

“Questions to ask a partner” checklist: Seek first to Understand

Inquiries to address at a Networking Event:

- Tell me about your business.
- Who is your target market?
- What problems do you help them solve?
- What are you most proud of about your business?
- What is your main focus in your business right now?
- Who or “what” would you really love to meet today?
- What are you hoping to achieve from this networking event?
- Are there any challenges you are facing in your business right now?



Alliance partners must believe in the basic alliance philosophy, and be willing and able to fulfill the mutual commitment to work together in a very proactive and enthusiastic manner. Through this process trust and respect grow, and the success of the alliance is assured.

B. Questions to ask which focus more specifically at creating strategic alliances.

- Which of these are most important to your business right now?
 - More leads?
 - Better conversions?
 - Increased \$ sale?
 - More sales per customer?
 - Reduced costs?
- What other businesses does your target market deal with? – What else are they looking for?
- Do you currently have any strategic alliances and if so how have they worked for you?
- What marketing strategies do you or have you used and how have they worked for you?
- Are you open to the idea of creating joint or cross promotional opportunities?
- Do you have any information, products or special skills which could be used to build credibility with another business owner's customer base?



It is believed that the strength of a successful alliance rests on three elements. First, the products available from the supplier must be reliable, of high quality, state of the art, and constantly being improved through a significant investment in research and development.

Second, are the people involved in the alliance. They must be competent in their discipline. In addition, there must be an element of trust and flexibility that is second nature to each of them. There must also be a team mentality in their approach to work. There is little room for big egos in the alliance process.

The last element of the alliance platform is the process itself. A major element in the process is a mutual commitment to continuous improvement. This must be built into the process and emphasized continually. In addition, the willingness for both customer and supplier to invest in the time and the people resources is crucial, since without that time and without those people, the alliance process cannot continue and be successful.