tier 1 (peak work season)
 - The penultimate 45 days of the year bring some of your best opportunities to talk about the future as it is budget time. Your lunch companions are going to be closing out the year and looking ahead and are in brainstorming mode. What better time to brainstorm than over lunch?
- Conversation topics
 - Halloween, Thanksgiving and the Holidays. How was the Harvest? Now that you have the budget, how are you going to get it done?
- Veterans Insight:
 - Your biggest meals of the year happen now. If you aren't at the table, you might be on the menu, so plan ahead.
- Mood:
 - Tense

8

November 15 to January 1

Tier 3 (low work season)

- The end of the year may appear to be a great business period but in fact most of the high impact lunches have occurred. The business lunch suffers under the weight of the work and family parties. A good thing to do with this group of people is to push your lunch date into the next year when everyone is fired up and fresh.

Conversation topics

- How was the year? Being Thankful? Honoring those who have passed away? The Holiday Season excitement.

Veterans Insight:

- You can keep your habits in shape by taking close friends to lunch and a mentor will find the time but your efforts should be on your yearend action items.

Mood:

- Festive

When, Part 2:

How to Work Within “The Magic Window”

Early on in our research we started to notice that while we could sometimes get lucky and find a “next day” lunch, most of our targets were “slammed”. When we dug a little deeper what we learned is that slammed or buried was actually only a 2 week phenomenon. Most people’s calendars start to open up at 3 weeks out. Getting a lunch on the table 3 weeks out on a specific day starts to subtly get the point across that you respect your own time as much as they do theirs. If they can’t fit your times, go to the next week. You can do this up to 6 weeks out without losing effectiveness. We find Wednesday or Friday at noon is the best hours of the week to shoot for. Use our handy calendar attached, or make your own.

This is why we have called it the “Magic Window” and we found it works time and time again. It respects their time and shows you have a plan or your time as well. When the inevitable “sorry to cancel” email comes as their “slammed” life catches up with them, you get another confidence boost when you offer another date back in the Magic Window. Clearly you are just interested in them because if you had a deal or a sale in mind you would be pressing them for a quicker date. Trust in this process and watch the quality of person you are dining with improve.

Chapter 4: Your Lunch Why

Your moment of deep fear is now here, why should someone say yes to lunch with you? In your world they may be important and may also hold that aura, but somewhere along the way you have a shared experience or know each other, and you are reaching out to build your relationship. You know they are

busy, but you have the Magic Window on your side, with persistence and insight you will find the hole in their calendar. But what if they just don't think you are worth it? Can you handle the rejection? This is where having a solid reason why you want to go to lunch can be the bridge to carry you over your valley of fear.

We advise a well written email that includes several key elements. First, you want to connect into their world and their initiatives. Secondly, you want to elicit their perspective and coaching on **your** initiatives. Finally, you may want to ask for their consideration to partner on a joint initiative. You do not need to have all three of these in your email as it may turn into a novel and people seldom read emails that are too long. What you do need to do is weave your why into the when and where in your email request. The higher up the business food chain you are going, the more we suggest taking the "coaching request" route. The more diverse targets will do well with the "it would be great to learn more about your industry" request. Those that are in your sector and are peers will do well with the "we may want to put our heads together about partnering in the future" offer.

In summary, the more creative your "why", the better your chance of ending up at lunch with interesting people. The good news is that as you start sending your offer emails each week inviting someone to lunch, in 3 weeks you will get better at setting the table for a safe and fun shared experience at a restaurant full of energy. And many times during the course of conversation and discussion, you will be amazed to find that you do have something to offer back to your lunch target.

Picking the right location

One of the benefits of most urban settings is that along with day time density comes above average cuisine. Most fine restaurants don't open to serve lunch; they exist to reap the benefits of dinner time. Yet they know a fantastic lunch will hook people to come back for dinner with friends and order wine and dessert. Over half of your targets will have fine cuisine as a "top 3" topic of discussion and most restaurants offer an excellent lunch for less than \$75.

Look at your target area and pick 2 or 3 restaurants that most people would consider a "good" choice for lunch. Good in our book means nearly excellent food but not over the top famous or expensive, and has a host or general manager you can get to know.

You don't need to spend a lot of time scoping out the restaurants, and if you have a favorite spot then run with it. The key is you should feel comfortable and as you start to be there on a regular basis the owner and servers will recognize you. The recognition comes from your frequency and your openness with those on site, and this pays dividends with your guest. Take a minute now and write out a few spots that come to mind. For example, here in the Bay Area it is necessary for people to have several spots based upon geography and traffic patterns. The key is for you to plan ahead and have your lunches add to your work momentum, not detract from it.

