



Hunting for Leads - Great Places to Find Them

By Bette Daoust, Ph.D.

I see so many people looking for the ideal group to get leads that will turn into business. I have attended many networking groups and have only been impressed by a few. The groups that impressed me the most were the ones that had a lead verification requirement. For example, I am given a lead by a person in the group, that person must then introduce me to my new potential client and help with getting the first meeting arranged. This way the lead is actually a true lead and not someone they met in a lineup at the grocery store. I have also gone to groups where they have internal leads. These leads mean that you have done business with someone inside the group. I do not have a problem with this when there is actual business conducted. One person I know had someone from her group drop into her shop to see her wares without a purchase and it counted as a lead. That same person went back another week and purchased a vest and this also counted as another lead. Finally that same person returned the vest the following week to get credit for a third lead. Needless to say, my friend soon dropped out of the group to find a better one.

Leads groups are only one avenue for finding additional business. Alliances can provide the same thing but the lead is even warmer. This means that you get a good introduction and a recommendation from the alliance partner. I have seen a new lawyer make an alliance with a small accounting firm in order to build his new business. It worked very well for the lawyer but the accountant was not too impressed as nothing new came his way. An alliance is a two way street so if you get introductions, you should make sure you give introductions as well. Leads can also come from service organizations. Before you get any leads here, you will have to be thoroughly integrated into the group. These organizations tend to lean on each other for favors and eventually do business with each other. Gaining business here does not happen very quickly, you must be directly involved with fundraising and other events.

Leads can come from almost anywhere if you are actively attending events and letting people know what you do. Leads can also come from your current

customers in the way of referrals. The best leads are warm leads and eighty percent of your business will come from current customers.

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