

Business News & Notes

Expand Your Business

(NAPSA)—Other people can be an important part of expanding your small business. Not just your customers, employees and suppliers, but other entrepreneurs and advisors as well. Coaching, mentoring and advice can all be invaluable help.

Networking

The bottom line about networking is that it works. If you don't think you have time to network, think again—experts say you can't afford not to. Not only do you meet experienced business owners, discover new ideas and learn innovative ways to do business, you get to know people. That could mean finding quality day care, a part-time housekeeper or a car pool for the kids' soccer game when you have a late sales meeting. More and more, networking is becoming the bridge that unites work and family.

Strategic Planning

As an entrepreneur guiding your company to the next level, you're seeking more than just financing. You need an engine to best let your company achieve its most important business goals. Generally, that engine, that driving force, will be money, such as a credit line from the bank or a venture capitalist's cash—but not always. Sometimes the right engine isn't monetary at all. For example, what you're primarily looking for may be the individual with an important skill you don't have—but the company needs.



You don't have to expand your business all by yourself.

Training

You may think only large companies and organizations need training programs, or can afford to implement them. The truth is that training is especially important for small businesses, because even tiny improvements in service or efficiency can have an enormous impact on the bottom line. If your staff can boast special skills or expertise, you will almost certainly carve an important or profitable niche for your business.

Fortunately, outside help is available. Smart business owners rely on outside assistance—such as SCORE volunteer counselors—to get them through it. Since 1964, these counselors have assisted more than seven million entrepreneurs through counseling and business workshops. For more tips or information about SCORE, call (800) 634-0245 or go to www.score.org.