The Pre-Work: BI-PI-SE

Hooray someone said yes! You now have your lunch date set, target acquired and location picked. Now what on earth are you going to talk about? What if they are in a bad mood? Visions of dating disasters linger in the sub consciousness for most of us. Fear not, most adults have acquired an assemblage of manners and conversational ability. Yet we recommend you prepare for the meeting to become excellent at the business lunch.

The Business Information (BI)

On the accompanying template you will see that the Business Information about your guest will be on the web and LinkedIn. Organizing the data on a one pager noting college and past companies worked at can be live savers over lunch. (Hint, jobs held less than 2 years make for bad subjects or land mines, as seldom do we look to only work somewhere 2 years.) Other interesting things that can fall under the BI category are charity boards they serve on. These roles are great places to start your conversation.

The Personal Information (PI)

Most people if you met them at work would only share their BI with you if you met in a conference room. If you make it into the office it will be almost impossible for you to not pick up some personal information about them and this can be the next layer of your relational bond. If you meet someone in a social setting often the BI and the PI are reversed.

You will discuss your family and other personal anecdotes before talking about professional interests. Regardless of how you met them it is vital that you write down prior to the meeting the “PI” that you know so you can see what you don’t know.

PI (Personal Information) can be a double edged sword, as a person who is happy at work may not be so happy at home. Nothing stops the flow of a lunch like asking after a spouse; only to find out they have cancer, have died or more commonly are recently divorced. Children are equally challenging to ask after as the absence of them can be a real source of pain.

While the BI and the PI can afford you a few conversational moments the power of a shared experience cannot be underestimated. Shared experiences can be as small as a plane ride in which you sat next to each other, or as big as going to college together. It can also be something you both have done, but not together. You shared the experience of going to the same high school but graduated a decade apart.

In fact the magic of 50 lunches is that you are creating new shared experiences that will add up over time and give you a wide scope of people with whom you have good relationships with. Shared Experiences afford people a window into your character. Once they have a vantage point into your Character you have created an opportunity for them to build a personal basis of trust. We believe Trust to be a power emotion.

Here’s our formula for Shared Experiences.

$$\begin{aligned} SE \text{ (Shared Experiences)} &= C \text{ (Character)} = T \text{ (Trust)} = \\ & \text{Opportunity. In short form:} \\ SE &= C = T = Opp \end{aligned}$$

Once trust is established all that remains is for the two parties to agree on what they want to transfer between each other. Goods and services, money and recommendations all flow back and forth between trusting parties.

This Shared Experience formula allows you to enjoy your lunch and realize that as you spend time together the shared experience bonds are forming and as long as you treat the other party well then you will have at a minimum a new “character” reference. A good lunch together can be that powerful.

Chapter 5: Finally, the Meal

The date you both agreed to is here, you arrive 10 minutes early to check in and greet your guest so you can be seated together. The hostess seats you at your table and your napkin goes in your lap. The good news is that what follows is highly predictable. The restaurant owner and all its employees would like to “turn” the table in 1 hour 15 minutes if not sooner. This consistent and constant force allows you and your guest the comfort of knowing that your meeting has a beginning, middle, and an end. In essence you are renting the table with your meal and beverages. Overseeing the process on behalf of the owner is the waiter.

When You Are Seated

When you sit down you can expect to have the waiter help you get through the meal on a schedule. This is a big help for you as you start taking people to lunch. The first thing you will be asked is if you would like anything to drink. Clearly the restaurant would love you to order alcohol so the bill can go up, but for our purposes we are going to advise you to stick to water, iced tea or a soda of your choice.

If your guest starts out with a strong order of alcohol it is your call on how to follow. After your fluids are delivered and the conversations have started on the easy topics already outlined you will want to give your menu a glance and if you have a favorite dish you should share that information with your guest.

The waiter will be back shortly after the drinks arrive to inquire about your meal options. We recommend you have a good dialog with the waiter and ask their opinion about the specials and their favorite choices. Once you have this flow established allow your guest to order first and then make your choices.

Veterans Insight:

Lunch meals with sauces and soups are to be avoided. You may be looking for taste in your meal, but wearing it should not be an option.

Between ordering and the meal:

Now that you have ordered you should have 7 to 12 minutes of uninterrupted time with your guest. This is a perfect item for your first solid question of the lunch. Remember this isn't a sales call and you aren't closing anything. You are exploring their world and learning from their perspective and this is the perfect time to get started.

Veterans Insight:

Bread is offered at most restaurants and sits there just waiting for you to grab a piece. Unless your guest takes a piece, stay away. You don't need it and it's messy.

