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3 Ways To Nail Networking As A Travel Writer

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I knew I wanted to be a travel writer for a very long time. I love learning about other cultures, seeing and photographing new sights, researching and creating itineraries, connecting with locals and building relationships.



As a photographer for the last 30 years, I've built my business by networking, growing my list of contacts, and becoming adept at self-promotion.

Networking and self-promotion might sound intimidating, but networking as a travel writer simply means being friendly to other people who love to travel. If you already like to chat with everyone you meet, then this could be a perfect fit for you.

Find common ground

Take, for example, my discovery of a character to include in an upcoming article about Hawaii. When I was on Hawaii Island, I struck up a conversation with a photographer sitting in the bed of his truck aiming a giant lens on his camera at the water. While I couldn't see them from the shoreline, he was photographing whales with that specialty equipment.

Finding common ground with a discussion about photo gear was easy. I learned that my new friend was a transplant from the mainland. We talked for a long time. It ended with an invitation to his closed whale photography

Facebook group and connecting with other whale photographers. I received a wealth of information, made a friend and connections for future articles.

Nurturing relationships

The relationships you nurture as you are learning and growing last a lifetime. You may not know when it will benefit you. People do business with people they know, like, and trust. This includes editors, public relations companies responsible for promoting a destination, as well as the subjects of your travel articles.

As I was preparing for a travel-networking event in San Diego, I put together a one-page promo sheet that I could distribute to the featured speakers as part of the one-on-one event. While designing this sheet, I realized that all my experience is related, and I bring all those skills to the table. I am a complete package, not just a travel writer nor just a photographer. I offer a unique perspective as an Experience host, tour guide, travel writer, photographer, business manager, and educator.

With color copies of my promo sheet in hand, I delivered to each of the representatives at the networking event something no one else did. I introduced myself with confidence and gave them a list of reasons to work with me.

I ran into a former contact from the CVB (whom I had met earlier on in my travel writer career). She was clearly impressed with my presentation and remarked at how far I'd come in just five months.

That presentation earned a lunch meeting to discuss exactly how we could work together. Of the several projects discussed, one, in particular, ties together my writing skills, tour planning, and photography.



Another is working with local hotels to create promotional materials. The ability to know what the CVB is looking for, specifically their target market, and asking the right questions, is key to success with connections like this.

The best and immediate result of this relationship was her assistance in arranging an interview for my upcoming restaurant review article. She connected me, I did the interview and delivered the social media coverage with more to come—all in one week.



Press trips: Another chance to connect

At the San Diego networking event, I received a [press trip invitation](#) to the Newport Beach Boat Parade. There, I connected with travel writers I had met before and strengthened our bonds. Plus, I had the perfect view of the holiday parade and fireworks. What a perk!



On press trips, I find I'm always learning from the more experienced writers. I recently went on a wine tasting press trip just across the border where I had the chance to sample fine wines, and chat with fellow travel writers and get their advice for things like gratuities on press trips, and the best phone apps for writers.



A relationship, established in one career, can be beneficial in the next job. Likewise, your skills build upon each other. You don't throw the old skills away when you move on to something new. They complement each other and allow you to forge a stronger relationship—one that you can call on over and over in the future.

Here are my three tips for successful travel writer networking:

- **Promote yourself.** Prepare a promo sheet. List all of your skills. When you see it on paper, you will be amazed at what you've accomplished. You can be proud of that. In turn, it gives you the confidence to tell other people about what you have to offer.
- **Talk, talk, talk.** Talk to other people about what you do. No one knows your business/goals/accomplishments better than you. Just don't go overboard on the self-promotion. Tell people that you are a travel writer and ask them about themselves. It's incredible how much people are willing to share when you are genuinely interested in them. The conversation flows, and you get more inside information than you expected.
- **Be persistent and follow through.** Everyone is busy, and a query may go unanswered. After the third email to a CVB with whom I want to work, I got a response thanking me for my continued outreach. I came away with a slew of people to contact to fulfill my immediate article-writing needs. More importantly, I have now made an impression that will stick.

Finally, be sure to deliver the goods on time.

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