

No time to date? Eight minutes could change your life

BY JOANNE YUAN

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It's all about economics these days, dating not excluded. 8minuteDating.com has caught onto this trend and offers single professionals more bang for their buck in the romance department.

Scott Dluzen, a 32-year-old pre-construction manager, says he's not the type of guy who likes to pick up girls at bars, and he's just too busy to go out every night and meet people.

He says he's now looking at speed-dating as an alternative to the bar scene and blind dates.

"On blind dates I'll spend at least \$65 to \$100," says Dluzen, who tried speed dating for the first time. "But why do that if I can come here, get past the initial investigation with more people, and for only \$35. 'It's just more economical.'"

■ OFFBEAT

This idea was shared by most everyone at a recent 8minuteDating.com event held at Scottsdale's Devil's Martini. The bar hosts the dating rendezvous once a month.

Created in January 2001, the Boston-based company has been rapidly growing, with more than 60,000 customers to date. The service usually charges from \$35 to \$50 per event, which includes cocktails and appetizers.

The dating nights are held in 55 cities in the United States and Canada, which tailor events to niche groups, from women seeking younger men to Jewish singles. The events also are broken down by age ranging from 25- to 50-year-olds.

In Arizona, the company hosts events in Tempe, Chandler and Scottsdale.

The dating parties usually consist of an equal amount of men and women — gener-



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Becky Park, event organizer for 8minuteDating.com, says 91 percent of the match-making service's clients meet someone they would like to see again.

ally about 20 pairs per event — who are allowed eight minutes to converse with a partner before having to switch tables to meet the next possible love match.

For fourth-grade teacher Maggie Rivage-

Seul, 23, eight minutes was the perfect amount of time to decide whether or not sparks were flying, as compared to other services that only allow three or five minutes.

"It would've been difficult to get to know them if I had less than eight minutes," she says. "I think the time was just enough for me to decide if I'd like to see this person again."

Scottsdale event organizer Becky Park says 99 percent of the 8minuteDating participants say they had a great time and 91 percent find someone they'd like to meet again, whether for a date or as a business contact.

Park says networking is an appealing part of the engagements, since many of the participants have much in common professionally.

Daniella Andrei, 32, says three out of her four eight-minute dates were people she'd like to keep in touch with for a business friendship.

As a medical researcher, she says most people she meets are not from Phoenix, and she feels speed-dating is a great way to get to know interesting people.

One of the best things about 8minuteDating.com, Park says, is that it gives people who are done with the bar scene a chance to avoid cheesy pickup lines and boring conversation.

"It's easier for them to talk to each other because they know the other person is here for the same purpose," Park says. "There's also no pressure to get that someone's number or to have to endure rejection."

The dating service does not allow participants to exchange numbers directly. Dating cards are used instead, where dates write who they'd like to see again and whether for a second date or as a business contact.

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8minuteDating.com: 8minutedating.com