

What is the value in a Year End Function?

 By [Chemory Gunko](#)

7 Oct 2016

Is the habit of social events and gatherings in the business world a remnant of an archaic society, a necessary evil (and headache), or a smart business choice?

As many people around the world are doing right now, I've had time to reevaluate my life and pick a new direction.

Along with that evaluation came a trip down memory lane over my marketing career, remembering the many experiences I have been blessed to have.

Into the deep end (as always!)

If you follow my writing, you'll have noticed that I tend to barge headfirst into everything. LOL. I've been no different throughout my career. So the very first event I ever managed to land to organise in my first agency position, was an open-to-public event, in the middle of Tembisa, to officially launch the Internet Cafés built from recycled shipping containers. It was a joint venture between Mecer, Vodacom and Intel.



123RF

After that experience, I got brave with events obviously, and the first big corporate year-end I organised was Barry Hilton performing live over lunch. The event was a roaring success, and set the tone for my ability to do low budget events that don't look or feel low budget.

Marketing vs. Sales

But the events themselves never made sense to me. Yes I could see everyone was enjoying themselves, and I got my high and kick from their reaction, but the actual being at an event? Exhausting.

In fact, my lack of understanding of events and the social side meant that even by my wedding, I just had that horrible event fatigue you get, where all you want to do is wake up the day AFTER the event, when it's all already over.

Look I can sell – if the client is already interested and I'm going in there to show genius – but to do what the sales guys do, the chatting and socialising and networking and talking on phones? No thanks – I'm in marketing, not sales.

I know how to mass communicate, and I can deal with the numbers and attention that wide mass communication brings. I'm fantastic on radio, one on one and in small groups of three or four, but put me in a medium-sized social situation and I feel totally overwhelmed.

As a result I used to go into a kind of frenzy around events and certain projects, and I've seen many marketing and events people do a similar thing. We tend to write it off to the excitement of the event most of the time, but there's a fatigue that starts setting in after a while. Leave it long enough and you start dreading every upcoming event.

Use the [coaching tools](#) if you do need help coping physically, mentally and emotionally: In particular, the Butterfly Release will help you keep functioning and going at high speed, while the Go Ape process will enable you to turn off the stress hormones in your system.

How many people feel the same?

If you're honest about it, there are always a percentage of the people who see attending a year-end event as nothing more than a chore. It's like when guests go to a wedding just to criticise the bride and the event. You know it happens.

Over the years, one of the people I was privileged to work with a number of times was the late Ladrach Cozens, founder of Cozens Recruitment Services. Cozens, if you never got the chance to know her, was an incredible businesswoman, and savvy beyond words, and she had a very favourite saying that she used often: "People hire people they like."

It's so true that – we hire people we like, because we feel good around them. We do business with people we like, and social opportunities like year-end functions give us a chance to get to know people in an environment where we can build a bond or connection.

So that hour you spent chatting to the client becomes the foundation for every communication in the coming year, because their primary memory of you is the time they had fun with you. Basically, it helps them get the warm and fuzzies when they think of you.

On the flipside of that though, South African businessman and speaker, Vusi Thembekwayo, makes a very interesting point, that there is no value in doing business based on social connection alone. As he discusses in one of his talks, he has also made the mistake of doing business based on connection and a false sense of trust that has been generated by likeability, and he was badly burned for it.

Vusi makes a strong case for the fact that we should be doing business based on the business case alone – choosing people because they can do the job, and not because we like them.

In the short term

Right now however, chances are good you are not going to change your directors' attitudes towards the importance of a year-end function. So I got to thinking, maybe the solution is to create a year-end function where marketing gets to feel they are part of the team and celebration - after all, we brought in a lot of the work they did to get here, didn't we?

The problem with organising a full year-end event is you are the event coordinator. You're so busy arranging and making sure everything happens, and taking photos, and dealing with the venue manager, that you actually don't get to sit down until after the event.

Well I mean when you get home, three or four hours after everyone else because you had to supervise breakdown and the gathering of the branding materials and pack all those vases into your car. And why does it always have to rain while you're carrying stuff to the car?

A restaurant is no better because you have the same set of headaches, with the looming threat of an uncertain bill, and you still have to run around and do everything anyway. And how do you handle the drinks situation in that case? You know how quickly that can get costly on a limited budget.

And even if you do go the restaurant or venue route, what do you do about entertainment? You have to at least have music, which I guess means your iTunes playlist is going to double as DJ? LOL – they certainly don't tell us how many different jobs we have to be prepared to do when we study in marketing ;)

Let someone else do it for you

As I was trawling around the Internet to see what other solutions people had come up with for the year-end function dilemma, I stumbled across a South African gem. The website - www.yearendlunch.co.za - is an open to public South African live comedy and music business lunch.

Pricing is really reasonable when you consider that it's three top comedians (Barry Hilton, Tumi Morake and Jason Goliath), with a three course meal, drinks included and live music before and after the event. Hosted in Joburg and Cape Town, I can also see this as a networking opportunity (hear the sales guys roar LOL!) to mingle with other business people in the area.

Venue, food, entertainment and PARKING are covered, so you can invite clients and important vendors, and it's easy to add a few elements to any tables you book to make them your own.

And the open to public environment means you are not responsible for creating the atmosphere – there will already be a buzz and excitement around you.

I think back to the year I did the private event with Barry, and the printing of menus and the running around and vases that had to be looked after – and how my hair does not survive getting wet in the rain well – and I think to myself "this would have been the perfect solution".

If you haven't found a budget-friendly solution for your year-end yet, go take a look at this, and give yourself an afternoon off to let your hair down before we come back and launch 2017 with a real bang!

It's been a long year – and you deserve it.

ABOUT CHEMORY GUNKO

Chemory Gunko is a seasoned Creative Director, a certified NLP Practitioner, Ericksonian Hypnotherapy Practitioner, Energy ReSourcing Practitioner & Life Coach, among others. She works as a marketing consultant and provides copywriting, SEO, graphic design and Joomla! website services.

- What makes content marketing return ongoing results? - 18 Jan 2017
- Being brave and controversial in your content marketing - 13 Jan 2017
- So we've created a world of consumers... now what? - 5 Jan 2017
- What is the value in a Year End Function? - 7 Oct 2016
- Five ways innovation can accelerate in a world without money - 5 May 2016

View my profile and articles...

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>