

CHAPTER 18

TRADING FAVORS – BUSINESS TO BUSINESS

“Lots of people want to ride with you in the limo, but what you want is someone who will take the bus with you when the limo breaks down.”

~ Oprah Winfrey

Making industry-related networking in your community part of your strategic marketing plan is always more cost-effective than traditional advertising. Think of it as one big relationship-building advantage to get people to know you and to tell others about you.

They're practically everywhere for just about every business out there. Are you a member of your local chamber of commerce? There are ones specifically for all types of owners, minority-owned, women-owned, etc. There are chapters specifically by location. If your business relies a lot on tourism dollars and you're within twenty-five miles of the city's downtown, definitely look into membership at the local convention and visitor's bureau. Think about who you should be affiliated with that would match your target market.

These networking and educational growth opportunities should be included in your business resource life once a month or quarterly when you're getting started, then continue to choose worthwhile business seminars. You'll meet other business owners, exchange business cards, and build your circle of contacts each time. You'll be inspired by keynote speakers who are happy to share their rise to fame and how they overcame their own challenges. They'll provide relevant, up-to-date information, ideas, and points of perspective you won't get by yourself or from your employees. Occasionally, send a manager or key employee. They need to embrace your dream as much as you do. Professional growth opportunities recharge people's batteries and puts them together with others of various levels of experience from which to discuss, ask questions, and feel part of an industry.

It's important to not isolate yourself by working fifteen hours a day. You'll burn out quickly that way. Instead, stay energized by knowing you are connected to a smart association where you can network comfortably and build your name recognition.