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Mary Rose "Wildfire" Maguire Presents:

Why Networking Events Are The WORST Place To Find Prospects *(And What You Can Do Instead)*



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Howdy!

Congratulations on downloading this eBook! You've taken the first step toward increasing business sales **FAST** with ***less mess and less stress***.

You're about to discover some marketing secrets that took me *years* (and plenty of moolah) to learn. Don't worry about testing all these ideas at once. Just take a few of them and experiment. Marketing is an ongoing part of a successful business.

I've worked with a lot of small business owners. Many are overworked and overwhelmed when it comes to running their business. Some think marketing is optional. But that's the farthest thing from the truth.

Here are some eye-opening stats:

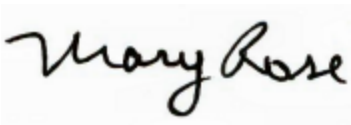
- 99.7% of all businesses in the U.S. are small businesses
- 19% are outcompeted
- 23% don't have the right team
- 29% run out of cash
- 42% have no market need for products or services
- 82% experience cash flow problems
- 14% fail because they ignore their customers

(5 Reasons Businesses Fail , Entrepreneur Magazine, July 1, 2017)

This is why I'm so passionate about marketing. It's because I want to see small businesses thrive and succeed. Without the right type of marketing, it's like rolling a big boulder like the mythical Sisyphus, with the "boulder" being the health and prosperity of your business.

Networking events are often seen as an opportunity to meet prospects. However, are they the best use of your time? Today, more buyers search online for products and service.

I'll share a better, more effective approach toward generating leads than attending typical networking events. Ready to take action? Let's go!



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About The Author



I'm Mary Rose "Wildfire" Maguire, founder of Maguire Copywriting and an accomplished B2B copywriter and email marketing expert.

With over 30 years of experience in marketing, copywriting, newsletter creation, design, and communications, I've helped clients market their message. From ideation to the final stage, I work with our clients to create compelling copy that converts prospects and builds loyalty.

A Little About My Background

As the daughter of a successful manufacturer sales rep, I look at marketing strategies with an eye toward sales. My knowledge of SEO and analytics help my clients create goals and track results that lead to greater conversions and lead generation.

Maguire Copywriting offers B2B/B2C copywriting and marketing services including web copy, email marketing, case studies, lead magnets, and more.

We also offer design and formatting for some of our writing projects. Learn more at www.maryrosemaguire.com. And if you want to create printed marketing assets, be sure to visit our sister site, Bootstrap Graphic . We create monthly printed customer newsletters and more.

Networking events are like entering a casino. There may be lots of excitement and expectation, but you usually walk out losing money.

Mary Rose "Wildfire" Maguire, Word Slinger and Crack-shot Email Marketer

Do you attend networking events?

Let me rephrase that... do you ***like*** attending networking events?

Perhaps the better question is this: **Do you get qualified leads from networking events?**

If you are a service professional and your experience is anything like mine, the answer to that last question is a resounding "NO!"

Allow me to share my story and see if it resonates with you.

Go To A Networking Event, They Said... It Will Be Fun, They Said...

Networking has always been presented as a great way to meet new professionals. There are trade organizations, professional groups, professional societies, and business clubs. Also there are conferences, trade shows, and gatherings set up specifically for networking, especially "After Hours" networking events.

I'll never forget when I attended a networking event for my employer and one of my co-workers came over to the appetizer table and approached me (appetizer tables are a great place to start conversations, by the way).

She looked at me carefully, then said, "How do you do that?"

"Do what?" I didn't know what she was talking about.

"You know... just talk to people. You make it look easy."

Up to that point, I had never thought anything about approaching people and talking to them. However, I discovered that this wasn't as easy for a lot of people, including my co-worker.

My father was a salesman and my mother a very gregarious Italian who never met a stranger. So I admit I had an advantage. Still, it demonstrated one of the most common reasons why people don't like networking events: ***You have to talk to strangers.***

And let's face it... we've been conditioned since childhood "not to talk to strangers." So it's no surprise that even as adults, that warning still exists in the back of our minds.