Food Arrives:

You food arriving is a nice break in your dialog. It allows some natural breaks as you cut and eat. If the first conversation has run its course, it also allows you to pivot and start down a new path. You have 15 minutes to eat your meal and chances are your waiter will leave you alone or check in once. Use this main chunk of time to introduce a key thought or pose your larger question to discuss.

Veterans Insight:

The pace at which your guest eats should be something you mirror. It shouldn't be obvious, but finishing your meal before they are half way through will bring a server to your table to remove your plate and it can be awkward. Seek to be in rhythm with your guest and you should finish in unison.

Your food is finished:

The moment you are finished with the meal the "bus" team will be on your table like clockwork and your server will inquire about a cup of coffee and dessert. This is a pivotal part of the meal, because your guest's choice will determine if you are wrapping things up or have earned unexpected bonus time. The end of the meal cup of coffee is your cue to keep the dialog going and maybe ask one final question off the threads that have already been discussed.

Veterans Insight:

We suggest ordering decaf coffee when you order, and we advise you always have an interest in having coffee. You don't want to bully your guest to have coffee, but if you can influence them to do so, it can really have a calming influence on the meal and provide an opportunity for them to bring your discussions to a culmination.

The Bill:

When your guest declines coffee or the coffee is finished, your server is going to bring the bill. We recommend you gently and assertively slide the sheet over to you and pay with your credit card. If your guest protests loudly that you split the meal we suggest you consider the request. This is not a good sign and you will want to allow them the chance to exit gracefully. In most cases they will offer softly and you should thank them and then suggest that lunch was your idea and you appreciate them coming and cite something you learned from them. You can then offer a final gesture of suggesting they can get the next one as you really enjoyed the lunch.

Veterans Insight:

The goal of the lunch is another interaction at some point. It may be an introduction, another meal, or a meeting. Regardless offering to pay is important, yet allowing them to split the bill when necessary is your guests nuanced way of saying "let's take this slow" and "I don't want to owe you anything".

Chapter 6: The Follow up

You part with smiles and a hand shake, both with someone to call or email on behalf of the other. You walk back to your office or car and the urge to check your phone for that massively important email that came in hits you. RESIST the urge to do this. Take the next 15 minutes and reflect on the meal, the restaurant and the person you had lunch with. Allow your thoughts to settle and get them into your

long term memory. Take a minute and look over a note card that has your follow up. Write down when you will have your items completed. Now you can reengage the Ferris wheel that is your inbox.

Veterans Insight:

Within 24 hours send an email with your thoughts and follow up items listed, we suggest right away for a key follow up and within 24 hours for a general “it was good to see you” response.

Congratulations! You have just created a new shared experience. Most lunches are just stepping stones in a life time of network building and friendship. However, reviewed over a 90 or 180 day period you will start to notice that when you reference someone whom you have lunched with your communication will change. A friend becomes a good friend, and an acquaintance becomes a friend. As you focus on growing the influence of those around you, your own experiences will be tethered to theirs. Your joint future will be win-win.

Some key points to remember when thinking about building your network in the future. First, remember the power of a preset date on the calendar each week that you want to get out of the building and have lunch with an interesting person. As a reminder we think Wednesday or Friday at noon are the two most powerful hours of the week, set the bar low at first by picking out two dates a month and watch how it easily becomes once a week.

Secondly, leverage the time of year of your lunch to make sure you are meeting with the right people at the right time of year and that you are prepared with the right conversation inducing questions.

Third, pay attention to the people you are inviting to lunch, make it easy for them (and you) by planning ahead on the date and the location. Fourth, recognize the power of a working lunch to have a great shared experience. The restaurant and its need to turn the table enable you to begin and end a meeting, use this to your advantage.

Finally, set your sites on improving the lives of those you are meeting with. Do this through preparation and thinking connectively for them within your network. Most problems are people problems and most of the time it is because your friend hasn't met the right person. Be an empathetic listener and then when the time is right offer to help. These introductions will become like the pistons firing in an engine, fueling the progress of your friends who will in turn take the time to care about your goals.

Thinking back, look at who you ate with in the last 12 months and most likely your influence matches their level. Now look forward 12 months and if you would like to improve your career, or a cause you care about, start by changing the level of the people you are choosing to dine with. Hugh Barton spent a life being interested in “People”. We think this is a great place to start. Send an email to someone you find interesting and somewhere in the email say “Would you like to go to lunch?” **Go for it.**

Appendix

1. 45 Day Worksheet
2. 45 Day Follow Up Questions
3. Pre-Lunch Worksheet

These and other templates also available for download at
<http://www.banyantreestrategies.com/publications.html>