

Flashback: After the Olympic Games in Sydney Australia had concluded, I hosted a December BBQ and year end party for clients, colleagues and close friends to close out the year 2000.

The initial list of contacts in the greater Sydney metro area grew from a few dozen to over 120. In going through my yearly planner, emails and business cards by mid-October, the list of contacts had grown to include people in Canberra, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and New Zealand.

In 2000, we didn't have the luxury of social media member sites like Facebook, LinkedIn or mobile phones with the SMS or message service capabilities of today. It was a bit 'old school' to phone people, send invites via mail or email addresses with many people having fax machines in their office or at home.

Within a week or so of the invites going out, 70% came back with a YES. With about 25% unable to make it due to travel or other family gatherings, the rest said they would be there and happily contribute to my simple request in the 'PS' area at the bottom of the BBQ / Boat Cruise invitation.

Our double deck boat with approximately 90 clients, colleagues, friends and crew set out for a late afternoon into evening December cruise. Once on board, guests were reminded that food, drinks, alcohol, music, door prizes, sets of binoculars to view the houses along the shoreline, networking and the cruise were all free. The year 2000 had been good for us with speaking, training, hosting events and consulting with core clients - thus it was time to celebrate with everyone.



An amazing experience on the harbour was enjoyed, however it was what occurred just before we left the dock that impacted everyone when the Captain and I gave a welcome 'aboard chat' to everyone.

You see, the 'PS' at the bottom of the invitation had an acceptance clause to board our cruise boat. All guests were encouraged to bring canned food items (soups, fruit, tuna fish) or a soft animal toy, reading books, puzzles or games to be given to the children 4 to 12 years of age who would be in the hospital during Christmas. The canned goods were for the children's parents or family.

A photo was taken at the St George Hospital in Rockdale (south Sydney area) as I gave the toys and canned goods to the Director of the Children's Burns Unit.

In early 2001, she let me know every child and their *parents or legal guardians received toys, gifts or food parcels for Christmas and into the New Year for those familiar with children who needed to stay a bit longer.*

My recap THANK YOU letter to everyone on the cruise was sent in January 2001. With my note, was a photo of me with the five large boxes of teddy bears, games, children's books, food parcels and other soft toys that everyone had helped to donate to as they boarded the boat.

It was joy to let our guests know what happened as it was all of us in our combined efforts that make a much brighter Christmas amidst the children and their families trying times.

Give knowing it can make a significant difference



Fast Forward: In late 2016 and December 2017, I hosted a year end BBQ gathering in Singapore with dozens of friends, clients and children in attendance. Apart from myself, my wife was the only person whom was at both of these BBQ's and also the one on Sydney harbour in late 2000.

I learnt something at the Sydney Christmas gathering that was a welcomed repeat in 2016 and 2017. I found that my clients, colleagues and close friends were very similar in a wonderful way.

While the BBQs were in different countries separated by 6300 kilometres and many years, the spirit of giving was similar as some who could not attend gave even more toys and books to our cause.

While my invitation to attend our BBQ was free, a simple 'PS' asked if they were going to RSVP, could they help a child in a Singapore hospital by bringing a kids book, soft toy or roller scooter to give away?

None of the guests will likely meet the children or parents we were helping, yet everyone felt great knowing we were making a difference for the 2016 & 2017 holidays. **Rob's thank you speech**

The spirit of generosity has thrived at all of our BBQ's. It was a pleasure to bring boxes of toys, games, books and chocolates to **Lisa Loh Ee Wen** with the Corporate Development Division of KK Women's and Children's Hospital. Also to the Singapore Salvation Army in which their teams did a wonderful job of getting the donations to caring families and children in need.



During the last three decades, I've been engaged for hundreds of functions and charities as an event host, MC and live event auctioneer.

Having helped raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for cancer and leukaemia research, for flood victims, schools, Olympic teams, associations, in support of Ronald McDonald House Charities...if it can help children and their parents, I am glad to help.

I have seen the philosophical value associated to 'give and you shall receive'. Hence my BBQ budget for community and business philanthropy has seen a return to me (*and our guests*) in ways we could not have seen.

If you take simple steps to gather some friends or colleagues who are interested in a great experience and also to donate toys or books to a children's cause, I contend you will enjoy your futures BBQ events much more than you can now imagine.

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