

# Creating A Network That Works

By Diane Hughes

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Diane Hughes  
admin@homejobzone.com

HomeJobZone.com <http://www.HomeJobZone.com>

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Do you ever stand in awe of those people who seem to know everybody and everything? I know I do! Regardless of what you're looking for, these people have their finger on the pulse of the 'Net and know where to find it. Their network of resources and people is incredible! Yours can be, too. It's actually very simple to create a network that works to bring you business, offers feedback and provides those resources that we all need to have.

## ---- Make A Wish List

The first step in creating a network that works is making a list of what you want. Go ahead, think of the perfect situation where you would have anything you needed at your fingertips. For example, if you have a Web design business you might find it very helpful to create associations with people who offer services that compliment yours. Why? Because if these people are heavily involved with the process of getting a Web-based business up and going, they could send you many leads and that could turn into paying clients.

What else might you want? Perhaps free advertising or publicity to bring more business your way? Sure! Write it down on the wish list.

## ---- Making Wishes Come True

Now, the next step is to find the resources you need in order to make those wishes realities. It's not as difficult as it sounds. Just expand on your wish list a bit in the following way.

We mentioned needing associations with service providers that compliment our example of Web design. So write down companies that provide: Web hosting, merchant accounts, shopping carts, autoresponders, Internet checks, copywriting, graphic design and scripting/programming.

We also said we needed some advertising or publicity. So add to the list the following: ezine ad swaps, banner ad swaps, local newspapers, local TV and radio stations, Chambers of Commerce.

Finally, it's time to go to work. The best way to start is to alert your friends and associates of what you are trying to accomplish. It's simple to send a quick email that states something to the effect of, "I'm in the process of expanding my resources and find I'm in need of the following [provide the list]. If you know of anyone who you highly recommend in one of the above areas, please offer them my phone number and email address. I am interested in arranging a joint affiliation with them in order to increase both our businesses."

You can also send the same message to any lists or bulletin boards you frequent. Most people are more than happy to refer those they have had pleasant working relationships with.

#### ---- Final Decisions

Lastly, once you get the results from your search back, contact the ones you feel most comfortable with. Again, honestly explain what you are doing and that you would like to create a joint partnership with them in order to exchange leads, prospects and services.

Even if someone does not suit your needs at the moment, enter them into your database for future reference. I once had a graphic designer's email address and samples for 6 months before having a need for them. However, because I had already established contact, once my need arose it was smooth sailing!

When you are ready to begin your projects, just contact those on your list who can fill a need. Perhaps you want to advertise your Web design services. You can ask someone in your network (a Web host, a graphic artist, etc.) to participate in joint advertising with you. This will allow you to get excellent exposure for ½ the price because those costs are shared with your "partner".

You can also set up a referral process. I have several arrangements with others in where we exchange referrals. Some do it for a fee, others just do it on a one-for-one basis. You and your network member can decide what works best for you.

The results of this simple process are normally tremendous. The majority of small business owners are always looking for ways to expand their businesses. Exchanging leads with one another, creating joint affiliations and bartering are great ways to create a broad network that truly does work!

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Diane Hughes is an accomplished internet entrepreneur and editor of the popular ProBizTips Newsletter. You can learn more about Diane and her success in helping many start a home business and make money from home by clicking below:

<http://www.viralmarketzone.com/diane>

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