

the Connector

April 2007

A Newsletter for Members of the Professional Business Women's Association

Vol. 07/Issue 4

networking notes

MONTHLY NETWORKING MEETING

Wednesday, April 4, 2007 (1st Wed. each Mo.)

The Purple Iris at Hartwood

Noon \$12 at the door - No Res. Required

Topic: Spring hats and ideas for "springing" your business.

MONTHLY NETWORKING BREAKFAST

Wednesday, April 11, 2007 (2nd Wed. each Mo.)

Shepherdstown Sweet Shop

German Street, Shepherdstown

8:30-9:30 am - No Res. Required

MONTHLY NETWORKING LUNCH

Wednesday, April 25, 2007 (4th Wed. each Mo.)

Toscanni's

Corner of Maple and King, Martinsburg

12 Noon - No Res. Required

MONTHLY NETWORKING MEETING

Wednesday, May 2, 2007

The Purple Iris at Hartwood

12 Noon - \$12 at the door - No Res. Required

Topic: Reading Is Fun Week: What good business book have you read and want to share.

CONNECTING WITH THE CONNECTOR

To have your news items included in the next issue of The Connector, send by the 18th of each month to: clundber@blueridgectc.edu

2006 MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Christina Lundberg

SBDC of Blue Ridge CTC

304-260-4382

clundber@blueridgectc.edu

Katie Ihndris, CPA

Monarch CPA Services

304-260-9112

Katie@monarchcpas.com

Susan Dudics-Dean

Southern Living at Home

304-263-3296

susandudicsdean@yahoo.com

J. J. Myers

JJ's Jewelry

304-263-2858

jjsjewelry@adelphia.net

Grace Murphy

Good News Mountaineer Garage

304-725-5070

gracegnmg@frontiernet.net



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MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

The 5th Annual PBWA Expo will be Wednesday, October 3 from 5 to 8 pm at the Holiday Inn, Martinsburg. At our future meetings we will discuss how PBWA members can help promote the Expo, and letters will be going out soon to all PBWA members so solicit sponsors- gold at \$200, and silver at \$100. We will be keeping the exhibitor fee at \$50. Our theme this year is: "Supporting Women in Business."

NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

Virginia Winston

Winston Landscape Design and Gardens

Martinsburg

304-267-6924

Carolyn Winslow

Winassoc & The Winning Way
(business Internet consultant)

Inwood

304-517-1553

Ann Kendall Morris

Humane Educator

Martinsburg

304-263-8296

Judy Larkin

The Larkin Tea Co., LLC

Martinsburg

304-264-8214

Mary "Bonnie" Hersh

Primerica Financial Services

Martinsburg

304-263-1215

Karen M. Bryant

Entrees

(Personal Chef)

Charles Town

304-725-9112

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Remember to wear your Spring Hat to the April 4th lunch!

At the March meeting, the survey for the Women's Expo was handed out before lunch. J. J. Myers picked them up after lunch after some discussion. Some of the basics discussed: No goodie

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bag, but give guests a bag with PBWA information they can use to gather info from vendors. On Vendor's contract, it needs to be made clear door prizes are to be drawn by PBWA at the Expo and not individual vendors. If they have a drawing, it is to be done off premises.

The following ladies talked about their mentors: Marilyn Braithwaite, Holly Taylor-Lemieux, Susan Dudic-Dean and Terry Kent.

We had 10 door prizes won by the following: Susan Dudic Dean, Margaret Welling, Terry Kent, Marilyn Braithwaite, Grace Murphy, Holly Taylor-LeMieux, Donna Hubbard, Christy Miller (guest), Kimberly Dole and Sarah Soltow.

Thanks to Donna Hubbard for the PBWA Open House at Seaside Tan and Spa at 881 Mid Atlantic Parkway. Kathy Mason and Meg Hughes enjoyed the Aqua Massage, and Susan Dudics Dean and Christina Lundberg enjoyed Christy Miller's Face Toning Massage. If you missed the open house, call Donna at 267-3930 for a tour.

Also the Seaside Tan & Spa is sponsoring its 3rd Annual Benefit Golf Tournament to support the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life. The golf tournament will be Saturday, April 28 at 11 am at Woodbrier. Call Woodbrier at 274-9818 to reserve your team, \$50 for a non-member.

I'm going to be a "Jail-Bird" - I will be participating in the Martinsburg "lockup" for Muscular Dystrophy Association, on May 17, at the Maximum-Appreciate Prison Site: Outback Steakhouse. My "bail" has been set at \$3,000. All donations of any amount are 100% tax-deductible and will be appreciated - \$.76 of every dollar goes directly to MDA research, health care services and education. I have receipts available and checks should be made out to Muscular Dystrophy Association. This is the charity that Jerry Lewis made known world-wide with "Jerry's kids" telethons.

