

Matchmaking: Old-Fashioned Service Meets Present Day Success

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BY RONNIE ANN RYAN Matchmaker, *matchmaker make me a match, find me a find, catch me a catch*. These immortal words were sung by Tevya's daughter in the play *Fiddle on the Roof*, set in the year 1905. Yet, today, the second oldest profession in civilization is making a major come back. The matchmaking business is going strong and some companies are even being turned into franchises.

What's causing this dramatic upswing? A number of factors are attracting people to the business on both sides of the desk, and for good reason.

- Nearly half the adult population is single, with 42 million singles over the age of 40. This vast number and unprecedented social phenomenon has been a boon to some businesses and inspiration to others for launching an explosion of services to help singles meet each other.
- The recent popularity of online dating services has made the idea of looking for love mainstream and completely acceptable. It's now okay to get help meeting the opposite sex and no longer considered a desperate move.
- Some people have been disappointed by the Internet dating or are tired of the time-consuming screening process required to find few gems.
- With free time so limited today, many professionals are simply too busy to bother with the online world or the hit-or-miss nature of typical singles activities.

What Do Matchmakers Actually DO? Traditional matchmaking starts with a comprehensive, face-to-face, client interview that's one to two hours long. David Cummings from Signature Singles in New Jersey points out, Some online services rely on telephone interviews, but that just doesn't work. I need to meet clients in person to ensure the details they provide are accurate. In addition, presentation, body language, and facial expression are essential for getting to know clients and being able to pick a good match for them. Answers to questions about life goals, life style, preferences, hobbies, interests, as well as age, education, religion and financial requirements form the basis of the matchmaking process. Some even conduct background checks, a feature that women find appealing for reasons of accuracy and safety. Based on these criteria, compatible partners are sought from the growing pool of applicants. Once a match is made, the office alerts both parties to facilitate the introduction. After the date, the focus shifts to

gathering client feedback, which provides vitally information to help the matchmaker improve future matches if needed.

Advantages In speaking with matchmakers around the Northeast, many advantages to working with a professional surfaced: **Selectivity:** I'm picky about who I represent. I look for prospects who fit well with my existing client base quality people who are successful, health conscious, ect., says Joanne Ward of It's about Time! Master Matchmakers in Philadelphia. The in-depth screening process eliminates undesirables and allows patrons to find the type of person they want more quickly than on their own. This is particularly true for clients who have been relying on the Internet to meet prospects where the profiles can be somewhat 's creative. **Ready for Relationship:** People who hire a matchmaker are ready for a serious relationship, explains Dale Matzger of The Singles Network from Hartsdale, Danbury, Stamford and Milford. This is a huge advantage since there's no way to know a person's true agenda when meeting someone through other dating methods. **Makes the Process Easier:** Our office sets up the first date to ensure the introduction takes place. We can help choose the restaurant if necessary, make the reservation, confirm with both clients and get feedback, explains Gary Ferone of Great Date Now with offices in Mamaroneck, Darien and soon Milford. Gary prides himself in taking the work out of the process so clients can enjoy the date. Matchmakers agree that working with a professional simplifies the dating scene. **Time is at the Premium:** Life is short and time is precious, so spend it wisely. You can always make more money but you can't make more time. ***That's one of the biggest reasons people join Executive Singles office in the greater Boston area. Matchmaking accelerates the process of connecting people with highly compatible prospects who are sincerely looking for love.***

Professionals So, why not consider hiring a matchmaker to find the love you want? That makes a lot of sense, particularly for adults who are seeking a long-term relationship. During your early 20s most people are single, but as people get old, and more set into their routines, meeting quality singles takes more effort.

If you find yourself struggling to meet single men, are tired of results online, sick of happy hours and single dances, and wish there was someone to make the process easier, you might consider working with a professional matchmaker. Sometimes investing in yourself offers the best return. While money can't buy love, it can help you meet good prospects.