

How to Work a Room

The Ultimate Guide to Making Lasting Connections

BY SARONA-LEE WILDE, CPP, PCP

Did you know that one source says 95% of people describe themselves as shy? I would fall into that category, and I'm a speaker!

I never quite know what to say: how to keep a conversation going, how to start one, maybe even how to end one (gracefully). I'm fine if someone walks up to me and starts a conversation, at least for a few minutes, but then it tends to hit that "awkward silent spot"—know what I mean?

I just can't get started and so I know I've missed some great chances to meet some great people. For example, there are chapter meetings and the Annual Congress, where the APA gives us the awesome opportunity to network. We all know networking is very important—it can lead to great job leads, fast friendships, and much more. We all want to make the most of these opportunities, but how can we if we are in the 95% of people who are shy? What if we just don't know how to start and/or keep a conversation going or worse, are downright overwhelmed at the thought of conversation?

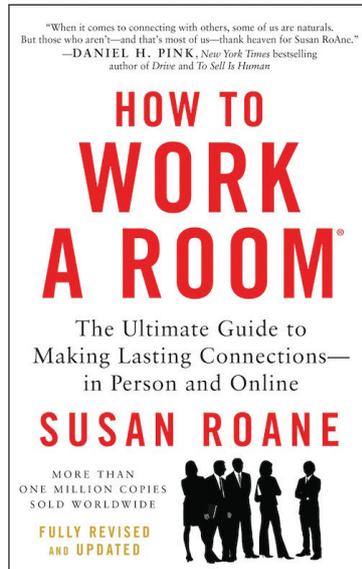
Enter one of APA's friends and an Annual Congress speaker on several occasions, Susan RoAne.

"When it comes to connecting with others, some of us are glad-handing naturals. But those who aren't—and that's most of us—thank heaven for Susan RoAne," said Daniel H. Pink, *The New York Times* bestselling author of *Drive* and *To Sell Is Human*, referring to her book *How to Work a Room*.

One of my favorite chapters in *How to Work a Room* addresses what is stopping us from being comfortable in crowds and networking or just meeting new friends like we'd like to. Susan calls it the five roadblocks (Personally, I identified with all five!). She then goes right into overcoming those roadblocks. Thank goodness she does. I need solutions.

Susan has even updated the original book she wrote a number of years ago with a chapter on "How to Work the

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Virtual Room." You know, like LinkedIn or even Instagram, the tools of today where we "reach out" and meet other people. We really need to take some of these online introductions into meaningful relationships where folks remember our name and something about us, not just as another "contact." Read these chapters because Susan will get you there.

This book is so full that it covers every angle. You will definitely want to read Chapter 17 if you are attending APA's Annual Congress. Chapter 17 is called "Working the Trade Show or Convention: The Trade Offs." Susan offers really good reminders of some do's and don'ts.

A number of chapters provide a lot of information on how to prepare, provide opening lines, offer tips on gathering material, and Susan even tells on herself from time to time.

Have you ever needed to speak in front of others and give a toast? Or had to introduce a speaker at an event? Yup, Susan even covers that!

I can't think of anything Susan left out on this subject of *How to Work a Room*. For those of us in payroll in particular (is it possible that even more of us in our field

than 95% are shy?), a discipline we've been working hard to elevate and promote as a truly professional field, we must make ourselves great at interactions with other professionals.

Even though there are 21 chapters, each one is a quick read. You can pick and choose the chapter that grabs your attention first or read straight through. There is also a Kindle version to make it even more portable and quickly accessible.

Coming to this year's Annual Congress May 13-17 in Minneapolis? Then pick up this book and make your time at Congress even more relaxed, more enjoyable, more productive, and more memorable—not only for you but also the people you meet.

Not coming to this year's Annual Congress? That's OK, as this is still a must-read for your personal library (it's available in print or electronic). Susan's book will help you polish your interactions or help you create and build your interactions—overall making your life more fulfilling. ■