

*How can I get along in business, where I have to make a lot of social contacts, if I don't drink?*

Social drinking has become an accepted part of business enterprise in many fields these days. Many contacts with customers and prospective customers are timed to coincide with occasions when cocktails, highballs, or cordials seem the appropriate order of the day or night. Many now in A.A. would be the first to concede that they had often transacted important business in bars, cocktail lounges, or hotel rooms or even during parties in private homes. It is surprising, however, how much of the world's work is accomplished without the benefit of alcohol. It is equally surprising to many alcoholics to discover how many recognized leaders in business, industry, professional life, and the arts have attained success without dependence on alcohol. In fact, many who are now sober in A.A. admit that they used "business contacts" as one of several excuses for drinking. Now that they no longer drink, they find that they can actually accomplish more than they used to. Sobriety has proved no hindrance to their ability to win friends and influence people who might contribute to their economic success. This does not mean that all A.A.s suddenly avoid their friends or business associates who drink. If a friend wants a cocktail or two before lunch, the A.A. will usually take a soft drink, coffee, or one of the popular juices. If the A.A. is invited to a cocktail party being given for business reasons, there will generally be no hesitation about attending. The alcoholic knows from experience that most of the other guests are concerned with their own drinks, and are not likely to care particularly what anyone else happens to be drinking. While beginning to take pride in the quality and quantity of work on the job, the newcomer to A.A. is likely to find that the payoff in most lines of business is still based on performance. This was not always apparent in the drinking days. The alcoholic may then have been convinced that charm, ingenuity, and conviviality were the chief keys to business

success. While these qualities are undoubtedly helpful to the person who drinks in a controlled manner, they are not enough for the alcoholic, if only because the latter, while drinking, is inclined to assign to them far more importance than they deserve.