Plus, if you're an introvert, you probably don't relish the idea of engaging in small talk – which is what's needed to "break the ice" when meeting someone new.

I'm not exaggerating when I say that over the course of my professional career, I've been to close to 1,000 networking events. I've belonged to speaking organizations, women's organizations, church organizations, professional development groups, small business groups, marketing groups, and more.

I especially stepped up my participation since 2010, when I started my own business on the side. And there's a good chance you also used the same logic I did when I started: "I'll attend this event because there's a good chance I'll meet someone who could potentially use my services."

Except it doesn't work.

Listen, if it did, I'd be writing a completely different type of eBook – one that would help you make the most of networking events.

But that's not the kind of eBook this is... In fact, I'll tell you three reasons why I don't believe networking works and – what you can do instead to get those valuable prospects you want.

First, Pareto's Law

A small percentage of effort will often lead to big success.

Think about what it takes to attend a networking event.

You have to schedule the time away from your office or home. Get in a car and drive around 15 – 30 minutes to the location. Pay for parking if it's in a downtown location. And then spend on an average 1 – 1 ½ hours at the event.

So whenever you're attending a networking event, on average you're spending at least 2 – 3 hours of your time, more if it's a conference out of town.

That's YOUR time invested. Are you getting a strong return on your investment?

Let's say you charge $200 an hour for your time if someone hired you as a consultant. Three hours of your time would be $600.

This is why it's important to consider everything involved when you're talking about attending a networking event. Those who make a living at teaching others how to network better will never position their advice like this because they'd be on the losing end.

In order to recoup the money you just invested by attending the networking event, you would need to get at least one new client or customer who would pay you that amount.

Pareto's Law says that 80% of the value of any business or action comes from only 20% of its efforts. So for instance, 80% of your business likely comes from only 20% of your customers. And 80% of your prospecting success is likely to come from 20% of your marketing efforts.

Most people who attend networking events hope that their time isn't wasted. They hope that they'll meet a few people who either need their services or could introduce them to someone who does. **But hope isn't a good sales and marketing strategy.**

What is? We'll get to that at the end of the eBook.

1. Why Networking Doesn't Work: Are You The One?

In the popular movie, "The Matrix," one of the main characters, Morpheus, was searching for "The One." This was the man who would free mankind from the control of technology. No longer would men and women be used to power the tech robots. Instead, "The One" would finally stop the oppression and slavery, giving mankind once again autonomy and independence.

Morpheus was searching everywhere for "The One." He kept believing he'd find him. He used different tactics such as running online messages, doing physical searches, and even consulting with a wise oracle to direct his efforts.

In other words, Morpheus put in a lot of time and effort searching for mankind's savior.

Now think about networking. Is your prospective buyer searching for you there... at a networking event?

What are the odds that they have headed to that networking event with the exact need that fits your solution?

Are they REALLY searching for you? Does that networking event position yourself as "The One?"

Nope. It doesn't because it can't.

A networking event is filled with a lot of activity. And there is a lot of mental work that is happening behind the scenes.

"Do I look okay? Oh, gosh... I'm sweating. My mouth is dry. I need water! Wait... is that my stomach grumbling? I'm starving... when are they going to break for lunch? Ugh... I have to go to the bathroom. Probably shouldn't have eaten that sausage biscuit..."

These are the conversations going on in someone's mind that you have to overcome with YOUR solution. In order to really capture someone's attention, you'd be better off looking like a food cart salesman holding a bottle of water and a few snacks.

The bottom line is that at a networking event, those in attendance are not usually in the market for your service. They're not even thinking about it.

As the famous copywriter Robert Collier said, "Always enter the conversation already taking place in the customer's mind."

When you do this, you'll have a much better chance of presenting your services.

2. Why Networking Doesn't Work: No Urgency

How many times have you met someone at a networking event and when they heard what you do, said, "What a great service! I've been thinking about looking into that someday."

