



Photos by Daryl Cox

# "Sp-mingling"

## *Networking at a Spa Builds Happy and Healthy Bonds*

By Cathy Areu

*"Happy Hour" is sort of a fallacy. I mean, is a bar full of professionals drinking their sorrows away for hours after work really so happy? How about "net-working"? What a misnomer that is. Have you ever tried to create lasting relationships with strangers in a cold and unwelcoming hotel lobby?*

So, what's a hard-working Philadelphian to do? I suggest relaxing in a productive, healthy posh environment. Call it "sp-mingling," if you will. It's when professionals gather at a spa and mingle while being pampered, of course.

If you haven't been invited to a spa-mingling event yet, here are five tips to help you create and host your own spa-mingling networking event - a gathering that's both happy and healthy:

1 Choose a convenient and functional location. Select a spa that is conveniently located for the majority of your guests/networkers. No one wants to drive to a resort outside of the city for an after-work event, no matter how posh it may seem. Also, visit your spa of choice in advance and make sure it's relaxing and welcoming - with enough room for a large group to mingle. (My suggestion: Visit the Adolf Beicker Salon and Spa at the Rittenhouse Hotel.)

2 Pick the right time. Since many of your networkers work full time and rely on their weekend for errands, host your sp-mingling event on a weekday evening. Plan on hosting a two-hour event, starting at around 5 p.m. (Tip: To reduce road rage and stress, tell your networkers to arrive

"at their leisure" between 5 and 6 p.m. and end the event around 7 p.m.)

3 Think healthy. Treat your networkers to healthy spa cuisine and relaxing spa and/or beauty treatments. Your guests will instantly feel refreshed and eager to bond when nibbling on healthy treats and experiencing soothing spa treatments. (Note: Keep your activities simple. It makes more sense to network over a chair massage or manicure, than a Swedish massage or Brazilian bikini wax.)

4 Make it affordable. Since I started sp-mingling two years ago, I've noticed that spas are getting used to accommodating large groups and hosting events. This means discounts! Call different spas and ask them about their group rates. (True fact: A networker can indulge in spa cuisine, treatments, relaxation, and camaraderie for less than \$40.)





Get the word out! At least two weeks in advance, contact area business associations, non profits, women's groups, and your friends to invite professionals to your unique event. Send them an online invitation and an easy way to R.S.V.P. In your invitation, be sure to mention the healthy tone of the event, price, and specific spa treatments. (Tip: Visit [www.evite.com](http://www.evite.com) for online invitations and more.)

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