\$600 - sends a child to MDA Summer Camp

\$100 - Funds one support group session

\$63 - Funds one minute of research and hope for a cure

\$25 - Funds one flu shot

Judith A. Friend, PhD

Executive Director, AIDS Network

Join Nancy Streeter and other artisans and performers for First Saturday Street Fair on April 7 from 10am to 4pm on Queen Street in downtown Martinsburg.

Recycle old phone books by bringing them to the May PBWA meeting or bring them to Berkeley Community Pride recycling at the Martinsburg Mall on Saturday, May 12 from 9 am to 1 pm.

OUR TOPIC THIS MONTH IS HATS AND IDEAS FOR "SPRINGING" YOUR BUSINESS

By Christina Lundberg

We can all think of women who are known for their hats- Bella Abzug, Susan Dudics Dean, Su Carroll and others. Since 2001 I have been saving this article on "Six Thinking Hat's which uses

hats and their appropriate color to differentiate among types of thinking and give direction and focus for thinking.

- White hat- information, data facts only, and asking questions.
- Red hat- emotion, intuition, feelings, hunches.
- Black hat- judgment, caution, why it will not work.
- Yellow hat- benefits, values, why it will work.
- Green hat- creativity, alternatives, proposals, provocations.
- Blue hat- overview, process control, managing the thinking process.

So the next time you are thinking through an issue in a group or by yourself- go through all the hat colors and see if you or the group can find some creative solutions.

10 TIPS TO BE MORE PRODUCTIVE AT WORK

Suggested by Traci Morris and available at www.onlineorganizing.com/ExpertAdviceToolboxTips.asp?tipsheet=106

1. Change Your Ways- make getting organized a habit- spend 5 minutes a day to start.
2. Clear Clutter- toss out ancient history, clear your desk of clutter.
3. Get Great Gear- get the right equipment, use your briefcase or bag like a portable office.
4. Make the Most of Meetings- have a written agenda, start and end on time.
5. Manage Your Time- use only 1 calendar; look at your calendar every day.
6. Minimize Interruptions- its ok not to answer your phone.
7. Organize Your Information- create a filing system that works for you!
8. Prevail Over Email- check and respond only at designated times.
9. Travel Trouble-free- start a list of information and materials you will need to bring with you.
10. Use Your Space Effectively- keep critical information within arms reach.

CUSTOMER SERVICE STORIES

By Terry Kent

Since successful customer service is a cornerstone of making your business work, I thought I'd share a few stories that we have published on our site: <http://www.thewritemarket.com>.

Cat Donnelly of PurelyPets.com gives us two customer service stories:

A year ago, we bought a Plymouth Voyager and have been thrilled with our new mini-van. With 2 kids and all the stuff we tow around, the mini-van was perfect for our lifestyle. Over the course of the year, I have thanked the auto-gods many times for sending me such a wonderful and reliable vehicle.

Lately, though, there has been a shimmy in the front end. We brought it into Complete Auto Care for a diagnosis and possible fix since we had many favorable experiences with them in the past. They looked,

didn't see anything wrong, charged me \$26 for the diagnosis and advised that I get new tires, since there was uneven wear that could cause a shimmy.

We went out and got two new tires. The problem persisted. We were not happy. We went to another tire place who suggested it could be the transmission since it only happened between 30 - 40 m.p.h., and especially at 35 m.p.h. We brought it back to Complete Auto with that tidbit of info, and they referred us to a transmission shop since they felt that at that point, we needed a "specialist."

I drove straight to the transmission shop. They were closed on Mondays! Arrgghh! Went home. Went back to the transmission shop on Tuesday. The mechanic said he knew it wasn't the transmission, but he would take it for a test drive to be sure. He spent nearly half an hour with us and our car, and didn't charge us a dime. (We will DEFINITELY use them and recommend them in the future!!). His diagnosis was one or both of the inner CV joints.

We went home and called other mechanics and the Plymouth dealership. Received all kinds of quotes and theories. We went BACK to Complete Auto and told them that we thought it was the INNER CV joints which are rarely checked when they diagnose the front end, but the dealership and most of the mechanics we spoke with felt that was what our problem was. They put our van up on racks, and by this time the inner baffles to the CV joints were visibly leaking, and we authorized for them to replace both, which is what the dealership recommended anyway since the van had more than 50,000 miles which was about their life span.

We went fishing with our children, and by the time we were done, it was completely fixed. Now, people are probably wondering why we would have given Complete Auto our ultimate business when they really seemed to fall down on this particular job. Here are our reasons:

They have given us courteous, profession, quick and affordable service in the past. They have not ripped us off in the past when they had the opportunity. They could offer us the quickest most affordable solution to our current problem. AND, when dealing with cars, you have to realize that a Jack-of-All-Trades shop will not have the same knowledge about your particular vehicle as the dealership, but armed with the right information, they can still fix your problem just as well.

