



## Your 2010 Direct Sales Events & Meeting Attendance 4 Key Questions To Help You Build Big

*By Barb Girson*



I recently attended one of the monthly eWomenNetwork events for the first time. Since the dynamics of sales promotion, client engagement, consumer outreach, and sales event planning continuously intrigues me; I thought I would share my observations during this luncheon to provide my insight for you.

Regardless of the type of event, team meeting, regional workshop or direct sales campaign you are planning, a few questions remain:

1. How do we catch people's attention to improve our attendance?
2. What is the most effective way to extend an invitation?
3. How can we ensure a positive and valuable event experience?
4. How can we encourage participants to get involved?

### **1. How do we catch people's attention to improve our attendance?**

For the past two years, I have followed the eWomenNetwork Organization online. Tuning into outside resources such as this is a great way to analyze effective fee structure, communication, and techniques to build attendance. The eWomenNetwork event, at \$45 a person (guests) which includes lunch, initially seemed steep. It was not until I met eWomenNetwork Columbus Chapter Managing Director, Cynthia Marshall (pictured below), for our own lunch one afternoon that I decided to register for an event.

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What changed?

\*Personal connection with 'chief recruiter' for the organization

\*A deeper understanding of what the organization offers



Cynthia Marshall, eWomenNetwork, Columbus Chapter Managing Director, Columbus, OH

**TAKEAWAY TIP:** Develop a personal relationship with prospects, recruit leads, potential clients, Hosts, or customers so that your invitations are more likely to attract people's attention and produce a positive response. Make sure prospects really understand what it is that you are offering.

## 2. What is the most effective way to extend an invitation?

After meeting with Cynthia, over the next few weeks, she sent a follow-up email, sent me a personal invitation and called me to ensure that I was registering for the upcoming meeting. If this seems like a lot of work, realize that Cynthia understood the importance of earnest effort in the beginning. She was respectful, patient, and not once overbearing. With the flood of omnipresent outside communication, personal attention can rescue an invitation, potentially drowning in an inbox of viable competition.

**TAKEAWAY TIP:** Send pre-event invitations and make reminder phone calls. Remember your invitees can attend when their schedule is open, but that they want to attend after you peak their interest and bridge your content to their values and needs.

## 3. How do we ensure a positive and valuable event experience?

Each workshop, sales event, organization, and team meeting has its own flavor. Elements and subtleties that make people feel comfortable or uncomfortable are what produce feelings of inclusion or exclusion. eWomenNetwork event structure was well planned; an experience evident of thoughtful preparation. As the event drew me in, and I found myself enjoying the use of my time and money, I remembered all the special contributing touches.

**TAKEAWAY TIP:** Make sure your meetings and sales events and campaigns are well planned and satisfy the needs of both your repeat attendees, team members, and your new participants.

## 4. How can we encourage participants to get involved?

Listed below are 6 key observations that encouraged participants to get involved in the event and deliver value to the attendees. Use this takeaway list to build your team meetings, business opportunity meetings and sales events and to draw your potential partners in.

### 1. Greet your guests

Members at the registration desk and beyond personally acknowledged my arrival. The entire luncheon seemed to recognize my presence as a guest. This was of course intentional and made me feel welcome.

### 2. Make sure your guests are easily identified.

When I sat down at my table there was a laminated GUEST card in front of my plate. Positioned next to me was another laminated card that read TABLE LEADER. This effort facilitated all parties present to quickly warm up and converse. The pre-organization strengthened event cohesion.

*[In continuation of luncheon observations]*

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### 3. Make networking organic and easy.

We participated in a 'speed networking' activity, which was repeated twice during the meeting. Normally I am not fond of large networking events that require brief introductions and business card exchanges merely to build a collection.

However, this activity was fun, fast and effective. Each table had a card complete with starter networking questions. The idea was for each person at the table to spend 60 seconds sharing their responses. The focus was, "Give to Get" and as respondents described their business and for what they were looking, listeners thought about whom they knew that may be a great lead or resource for that person.

The questions were:

- *Who are you?*
- *What do you offer?*
- *What do you specifically need in the next 30 days?*
- *What do you plan to spend money on for business or personal use in the next 30-60 days?*

Each table had a designated person with a timer in hand to ensure everyone got a turn. This rapid activity produced meaningful lunchtime connections. The conversations that followed were organic and flowed with the help of this opening activity.

### 4. Deliver learning.

Learning is an exciting dynamic process. People will attend events if they feel it is worth their time. The speaker, Jerry Browning (pictured), owner/president of Chiron Company gave an interesting, focused, thought-provoking presentation which was sprinkled with stories and humor throughout. She challenged the audience to identify our theme to the New Year. She shared examples of her past themes: "Survive Singularly", "Potent and Precise", "Full of Myself", and "Fun First" were a few.

### 5. Recognize Members, celebrate success.

Member's individual achievements were acknowledged during a "Member Kudos" Segment. One member was written up in the local newspaper, another was profiled in The Women's Book. The acknowledgement and celebration pumped positivity into the room, and of course fostered recognition, credibility and distinction.

### 6. The 'other stuff' is important, too.

'Other' features included quick tips on how to help attendees grow their business, upcoming events and time to talk. There were four vendor tables with business owners displaying their products or services. Each person was to visit the table, collect a signature, document the patronage, and place the completed sheet in a gift bag -- to use later for a door prize drawing.

In addition they held a participatory auction to raise money for charity.

Before the meeting came to a close an application appeared in front of me. Guests were of course

invited to join the organization, but in the absence of over-kill, pressure, or intensity.

In the aftermath of the luncheon, my initial price objection faded.

The eWomenNetwork event turned out to be not only time well spent but also truly enjoyable. The members also provided numerous opportunities to show how their organization met our needs.

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And though a lot happened in a short amount of time, the atmosphere was calm not cluttered. I will definitely attend an event with this group again, as I now know that this organization is a fit for my 'Twenty Ten' New Year's theme. If my impression of their framework remains the same, I will likely join this group to maintain my networking focus.

Use these key questions and takeaway tips to help you build attendance and ensure engagement when inviting your guests, prospects, recruit leads, Hosts, customers, and clients to attend your events.

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Read on for some observations that will help with the answers to these questions...

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#### **About The Author**

Barb Girson, International Direct Selling Industry expert, trainer and coach, is a highly interactive, creative speaker & author offering professional skill development programs for workshops, leader retreats, annual conventions & teleclass training programs. Custom programs /Coaching 1:1 available.

Barb Girson helps companies, teams & entrepreneurs gain confidence, get into action, & most importantly... grow sales.

To sign up for her next FREE sales training teleclass / join her free email list & get 'Sales Strategies that Stick' ezine, Visit <http://www.MySalesTactics.com> to learn more.

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