

Women Entrepreneurs Build Business Through Networking

by Donna Messer



The Canada/USA Businesswomen's Summit started months ago for me. My role was to be the official match maker for approximately 300 women-owned businesses from throughout North

America. Imagine the challenges, the opportunities and the networking that was involved in order to be able to make creative, effective matches that would benefit both sides of these introductions.

As a keynote speaker and facilitator, I have been building relationships for many years, working with financial institutions, governments, education systems and individuals. My role has been to show by example, how to "network to get work." My methods have been broken down into a simple system that gives everyone the tools needed to maximize participation in any event. Everyone needs to know how to break the ice, build the bridge, cement the relationships that will result in successful joint ventures, strategic alliances or the sale of a product or service.

For this Summit, the challenge was to help everyone help each other. This was not just an opportunity to sell, it was the chance to find common interests and create partnerships where both sides of each match would be a winner. My team helped me research the delegates and their needs, then find interested companies and individuals who would be available to meet and discuss possible cross border business development.

I found myself repeating over and over again to the delegates and potential matches, who do you know, what do they know and how can we share that knowledge so that everyone will benefit? I was truly amazed with the response we had. Companies were not only willing to participate in this exercise, they were anxious to meet as many delegates as possible who had common interests.

In order for this monumental task to work, we needed to set up a data base that

would allow us to get to know each potential match. We created a form that gave us the needed information. We learned about the company, the products, the people and who they wanted to meet. The matching was done based on that information. Using a little lateral thinking we began to find common denominators between our delegates and our potential matches.

The results of the matches at the Summit are still being tabulated, our records show that each delegate received at least three matches, some delegates were able to meet with as many as twelve connections. We provided the tools and the delegates used them!

We intend to keep the match making going. We have contracts with several international events in the next few months and many of the companies we matched during the Summit, will be part of our match making for these events. We encourage any company interested in cross border business to connect with us. Our data base is growing and we are regularly asked for our match making services.

We have a reputation for ethical introductions that benefit both sides of every match and we are always looking for companies that believe as we do, that effective networking builds business. **SBCM**

Donna Messer is an international speaker, trainer, facilitator and author. President and CEO of ConnectUs Communications Canada, the company designs, develops and delivers business programs that build profitable strategic alliances and joint ventures here and abroad. ConnectUs offers a unique match-up service which links businesses to opportunities around the world.



Contact Donna Messer:
www.connectuscanada.com

MR. STATS

If stranded on a desert island and forced to choose, two-thirds of Net users would rather have online access than a phone or TV.