NOW, for our DIRTY SECRET for our own business. At PurelyPets.com (Purely Pets - Pet Nutrition - Natural Pet Food and Vitamin Supplements for Pets), we give our refunds quickly and easily if someone isn't satisfied. So far, we haven't been challenged to give fraudulent refunds, so it works out well. Our company is still small enough where every refund does hurt, and do we ever feel it, but one bad customer can do more damage to your business than 10 happy ones can help!

We've even given refunds to folks who have ordered our stuff and then "chickened out" on going holistic. That is no fault of ours or the product, just the person's state of mind. No problem, refund granted. Hopefully, they will be back when they feel more confident about it!

You'll notice how PurelyPets.com uses their own life experience to build their business practices.

E. Grace Wanamaker gave us the following customer service story about Ebay. It's a great example of a customer (Grace) offering the company a "second chance" to sell, and the company falling woefully short. Here it is:

While reading the latest issue on customer service, I was immediately reminded of a recent incident I had with someone selling on Ebay, which is where I am purchasing much of the inventory for my soon-to-be-opening online business.

I was looking for special gift boxes and during the course of my search, I ran across an auction that had such a strident and combative message concerning slow and non-payers, I was completely convinced NOT to bid on the merchandise in question, even though I wanted and needed what this particular business had to offer.

Since I felt that such a message was counter-productive to what the business was trying to accomplish, I dropped an email off to them explaining that I felt the message gave a negative impression, one that convinced me NOT to buy from them, and maybe they should see about couching their necessary warnings in a more positive and/or subtle way.

You can imagine my surprise when I received the following response from the manager:

"Hahaha, that tells me one thing.....YOUR a slow payer or NON payer!!!!We don't want that type of business..... and thats why we TELL everyone!!!!

"Store Manager"

Please note that I have blanked out the name of the person who wrote the response, but otherwise the message is just as I received it. To say the least, it was quite obvious to me that this person had failed to check my feedback before replying because had the person done so, they would have known that a majority of my feedback reflects my policy of always paying quickly and maintaining good communication with those from whom I do make purchases.

However, the story doesn't end there, as I was rather offended by the response I received, which was juvenile, obnoxious, and something any half decent English teacher would suffer a coronary over, so I again emailed the person to let them know how I felt about it.

I told them I knew quite well they had not checked my feedback, as well as pointed out that even though I was "put off" buying from them on the basis of their original auction ad message, they still could have salvaged the situation with their reply had they not destroyed it by responding in such a manner.

My initial email and their reply was in essence a "second chance opportunity" to convince me to become a customer and, indeed, I likely could have been swayed by a well-phrased & diplomatic response explaining why they were taking such a strong stance. I am well aware of the problems Ebay and its sellers have when it

comes to slow and non-payers, but I have often read well-written and even humorous slow and non-payer policies that do not offend me at all, though they may take just as strong a stance as the one I had problems with.

Sadly for them, this business chose to take another route and as such presented me with one of the worst cases of customer service I have ever experienced. As a result, not only will I not do business with them, but I will make sure that anyone I refer to Ebay knows to steer clear of this particular business as well.

I guess the important point I'd like to make here is that if one is given the sometimes rare "second chance opportunity" to gain a customer, then by all means DON'T WASTE IT! As hard as it may be for some to grasp, too few people these days will give you that second chance, as we all know there is nearly always somewhere else one can go for the services and/or product they need, and wasting that chance is the equivalent of throwing money away - something many of us cannot afford to do.

The following really dirty story which was submitted by Mary Howard of Howard Horticulture was rather humorous and just goes to show you how every day in business is a new adventure! Here it is:

I have got to tell someone my story. You talk about a determined

small business. We had 3 1/2 inches of rain last night. The storm was so bad that sheets of rain were blowing horizontally. I live in tornado alley. It was so bad that my husband and I got the kids up at 4 a.m. and went to an inner closet. During the storm, my corn was flattened and there was water standing everywhere.

In the morning, I had customers come by for an order of beans and cucumbers. I went out to pick the vegetables, but first, I took my shoes off because I thought it would be easier to walk in bare feet. The kids came along to help. (I have two kids - a three year old and an 18 month old.)

The customers commented that I was pretty dedicated. Then my youngest got scared and didn't want to walk in the mud to get to me. I let her cry a little, but then tried to carry her, but that made me sink about 4" above my ankles. I could hardly walk and had customers standing there watching me. I said, "This sure isn't very professional!"

I was so frustrated, I just stood there and laughed hysterically. Then, the customers were laughing, too. I managed to pick them a couple pounds of beans and found some cucumbers. I never worked so hard for \$2.50, but I can still say I Love It!

I'd say that shows some serious dedication to the customer!

DBWA

