

A Member Group of Idaho Media Professionals

There is NO MEETING in December

We'll see you back in January

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

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Give your Career a Holiday Gift by Pamela Kleibrink Thompson

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The holidays are coming, which means shopping, travel, holiday cards and parties. Here's how to make the holidays meaningful — for your career.

Instead of taking your wallet to the shopping mall, take your notebook. Write about the variety of humanity walking by. Practice your writing. Capture the personalities of the people walking past in quick character sketches.

If you are traveling during the holidays, pack your notebook in your carry-on bag. Take advantage of layovers by writing at the airport. Observe the moods of other travelers. Observe their movements and body language. Are they carrying too much luggage and trying to drag a small child through the airport as well? Look out the windows — the baggage handlers and airport workers make great subjects.

There's no more unique holiday card than an original card. I enjoy and save holiday cards from my artistic friends. Photo cards are also effective. Send cards to those people you met this year at interviews (even if you didn't get the job and already sent them a thank you note after the interview), conferences, classes, writing groups and other meetings. Here's a chance to express your appreciation, give thanks and show your creativity.

Invited to the company party? Make contact with those you don't work with everyday. Don't be shy about introducing yourself and give each person you speak to at least five minutes of your undivided attention. If you're shy, pretend that you are interviewing the person. People like to talk about themselves. Be a good listener.

Holiday parties are a great opportunity to expand your network. Whether it's a neighborhood party, a friend's party or industry-related event, make a goal of meeting five new people. If you go with a friend, make it a contest — each of you must meet at least five new people and find out two things about each person. Compare notes afterward. If you get a business card or e-mail address, follow up after the party with a short note telling the person how you enjoyed meeting him or her.

Your networking doesn't work only at parties. Don't be afraid to speak to people while shopping or traveling too. You never know where it might lead. Some friends met their babysitter while standing in line at Disneyland. And one of my best friends met his future wife at the airport as they waited for their delayed planes from the east coast. My screenwriter husband met his manager at a Chinese restaurant.

Most of all, lend a helping hand and give someone encouragement. Spread joy and you will be surprised at what might happen.

Of course, these tips can help you at any time of year, but why not try them right away?

Enjoy the holidays and take charge of your career in the new year.

Pamela Kleibrink Thompson is an internationally known recruiter/hiring strategist and career coach. Clients include Lucas Animation in Singapore, LAIKA in Portland, Oregon; and Framstore in London, England. She speaks regularly on career issues at colleges, universities and conferences. For recruiting, career coaching or speaking requests contact Pamela Thompson at PamRecruit@q.com.

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