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**Small Business
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WHY SHOULD I NETWORK?



**By Gary Seibert, CEO,
Small Business Resource Association**

That's a great question and it made me think, if you asked a dozen different people about their thoughts on "networking", what would they answer? Would you get consensus or a dozen different perspectives? So, at a networking meeting last week, I asked the question to a small group of business owners and here are some of the comments they made.

I hate it but it's a necessary evil. I feel uncomfortable going into large groups of people that I do not know. I am afraid someone will ask me a question that I don't know the answer to. I am not good at starting a conversation with a stranger. I don't like that everyone is trying to sell me and I am trying to sell them. Everyone seems to be in small groups, huddled in the corners of the room or around the bar and I would have to break into the group. Some of these networking groups are expensive. Some of the groups meet every week and it is very time consuming. It is the same people every week and I have to be a member of several groups to meet new people and that is additional cost and time out of the week. I have met some great people and I do business with some of them and I really enjoy going to the meetings, however, the social experience has now been overpowered by the financial expense.

You can make all the excuses in the world about why you do not like networking, but, at the end of the day—get over it. You will not be able to build your business waiting for the phone to ring or hoping someone sends you an email. Believe in yourself and your product and be excited to tell others.

Here are a few ideas that might help you better enjoy and benefit from your next networking event.

Prepare for the event

- Find someone that has participated in the event previously to find out what to expect. How many people, types of attendees, dress, atmosphere, when best to show up...
- Find someone you know that has attended before and see if you can go with them.
- Take a good supply of business cards
- Make sure you have a good 15-second elevator speech. Practice it over and over in front of a mirror to make sure you can deliver it in a normal, friendly speech tone.
- Think of a couple of introductory questions that could start your conversation.

During the event

- Put on your smiley face, be positive and approachable. Most people like to associate with happy, friendly people.
- Walk up to someone you don't know, extend your hand and introduce yourself and briefly tell them what you do (in as few words as possible). Either they will ask you a question about yourself or about your business or they will give you their name and what they do. Regardless, the ice is broken and a conversation should pursue.
- Try not to spend more than 10 or 15 minutes with any one person as they may be wanting to network more and meet other people.
- Always get their business card and if possible, write a couple of notes on it to remind you later about specific facts you wanted to remember.

- If possible, introduce people you met to other people you might know. This shows that you are looking to help others rather than just looking for your own sales. This is what I call REVERSE NETWORKING. The more you help others, the more likely they will want to help you.

After the event

- Within 24 hours, make sure you have emailed everyone you met with a thank you for spending time with you and sharing their story. If possible, something in the email that reflects back to the note you placed on their card. Make your email personal.
- Within a week of the event, if you feel you met someone that would be a good potential client, call or email them to set up a meeting. Get them in or out of the system as soon as possible.

Now maybe you can relate to one of these responses: "I make networking part of my weekly business routine", "Without networking I would not be as successful" "I network just to meet people and make new friends but, business usually follows shortly thereafter".

I can really relate to the last response. "I network just to meet people and make new friends but, business usually follows shortly thereafter". This person obviously takes a different approach to networking. They view networking events as a time and place to make new relationships. One of the primary reasons we are on this earth is to socially interact with other human beings. Networking provides a great way to fulfill that need.

Once you meet someone and have developed a relationship with them, you will better understand who they are, what they might need and how you might fulfill that need. Networking can help you define and refine who your target client really is. Network to find those people.



SBRA Business Spotlight



Berks Hearing
PROFESSIONALS

Address: 560 Van Reed Rd,
Ste. 205, Wyomissing,
PA 19610

3607 Perkiomen Ave, Reading,
PA 19606

Phone: 610-750-6107

Website:
www.Berkshearing.com

Since 2006, our audiology practice has specialized in comprehensive hearing and tinnitus evaluation and treatment. We provide hearing aids and ear-level tinnitus treatments, and can perform hearing aid checks and repairs. We accept most insurances and are accepting new patients.



WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

The Emerging Entrepreneurs Academy Provides High School Students With the Opportunity to Explore a Career as an Entrepreneur

The Small Business Resource Association (SBRA), in collaboration with Career Ready Berks, is launching the

Emerging Entrepreneur's Academy (EEA), a unique educational program for high school students who aspire to someday own their own business. The EEA is designed to provide

11th and 12th grade students with both classroom instruction and in-the-field training through internships, allowing them to benefit from the knowledge and experience of local business owners. The six-week summer program for 2022 is being offered to 2 students selected from each Berks County school district that have expressed a desire to be an entrepreneur. Students of the EEA will learn the fundamentals of being an entrepreneur - how to analyze the market and competition, create a business plan, develop and execute a marketing plan, hire staff, manage a sales team, create a culture and more.

Students who have an interest in someday owning a business will gain valuable insight and knowledge in recognizing opportunities and understanding the challenges of owning a business... directly from local entrepreneurs. This interactive curriculum delivers a unique combination of educational workshops along with an internship-like experience for

greater guidance to career decision making - beyond the choices of college, trade school or entering the workforce after graduation.

The SBRA aims to reverse statistics that show Berks County has the lowest business birth rate compared to neighboring counties, the State of PA and the entire nation. Launching this program makes perfect sense for the SBRA to help build a stronger Berks by fostering the growth of business.



The Emerging Entrepreneurs Academy Needs the Support of local Business Owners that want to make a difference!

Local business owners are encouraged to support this program as a presenter, an instructor, participating on a panel, offering an internship or sponsoring students. The SBRA's goal is to offset the entire cost of tuition though sponsorships. Sponsorship packages for those interested in supporting the EEA are available.

For details about the EEA - <https://www.sbrassociation.com/ee-academy>

Contact Gary Seibert at: gseibert@sbrassociation.com

SBRA Monthly Member Shout Out

Members Helping Each Other Grow



Levelfp.com



Amazzoaccounting.com



[What you want your bank to be](http://Whatyouwantyourbanktobe.com)

Fleetwoodbank.com



DBconstructiongrp.com



Sottosantilawn-care.net



Cleanfloorsandmore.net

SBRA EVENTS - BE BETTER. GROW FASTER.

TUNE-UP Tuesdays

information. sharing. motivating.



Free to the public. Get more details and register at <https://www.sbrassociation.com/#EVENTS>

- Tuesday, April 12th - 9:30-10:30 a.m. - SBRA Workshop

- Tuesday, April 26th - 9:30-10:30 a.m. - SBRA Workshop

120 MINGLE NETWORKING

- Wednesday, April 27th 5:30-7:00 at B2Bistro in West Reading

Register: <https://www.sbrassociation.com/#EVENTS>

- Learn How the SBRA Can Help Your Business Grow - Membership Benefits Update Wednesday, April 27th, 9:00-9:30 a.m. via Zoom

Register: <https://www.sbrassociation.com/#EVENTS>



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