



HOW TO FIND SOMEONE & BE SOMEONE WHO BACKS YOUR BUSINESS

Collaborating, connecting, and linking with other businesses brings added value to both you and your customers. As well as provides an opportunity for those businesses to expand the visibility of your business to their own clients and customers. So, find a tribe, build a tribe, be a backer. Support small business and let others support you as well.

"As you navigate through the rest of your life, be open to collaboration. Other people and their ideas are often better than your own. Find a group of people who challenge & inspire you, spend a lot of time with them, & it will change your life"
~ Amy Poehler

Here are some effective ways to find someone & be someone who backs your business:

1. Join a Group

Often in the small business world business is driven by referrals and connections. There are hundreds if not thousands of referral and networking groups across the globe geared toward small businesses. They encourage a community of collaboration, support and most importantly referrals. Use the groups to build your relationships and gain advice from fellow entrepreneurs as well as help with issue like bookkeeping, website, social media marketing and more. There is a world of information walking around in these groups waiting to be shared. Much of it is free. To find these groups visit Meetup.com, your local chamber of commerce, your industry association, local coffee shop notice board or check online for a Small Business events calendar.

2. Find an Online Community

If your target market is outside the local community, or if you're uncomfortable with in-person events, try a social network or professional forum. There are many online communities and forums out there that encourage and support each other in developing their businesses, refer business to each other and build partnerships. Some examples include YoungEntrepreneur, and Entrepreneur magazine's Entrepreneur Connect. Also check out the many groups and forums across LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook simply be utilizing the search bar.

3. Give as well as Receive

Networking is not a one-way relationship. It is as important to look for opportunities for fellow small businesses and make those connections as it is to receive them. As a bonus, by bringing opportunities to those in your network you attract attention to your business and bring it to the front of their minds.

4. Support Small Businesses

Support small business whenever possible. Adopt a 'support your local community' mindset for your own business. When conceivable seek to work with local independent businesses as your suppliers, vendors and service providers. As well, consider bartering. Bartering is a great way to collaborate, promote several businesses and help both businesses with overhead costs. If you are encouraging your clients to support (your) small businesses and work with you, it is important to listen to your own words and support other small businesses as well.

5. Create Your Own

Do you already have a set of local suppliers you trust, or a set of competitors who you would trust? Why not create your own network group and trade contacts and work with them? I have a friend who owns an event planning company. She has comprised a list of "preferred customers" that she offers her clients at no charge. This list includes small businesses that offer photography services, catering, entertainment, and DJ services, etc. She gets no compensation for referring these businesses but should any of her clients utilize one of her preferred customers her business is represented as well as theirs. It's a win-win. Or it can be something as simple as writing for a magazine and promoting your business, guest blogging on other businesses blogs or what I do often is recommend the other businesses on Social Media. You can even partner with other small businesses where you only refer each other to clients providing each other with a small kick back for the referral.

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