It's tempting to think you may have a prospective buyer. But focus on what the person just said.

Someday.

One of the secrets of selling is to create urgency in the buyer. In other words, it can't be a "Well, that would be nice to have someday..." response.

Instead, you want your buyer to say, "Good night...where have you been all my life? Take my money!!"

Think about what creates a sense of urgency in a buyer.

- He or she is getting nagged about "fixing" the problem by a significant other, friend, or family member
- The problem is keeping your buyer from something they desperately want: success. love. acceptance. wealth. security, etc.
- **The problem is making them miserable**

In other words, **your perfect prospective buyer has a sense of urgency when they can't stand the status quo any longer**.

Again, consider a networking event environment. Some people attend because they're curious about who else will be there. Others may just need an excuse to get out of the house.

The odds that someone will be attending the event and urgently need your solution is very low. And even if such a person was at this event, the odds of you connecting with them is even lower, especially if it's a large event.

(Networking tip for those who still have to attend these events: Once you talk with someone and explain what you do, before leaving the conversation, ask if they met someone who might be interested in meeting you. Introductions are often a preferable way to make a new connection and can "double" your efforts at an event.) Networking events simply don't give you an optimal opportunity to position yourself well – and identifying good prospects who are urgently seeking your solution.

3. Why Networking Doesn't Work: It's More About Them

How many times have you attended a networking event, met someone interesting, but in the course of a short conversation, never had the opportunity to tell them what you do?

This has happened to me countless times. I happen to be a good listener and I usually ask someone I just met a lot questions. But all too frequently, after explaining what they do, they often end the conversation and move on.

I can't blame them. Self-interest is a common trait and most people are seeking to get as much out of a networking event as they can.

When they attend a networking event, they have one thought in mind, *"How can I let as many people as possible know what I do?"*

Again, on the surface this seems logical. Getting a sale is a numbers game. Such "movers and shakers" reason that when they meet more people, they'll increase the odds of meeting a few who will be good prospects.

But again, think of that numbers game in light of attending a networking event. Unless you're given the chance to speak at the event, chances are you won't be able to talk to that many people.

And those you do talk to will be focused on assessing your need for their services or products.

You Need A Better Strategy

Networking can work if you have a strategy. However, it requires careful planning and to be honest, most networking events will not give you the information you need to make an educated decision on whether to attend or not.

For instance, do you know who will be attending? Is there an attendee's list online that let's you know the companies that will be represented at the event?

That is key. If you created a prospect list and can see that someone will be attending from one of the companies on your list, then that would be a good opportunity to make a connection.

However, if the event is large, finding that one person is like finding a needle in a haystack. If the event is organized through an online group on Meetup, for example, you have a better chance of knowing who will be there, what they look like, and the ability to send them a message before and after the event.

There are a few good books on networking that I can recommend: **Networking Magic: How to Find Connections that Transform Your Life** by Rick Frishman and Jill Lublin.

Another book is **Never Eat Alone: And Other Secrets to Success, One Relationship At A Time** by Keith Ferrazzi.

But actually, there's a better way to meet qualified prospects than at the usual networking event.

Finding a Niche to Serve

A niche is a specific industry or service you focus on. For instance, in my world a copywriter could focus on B2B white papers for AI software companies.

One of my niches is writing marketing collateral for cybersecurity companies. Another is helping CPAs with their website copy.

The point is that being a generalist makes it much harder for you to market your services. Years ago, when I asked someone at a networking event who their perfect customer was, she replied, "Anyone who can write a check!" Although the response is humorous, it made it difficult for this person to stand out from a sea of competitors. Think of how much more valuable you would be perceived if you served a very specific business or specialized in a unique service.

