

**Flashback:** After the Olympic Games in Sydney Australia had concluded, I hosted a celebration BBQ and year end party for clients, colleagues and close friends to celebrate the end of 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 in mid-October of that year, the list of contacts had grown to include Canberra, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and New Zealand.

Back then, 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 in the mail or to those that had email addresses or via fax however most of my clients did have fax machines in their office (LOL to think about that now).

Within a week or so over 70% of the invites that had come back with a YES. With about 25 % unable to make it due to company travel or other family gatherings, the rest said they would be there and happy to contribute to my request in the 'PS' at the bottom of the BBQ / Boat Cruise invitation.

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



An amazing experience on the harbour was enjoyed; however it was what occurred just before we left the dock that impacted everyone on board right away. Ultimately, this is what helped dozens of children just before Christmas in the southern Sydney metro area.

You see, the 'PS' at the bottom of the invitation had an acceptance entry clause to board the boat. All guests were encouraged to bring either a small bag of canned food items (soups, fruit cocktail, cans of tuna) or a soft animal toy or fun game that could be donated as a gift to a child 4 to 12 years of age who would be spending Christmas in the Burns Unit of the hospital near our area. The canned goods were for the parents and families of those children.

My follow up THANK YOU letter to everyone who was on the cruise was in early January of 2001. My note that was included had a photo of me with the five large boxes of teddy bears, games, children's books, food parcels and other soft toys they had seen at the front of the boat that everyone had helped to donate to as they boarded the boat.

A photo was taken in the lobby of the St George Hospital in Rockdale (south Sydney area) as I gave the gifts to the Director of the Children's Burns Unit. A few weeks later in early 2001, she let me know every child in the burns unit (and their parents or legal guardians) was given multiple gifts or food parcels on Christmas Day.



It was our guests on the boats who collectively made it happen. In a unique way, we had helped the kids with a little brighter Christmas amidst very trying times for most of the children.

## Give without expectation yet know how to ask for help

**Fast Forward:** In late 2016, I hosted a BBQ / year end gathering in Singapore with dozens of friends, clients and children in attendance. Apart from myself, my wife was at this BBQ and also the one in Sydney in late 2000 which made for interesting conversation during the holidays.

I learnt something during the pre-Christmas 2000 gathering that was a welcomed repeat in late 2016 ... I found that my clients, colleagues and close friends were similar in many ways.

While the BBQs were in two different countries and separated by a distance of 6300 kilometres and 16 years in time difference, the spirit of giving from those who attended was very similar.

While my invitation to attend was free, a simple '**PS**' asked if they were going to RSVP, could they help a child in the KK Women's and Children's Hospital by bringing a children's gift, book or soft toy to give away?

None or my clients, friends nor I would get a chance to meet the children or parents we were to help, yet everyone at the BBQ wanted to make a difference before Christmas. They knew that if a young child in pain or their grieving family could be a bit happier with a donated gift to the hospital then it was a pretty special contribution for the right reasons.

The spirit of generosity was shared by those at our BBQ in Singapore. From that, I was able to drop by with several boxes of toys, games, books (and chocolates) to **Lisa Loh** with the Corporate Development division of KK Women's and Children's Hospital who worked with their staff to distribute the gifts to the children in time for Christmas 2016.

**Rob with Lisa Loh of  
KK Women's and Children's  
Hospital plus photos of  
various books and soft toys.**



Over the decades, I have been fortunate to be involved with industry events or charities as an MC, Host and auctioneer. Having raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for cancer and leukaemia research, for flood victims, to buy new school items, or help Olympic teams and in support of the Ronald McDonald House helps more children and their parents.

I have found the return on my time, energy and my budget for these BBQ and events has given back to me in countless ways beyond what I could have known at the time.

If you follow the same simple steps by putting together a list of people who are interested in having a great time and perhaps donate toys or kid's books to a great children's cause, I'm sure you'll find yourself enjoying your BBQ or boat cruise much more than you can now imagine.

**Rob Salisbury B. Com., CSP**, global speaker, corporate speaker, facilitator and popular MC has been hired over 2200 times by 620 global firms, Universities, Associations and Chamber of Commerce in 24 countries and 55 cities.

A former two-term President of the Sydney and Canberra Chapters of the Professional Speakers Association of Australia with nearly 300 financial members, Rob is a recipient of numerous global awards for service to associations, peers and industry clientele.

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