

FEATURE

Dating Service Aims to Put People 'In Good Company'

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Online dating—probably one of the most popular ways people meet each other—certainly is convenient. However, how many times has a guy claimed to be Brad Pitt when he turns out to be Brad Pitiful? Ladies, when you meet your date in the flesh for the first time, do you think of another “L” word—loser? As for the bar scene, many feel that the less said about that social minefield, the better.

Well, help is here. In Good Company (IGC), which bills itself as “the premier gay and lesbian service for first introductions,” launched in Chicago in late June. IGC is an upscale, professional matchmaking service exclusively for gays and lesbians.

Bill Rossi, the president of IGC, started the company while working with a successful company that provided introductions for the heterosexual community. Rossi realized that a lot of gay and lesbian singles had become discouraged with the dating scene. (“A lot of my friends—and they’re professional and really good-looking—would say no when I asked if they were dating,” he said.) He then approached Carla Vaughn, now the company’s vice-president and head matchmaking director, about the concept.

IGC’s professional attitude even extends to

its advertisements. “Our ads are very clean. We don’t have the guy with his T-shirt off. We’re attracting a different audience. Thirty-five percent of our clients are business owners.”

However, not everyone is going to be tripping the light fantastic with Mister or Miss Right immediately. “We don’t discriminate against our clients,” Rossi states. “However, our clients discriminate against our clients. For example, a 70-year-old man requested to have a man in his 20s travel with him. Well, we don’t have anyone in his 20s who wants to meet a 70-year-old man. So we can’t accept him as a member but we’ll keep his name on file and if we get someone who fits those criteria, we’ll take him on as a member.”

Everyone who joins IGC interviews extensively with a matchmaking director. The interview explores the member’s likes, dislikes, hobbies, interests and personality traits. After the interview, they are matched with other members based on their criteria and the views of the directors. “We’re a very personalized service,” Rossi stressed. “There’s no e-mail because it’s so impersonal. I’m 110 percent customer-oriented. Every person gets the same amount of attention.” Another interesting aspect of the interview process is that even though the questions are exten-

sive, they are not intrusive or too explicit. In other words, even though an IGC director may ask a potential client about hobbies, the matchmaker will not inquire about a person’s favorite sexual scene.

A typical first introduction (Rossi discourages the word “date” because “we’re in the business of introducing people with similar interests to each other”) with IGC could be lunch, drinks after work, a bike ride or a trip to a comedy club. IGC contacts both individuals, makes any necessary reservations and keeps all introductions on a first-name basis only in order to maintain each member’s privacy and to make the initial meeting as relaxed as possible. Then, follow-up phone interviews are conducted after each introduction and in-person interviews are conducted every three months of the membership.

Clients can choose from a variety of membership packages. They can choose between a 12-, 9-, or 6-month membership (for, respectively, \$750, \$650, and \$550), which guarantees the corresponding number of introductions. If a client hits it off with someone on, say, the third introduction, he or she cannot cancel the rest of the membership for a partial refund. (“It’s an investment like anything else. If you use a car for just six months, you can’t get your money back,” Rossi says.) However, people can put them on hold; if things do not work out, clients can restart their memberships. As for the costs of the memberships, Rossi points out that people easily spend more going to bars for the same amounts of time without meeting a number of quality individuals.

IGC has already blossomed, exceeding Rossi’s expectations. Already, more than 200 people have joined—and many have found success. As for expansion plans, he said that the company is already set to launch offices in New York City and Los Angeles. However, Rossi adds that if the market in Boise calls

for an office there, one would be established.

If IGC is set for world domination, it seems its goals are definitely peace and love.

For more information, go to www.igc-chicago.com or call (312) 499-9900.



In Good Company Director Carla Vaughn and John Murden.



ABOVE: Philip Pollack, In Good Company Director Emily Fry, In Good Company President Bill Rossi and Matthew Wall celebrate In Good Company’s launch.



Stan Christensen, John Hassey, Elliot Massuda, Ellen Seiffert and Pedro Muset at In Good Company’s launch party.