> *"Today, it is very hard to differentiate yourself according to products and services… because most companies offer the same thing. With today's technologies, anyone can copy what you create. So the only way to differentiate yourself is how you communicate.*
>
> *If we believe that's true, that means marketing must elevate itself in the organization and it becomes part of the broader business model."*
>
> Joe Pulizzi, founder of Content Marketing Institute, "This Old Marketing" Podcast, Ep. 207

Here are five reasons to niche:

1. It differentiates you and your business
2. With all the changes occurring within the business world, creating a niche will safeguard you from being considered obsolete
3. Having a niche audience allows you to make an impact. It creates an authority platform for you and your services.
4. A niche allows you to create custom solutions for your niche audience
5. Technology is commoditizing the generalist

When you don't have a niche, you lose the opportunity to leverage your expertise/knowledge base to serve a more targeted market – and as a result, lose profits and the ability to be seen as an expert

You're not able to create custom services that will truly help your niche – services that could be very lucrative for your business. Finally, technology is allowing your prospective buyer to find "do-it-yourself" solutions and also could automate some of your current fee-based services. And being a generalist won't differentiate you – which means it's tougher to get the rates you want.

Instead, a niche will allow you to:

1. **Feel Focused and In Control:** You know who your target market is, which allows you to dig deep into their particular problems and challenges. You know exactly how you can help them.
2. **Get The Rates You Always Dreamt Of But Never Achieved (Yet!) –** With a niche, you can now create packaged services that truly meet a need. Because your targeted niche realizes they're getting the "Ultimate Treatment" (and not just a number), they'll choose you for their business. Also, remember that products get updated. So plan on creating a "2.0" or "Version 2" of your service packages. Be like Apple!
3. **Gain The Respect Of Your Community And In Your Niche –** When you choose a niche, you're instantly entering an "insider's club." You know the lingo, the traditions, behaviors, etc. of your niche. You'll be seen as an expert.

Finding a niche can be one of the best things you do for getting new leads and new opportunities. The problem with attending general networking events or conferences not attached to your niche is that you're working in a ocean that may not contain your targeted "fish."

Instead, when you identify a niche, then you can hone your networking so that you invest your time and resources only into events that attract your "fish." Industry-specific events would be a better choice than a networking breakfast advertised by your local business newspaper.

How to Replace Networking Events With Prospecting That Works Like A Charm...

In order to meet those who are the most interested in your service or products, you first have to catch their attention.

This is challenging when you're in a room full of strangers. But it's a little easier online.

Why?

Because people are searching for a solution online.

They already have an issue that is plaguing them. They're starting to look for answers online and they're doing their research.

For these types of prospective buyers, they are already half-way there when it comes to a buying decision.

Let's say during their search, they land on your website.

You may have a great website, but most people will only visit it once.

In 2018, 93% of my website traffic was new visitors. Only 7% were returning visitors. In order to make the most of those new visitors, I need to have something to grab their attention and keep it. And that "something" is...

A lead magnet. A lead magnet is something you give away for free to your visitor in exchange for their email address. It could be a free eBook, guide, special report, white paper, checklist, and more.

Here is an idea list of 19+ Powerful Lead Magnets:

1. Checklist	7. Free Course
2. eBook	8. Video
3. Special Report	9. Recorded Interviews
4. Tip Sheet	10. Free Trial
5. Infographic	11. Sample
6. Interview Transcript	12. Coupon

Here is an idea list of 19+ Powerful Lead Magnets (continued):

13. Exclusive Deal	18. Toolkit
14. Quiz/Assessment/Test	19. Sales Material
15. Swipe File	20. Free Consultation
16. Cheat Sheet	21. A printed book
17. Case Study	22. Newsletter

I've written dozens of lead magnets both for clients and for my own site. This is the latest one. Some lead magnets will do really well and some will get only a mediocre response.

The trick is to keep experimenting. Keep testing various lead magnets to see which ones get a better result with your target market.

For instance, I have an email mini-copywriting course that has been running now for five years. People still opt in to an email list to get the course. Other lead magnets may not resonate as strongly with your prospective buyers. That's okay.

Remember you can always re-purpose your content or revise it. Another way to refresh a lead magnet is to give it a new title.

The other advantage of having a good lead magnet is that you can re-purpose it in different ways.

