

🔥 Hot Topic 🔥

Each Month We Ask Local CEO's To Answer A Question That Helps Define A Topic.

This month's question: What is the most successful means of relationship marketing for your company? Chamber of Commerce? Volunteering? Business Organizations? Trade Organizations? Golf? Networking Groups?

Steve Graham, President Graham Communications, L.L.C.



I find the Gloucester County Chamber of Commerce an ideal opportunity for relationship marketing. My company, Graham Communications, is in the business of marketing, web development and video production. The irony is that I do not believe in a "hard sell". My secret to relationship marketing is problem solving for people. The Chamber grants me countless opportunities to converse with other business owners on a social level. I listen to their day to day problems, and simply lend a helping hand. It often starts with a low to non-profit helping hand, but consistently grows into a regular client. Along with the satisfaction of lending business support, the act of cooperation builds a bond of trust and confidence that no hard sell could ever establish.

Marilyn Kleinberg Managing Director, SJ Chapter eWomenNetwork



For me, it is not about how many networks you join, but whether or not you are willing to commit your time to these groups. There is no sense in belonging to 10 different organizations if you are unable to attend and if possible sponsor events, join committees, and become a resource to others.

As we say at eWomenNetwork, the art of networking is sharing and giving first. It is not about who I am and what I need, it is learning about the other person and their needs and then sharing my database of contacts to help someone else. Be a resource to others and the business relationship is a sealed deal.

I've held this belief throughout my professional career, having served as president of the Philadelphia Chapter of Women in Communications from 1996-2000; vice-president of the Chamber of Commerce Southern New Jersey (2001-2005); president of Northeast High School Alumni Association (2005-2007); and now as managing director of eWomenNetwork Southern New Jersey.

And as they say, the proof is in the pudding...99% of all my CruiseOne clients are a result of my association with one of the above groups or other organizations to which I have dedicated my time one way or another.

Jeff Backal CEO, Team Builders Plus



The most successful means of relationship marketing for me and Team Builders Plus has been the combination of many approaches; networking events, breakfast, lunch & dinner meetings, CEO networking groups, sitting on non-profit boards, volunteering for community events and coaching youth athletic teams. I believe any of these approaches as a stand alone approach would not be very beneficial, however together they have had a tremendous impact on the quality of relationships I have built as well as the impact on the bottom line of Team Builders Plus. Whatever approach is chosen, I believe it is very important to really work it and get to know people professionally and personally. Also, once I start working with a new client, I spend a lot of time and resources building relationships throughout the client organization, as it is much easier getting repeat business from an existing client as opposed to breaking into new clients. Although relationship marketing can be time consuming, it is well worth the time investment.

Robert Everingham, M&AMI, CBI Everingham & Kerr, Inc.



It is our believe that a Company needs to do all of these things in order to be successful. We do not necessarily feel that one is better than the other. It is the cumulative effect of each of these, as well as others, that pays off in the long run. The idea is to build relationships with clients and centers of influence. The best place to garnish these relationships can be at a business networking event, a trade show, a charity event and even on the golf course. Our firm is involved in all of these various activities.

Lawrence M. DiVietro, Jr., P.L.S., P.P. President, LandDimensions



I have been working at "Relationship Marketing" for my company for over 25 years. I have found that it takes a blend of several areas to be successful; Volunteering has been great and has provided the opportunity of developing new relationships as well as the reward of being able to offer some assistance. The Trade organizations offer the opportunity of staying current with the industry I practice in and the Business Organizations offer a great opportunity to network with contemporaries in my field.

Just like everything in life, "you get out of it, what you put in".

Marina Pino-Unland Chameleon Advertising & Marketing



I have found Chamber of Commerce's to be a very valuable networking tool. What's great about Chamber events is everyone is in "business mode" - ready to talk business and network. You also have a high probability of seeing and speaking with that person again which allows the relationship to develop.

There are also those "unexpected" connections that are made when you are not necessarily focusing on business. Great relationships are forged with the casual spontaneous conversation you engage in while you are volunteering, golfing, etc.

Trade organizations can be very successful, targeted methods for businesses who have a very specific market or client type. Our services are used by large and small businesses in many sectors, B-to-B and B-to-C, so for us, specific trade groups are not the most valuable tool.

Sean M. Sweeney Chief Executive Officer, CramerSweeney



Businesses in the Philadelphia metro market are in the fortunate position of having many opportunities from which to choose with regard to relationship marketing. With time and resources at a premium, successful relationship marketing requires a consistent, disciplined approach that begins with carefully selecting events whose participants represent a good match to our target markets. While networking is fine for sustaining our overall brand awareness, it's a hit or miss proposition with respect to return on investment. Instead, we prefer to invest the majority of our time working on committees and board positions because they provide the framework to showcase our experience, work ethic and commitment—all the essential components that foster deeper professional relationships.

Ed Hutchinson President, Hutchinson Mechanical Services

At Hutchinson we maintain a residential, as well as, a commercial customer base.... and, although there is a purposeful overlap, relationship marketing is quite diverse for each. Our baseline belief at Hutchinson is that "people do business with people" and to that end it is imperative that all the activities mentioned, from Chambers, business/ trade groups to volunteering, are an instrumental asset in our marketing approach. We also believe that community service is a responsibility of everyone in the business community regardless of any collateral "marketing" advantage.

Bottom line, the more quality time you can spend with a client the more likely you are to really hear and understand their needs and enhance your ability to help.

In the July issue of **SNJ Business People**, we will feature our second, Hot Topics, which asks local CEO's to answer a question that helps define a topic.

Question #2:

Who's the region's "best" business person? Why?