

## CHAPTER 17

### HOW BEING A “GROUPIE” IS GOOD FOR BUSINESS

*“Coming together – sharing together – working together – succeeding together.”*  
~ Author Unknown

When you think about it, independent business owners actually have a lot of advantages. They can respond to customers much more directly and quickly. They can adapt and make changes as needed with greater flexibility than big companies whose wheels turn much more slowly. And among the advantages for many are industry trade associations. An alliance with a larger group can be very good for your business, if utilized correctly. The larger group should have name recognition, and with that comes credibility. Being part of a recognized group strengthens your own business reach. It builds your clientele. It gives you a stronger “marketing voice” and also serves as a great networking source from which you can promote others and be promoted by others.

Trade associations are a wealth of knowledge, information, and, in many cases, offer continuing education and certification. It’s an invaluable connection to people in your field who are generally very willing to mentor others, answer questions, offer new ideas and it naturally provides for another avenue of referral possibilities. Volunteer on projects and committees. Become active and better known among your peers. Here you have the perfect opportunity to grow among your professional circles and utilize their resources to the fullest. Do they put out a newsletter? If so, find out how you can contribute articles. Do they have a database you can tap into? Can you become a spokesperson for the group to the public in the form of giving media interviews or even be a primary representative as needed to other related groups of interest as a live speaker? The designated speaker or seminar presenter at a workshop is extremely valuable in getting you face to face time with potential customers. This strengthens your voice as an authority.

Meet Mark James, a modern day Tarzan, of sorts. Mark is a board certified master arborist (the highest certification given in its field comparable to a Ph.D. in education); a consulting arborist with the American Society of Consulting Arborists; a certified climbing specialist, and a licensed qualified supervisor for trees and turf with the Colorado Department of Agriculture. Mark has thirty years experience in the field, including twenty in teaching and training other arborists. The boy who grew up in northern Indiana on forty acres of wooded forests and streams discovered that the love of his life was hanging out fifty feet above ground or hanging from long vines swinging across steep ravines. In the quiet amidst the trees, however, a true bird’s-eye view provided Mark a perspective of nature not generally seen by many humans. In college, he worked for a tree company to help pay tuition where he quickly realized his childhood fun could be his lifetime vocation.

After many years of operating his own arborist business, and after becoming a certified arborist in 1995, Mark joined the Rocky Mountain Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) and attended their annual conference. “I got to know a lot more people, made good contacts, and felt part of something bigger than what I was doing on my own,” said Mark.

Be a Groupie Preview