For instance, let's say you created a special report for one of the biggest challenges your niche target market has. You create a landing page on your website (a separate page from your home page) and send people there to opt in to your online form to receive the report.

You publish the link to this page on all of your social media accounts including LinkedIn. Perhaps you have an online professional group where you can also promote the page.

Why not use that landing page URL with a direct mail campaign?

Here's an idea that other businesses have been using:

First, shorten your URL if you have a long website address. If you don't, you could shorten the landing page name when you publish it on your site so it looks something like this:

www.yourbusinessitename.com/free-money-report

Or whatever name you give your report. As long as the name is short, you have a good chance that people will type it on their own within their browser.

Next, create sales copy for either a sales letter or postcard that sets up the benefits of the free report. Tell your reader they can go to that page to receive a FREE report.

And capitalize FREE.

Emphasize they can keep the report, without any obligation. Highlight the ways the report will help the reader. Sell the heck out of owning this report.

Once someone is then on your website and fills in their contact information to receive the free report... then BOOM! You just got a lead!

Depending upon your marketing strategy, you can then follow up with this lead only with online tactics or you can alternate between sending them email messages with offline postcards, brochures, and letters.

The point is that the lead magnet can attract people both online and offline.

You can also use a lead magnet when you give a presentation. In fact, I'd recommend having a landing page that is specifically geared toward that audience. Such as:

www.yourbusinesssitename.com/free-money-report-chamber

So if you're presenting to your local Chamber of Commerce, put that name in the URL.

Your attendees will feel like you did something special for them (which you did) and often will be curious enough to check out your report. Especially if this is done at the end of your presentation and you have an opportunity to give some teasers regarding the content.

If you're giving a presentation to a group that discourages such actions, create a simple table form that has space for a person's name and email address. Pass it around in the beginning of your presentation and tell everyone you have a special gift you'd like to share with them and if interested, they can sign up.

Those are just a few ideas of how you can use a lead magnet to get potential buyers to pay attention to you. When you do this, you'll find that you've narrowed the "pool" of prospects considerably compared to walking into a room full of strangers and hoping you'll meet a few who would be good prospects for your services.

By all means, seek out opportunities to meet people face-to-face, but try to put the odds in your favor. Attend events that will attract your niche market. Do some research on the attendees, if possible. Find out if companies that you'd like to reach will be attending the event.

And it wouldn't hurt to have a lead magnet in your back pocket!

So when you do find yourself at a networking event that has a "mixed bag" of attendees... you can always say to them, "Listen, I just released a free report on XYZ. Would you like to read it? I'll send it to you."

It's a better alternative to just collecting business cards. Good luck!

Wait... Before You Go...

I would be remiss if I did not let you know that although this eBook focused on having a lead magnet live on your site, there is another type of "lead magnet" that will firmly place you as an authority to your target market.

A printed book.

We offer ghostwriting services for those who want to publish a book and we write it like it's one gigantic sales letter.

If you want to self-publish your own book but either don't have the time to do it on your own or even know where to start, please contact me.

We can only take on a limited amount of ghostwriting clients per year, so it's better to contact us sooner rather than later. Email mr@maryrosemaguire.com with "Book" in the subject line.

Also, check out **The Prospector Club** . This is the first private, members-only copywriting, photography, and graphic design club created especially for the small business owner.

Choose the tier that is right for your needs, whether it's monthly email templates or getting a customized eNewsletter.

The only way to ensure that your business is NOT commoditized is by building a "presence" around your expertise. This includes lead magnets, newsletters, email marketing, and books.

Don't dismiss the importance of marketing YOU. Your future clients, customers, and prospects are looking for an original – and that IS you!



Want Your Own Lead Magnet?

You can have your own lead magnet that will showcase your expertise, establish your authority, and position your business as THE best solution.

If you're tired of spinning your wheels with your marketing or lack the time to focus on it, you need to talk with us.

I'll ask a few simple questions and give you some quick-start solutions to move your business in the right direction.

To get started, just click the button below.

- Mary Rose "Wildfire" Maguire

BOOK YOUR CONSULTATION