



A PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN BUSINESS WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Express Network Newsletter

The mission of the American Business Women's Association is to bring together businesswomen of diverse occupations and to provide opportunities for them to help themselves and others grow personally and professionally through leadership, education, networking support, and national recognition.

How to Get the Money, Honey! By Smokie Sizemore

The September/October issue of Women in Business highlights two Express Networks that are using some marketing know-how to tap into corporate sponsorships. This article is a follow-up, written by a member of the River City Express Network in Richmond, Va. It includes how-to techniques that networks can use to create a sponsorship program in their area.

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"Give these smart women and their companies a round of applause. We thank you for being corporate partners of River City Express Network."

This occurs at our network meeting — every month. Because of these partners we have quality speakers, unique sterling events and fund scholarships for deserving women through the Stephen Bufton Memorial Educational Fund.

A frequently asked question is "How do you get sponsors?" All you have to do is ask — and do a lot of work before you even think about asking a business to be a sponsor.

Getting corporate sponsors and their dollars is a simple process. Oddly enough, asking businesses to be sponsor to support business women in the community is almost the last step in the process. It's the ground work that requires the time and talent.

Step One: Start with a committee who enjoys having fun, working together, and using their strengths.

From the beginning, the committee decided that we were going to have fun. Monthly we eat lunch at a different restaurant and discuss what's happened and what's next. Between meetings we use e-mail to keep in touch and welcome new sponsors. Totally we contribute about three hours a month.

Step Two: Look at some organizations like yours that have sponsors. These can usually be found on their Web site. Check out our corporate sponsor program on our Web site at www.rivercityexpressnetwork.com.

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Get the Money *continued*

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Step Three: Take what other groups are doing that you can use. Don't reinvent the wheel. The dollar value for each level is set by the variety of businesses in your membership to be affordable for them.

For example, River City has many soloprenuer members that the \$250 Bronze and \$500 Sterling level fits well. Naturally benefits increase as the dollar value increases.

The River City Board of Directors approved each level, assuring that we could deliver what we promised.

Figuring out the levels and their value took a lot longer than expected – about seven months. We tried to anticipate each sponsor need and wanted to have a solid platform and foundation. It is robust and can expand to accommodate River City's growth with higher levels of benefits and money.

Step 4: Delegate. Being smart women we used our particular strengths to create systems and materials

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Networking Tip

Think Big!

What's your networking goal? To double your business? To change jobs? To work overseas?

Big goals deserve a strategic plan. Decide on a Project and be clear about what you want to teach people about your talents, and your character and competence.

Does your Project make you visible to the right people? Do you have the time and money to give consistent attention to your plan?

If you answer "Yes!" to all these questions, you're bound to succeed.

For more on Strategic Projects read Chapter 5 in **Make Your Contacts Count** by Anne Baber & Lynne Waymon www.ContactsCount.com

Sponsor New Members in the Fall Membership Campaign Sept. 1– Nov. 30 and win great prizes!

By recruiting seven or more new members, you can receive a folding chair with carrying bag, as well as a tradeshow shopping trolley, all pictured here. For more about the campaign, see the September-October 2007 issue of *Women in Business*.



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Get the Money *continued*

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needed to support the process. One member wrote the emails and phone scripts. Another created the spreadsheet that tracks sponsors, and created the agreement the sponsors sign. Another organized the sponsor packages, while yet another made the checklist we use to be sure that we touch all points we need to with each sponsor.

Even the Network administrator was included since all the levels and logos are on the Web site for easy reference.

Step 5: Ask. With our support tools in place, finally it was time to begin asking. The next step was to divide the membership list among the committee members. Each network member was

approached to become a sponsor by e-mail first with a link to the Web site where all the sponsor information is listed. A phone call followed later to touch base and answer their questions.

In the 2006-2007 year we focused on building the program and soliciting our members for sponsorships.

This year we're again soliciting members and expanding the focus to large and Fortune 500 businesses in the Richmond area.

The benefits are customized for them to meet their needs and give them the best value for their marketing dollars.

Our largest sponsor focused on

Women's History Month.

To date we have eleven sponsors and have raised \$11,000. At each monthly meeting a committee member stands to acknowledge and recognize our sponsors. She says "Give these smart women and their smart companies a round of applause. We thank you so much for being corporate partners of River City Express Network."

Smokie Sizemore is an executive coach and founder of The Smart Woman's Club. Her workshop "Show Me Your Money, Honey" gives details about getting sponsors. She can be reached at smokie@smartwomansclub.com or 804-359-1139.

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ABWA News and Events

Is Your Information Current?

With the flurry of formations, elections and passing the gavel, we often forget the little housekeeping items that must be done.

Please keep in touch with your support staff at ABWA National to make sure your local group is up-to-date. If you've elected a new board of officers, formed a network or even changed your meeting date, drop us a quick note to abwa@abwa.org and let us know.

We'll update your files and make sure your information is current.

Attending the National Women's Leadership Conference? Be prepared to vote for the 2007-2008 National Board of Directors. Go online to www.abwa.org and click on "National Board Candidates."



National Women's Leadership Conference

There's less than one month to register for the National Women's Leadership Conference.

This year's conference highlights include:

- **Exploration.**
- **Building upon business skills.**
- **Networking beyond your neighborhood.**
- **Experiencing the fun in life.**

Unlike profession-specific associations, ABWA creates a tailored conference designed to appeal to all businesswomen, from the recent college graduate to the corporate executive.

Visit www.abwa.org and click on "2007 National Women's Leadership Conference," or call 800-228-0007 ext. 269 to register!

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