

Networking for Results

THE POWER OF PERSONAL CONTACT

Back To The Future: The New Requirements for Small Business Marketing Success.

It's time for small business owners to recognize that in today's wired economy, there is a solution that delivers all the elements of a successful small business marketing strategy: the right audience, a focused message and confirmed results. It's readily available and carries only a small portion of the cost of contemporary mainstream marketing.

This secret strategy, simplistic as it sounds, is rooted in emphasizing the most basic of business axioms: that the majority of business success comes from, or through a small group of satisfied clients and helpful colleagues. As a small business owner, your most valuable and valued asset, today more than ever, lies with the customers you have (or have had) and the professional relationships you cultivate. Here are five practical, proven strategies to better leverage these key networks:

1. Over-deliver value to clients. Your clients make the ultimate commitment by sharing their hard-earned dollars in exchange for your product or service, in spite of all the choices they have. Ensure they walk away perceiving they received more value than they expected or anticipated. You'll also be more confident about your relationship with them.

2. Leverage client relationships. Your clients represent your most powerful asset and your most productive resource. Invest more time communicating with them to discover additional needs or requirements. Ask about their lives and what their interests are. By building your relationships with them, they will think of you first, even when bombarded with advertising about others.

3. Exploit in the network effect. The majority of your "best" clients have similar traits and characteristics: where they live, what they do or what they like. When you confirm one or a number these, check what groups or networks they belong to. This may represent and tremendous opportunity for you if you can access, then leverage this group of like-minded people.

4. Invest in creating advocates. You have a network of partners and stakeholders who support and interact with you on a daily basis. Think in terms of your accountant, banker, professional colleagues or business neighbours. What have you done lately to incent these powerful resources to promote you to their networks? Referrals are reactive. Have others think of you first by contributing to their lives in some way.

5. Focus on the five percent that matter. Research has consistently proven that a core network of relationships contribute the majority of our results in business and in life (roughly about five percent of your relationships). As a Small Business Owner, these high-value relationships should be a priority in allocating your time, energy and resources. Do you know who is on your list?

Michael Hughes is known as *THE* Networking Guru. To find out more about him and receive a complimentary copy of his ebook "Managing The Networking Experience", visit his web site at www.NetworkingForResults.com.