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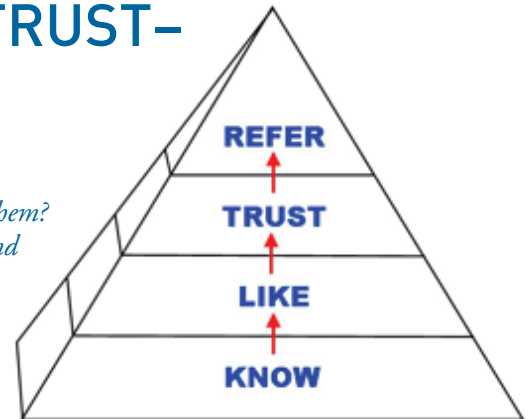
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Networking

The KNOW-LIKE-TRUST-REFER Pyramid

By Rocky Mills

Referrals don't just happen. So what causes them? Why do some members get lots of referrals and others hardly any? I'm clearly not a networking expert (I'm much better at notworking...), but I've found the KNOW-LIKE-TRUST-REFER pyramid to be the best explanation.



There's no de-Nile (sorry, or in this case, Tut-Tut...) that understanding this pyramid will crystallize actions to take to increase the referrals you receive and get the most from your ProVisors membership.

KNOW The foundation of this pyramid is KNOW. This ground level must not only be large—you need to know lots of people—but it must also be strong if it's going to support the rest of the pyramid. In other words, it's not enough to have a Rolodex of names. You must get to KNOW each person, one at a time. What makes them tick? What are their passions? Who are their heroes? What makes them unique in their fields?

Your Group Leader can be especially helpful in this KNOW stage. It's our job to promote KNOW, through meetings, mixers and other activities. For example, a few years back we had a joint breakfast (not to be confused with a meal for dopers; the confusion would only get worse if such a networking event were called "Refer Madness"). Instead of the usual mingle-fest where KNOW is mostly random or vested only in the most extroverted, we set up the first "Speed Sex-Troika." For those of you with R-rated minds, let me provide a little sex education: "sex" is simply a prefix meaning "six," as in the words "sextant," "sextuplet" and "sextet."

In this case it refers to the six members at each table—two from each group. We set up three 20-minute "rounds" where each member at

a computer-assigned table introduced him/herself and weighed in on that round's table topic. You met with 12 members outside your group—like having six very efficient troikas in the span of an hour. We got rave reviews! More importantly, we planted a bunch of new KNOW seeds.

Now ask yourself: Do you KNOW everyone in your group? I'll bet you don't. Here's a simple test: go down the list (literally—you need the group roster in front of you) and ask yourself if you really KNOW each person. You'll quickly notice gaping holes. How do you patch these holes? Pick up the phone and schedule some "doikas" (2-person troikas). Or, after your next meeting, put together your own second troika. And take KNOW for an answer.

LIKE The fact is, we do business with people we like. I can't help you here. Nothing that ProVisors can do will get you from KNOW to LIKE. You're on your own.

But on this second (smaller) level of the pyramid you don't need as many LIKES as you have KNOWs. Naturally, you're not going to like everyone and not everyone is going to like you. That's quite all right. Just be yourself and concentrate on those with whom you've made a genuine connection.

Repeat: just be yourself. You can't get to the next level of the pyramid with a shaky, unstable LIKE.

TRUST Once a bond has been formed with your LIKES, some **continues on page 4**

The KNOW-LIKE-TRUST-REFER Pyramid

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of them will move up to the next (and smaller still) level of the pyramid, TRUST. For you to graduate to someone else's TRUST level, you need to accrue some positives. Examples: receiving flattering testimonials, being highly responsive to requests for help, exuding professionalism, going the extra mile.

Over time, and amidst such positives, a level of comfort and confidence emerges. LIKE grows into TRUST, and the stage is set for the pinnacle of the pyramid.

REFER Once there's TRUST, only one thing separates you from REFER: opportunity. You can't force opportunities. But you can be clear with your TRUSTs as to the triggers for your business. In other words, your TRUSTs need to know what situations they might come across in which your expertise would save the day—and make yours.



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Turn Your Opinion into Revenue (for Free)

By Tim Gallagher

Your daydream about the perfect way to use the news media for free (as opposed to buying an ad) might go something like this:

A 500-word article written by you about your area of expertise published on a page of a newspaper or magazine that your customers and potential customers read. If you've got one, add a great photo that makes you look 10 years younger. Did I already mention it would be free?

Keep dreaming? No. You can make it a reality by using the opinion pages of your local newspaper or trade publication.

I worked in the news media for nearly 30 years and know this truth: Op-ed editors are always hungry for fresh ideas from fresh writers who live in the area or possess expertise in the subject matter.

The trouble is, most people (and this probably includes you) do not think of themselves as great writers.

Here's a news flash: You don't have to be George Will or Thomas Friedman to get published.

There are three key elements to getting an op-ed published:

It must be topical: Something that's in the news or will soon be in the news. When the GM bankruptcy hit in June, the pages were filled with viewpoints on the bankruptcy after the bailout. Consider writing an op-ed about a news story that you know something about.

It must take a strong point of view. No one likes an editorial that says "on the other hand." Be bold. Be logical. State your case.

It can take an unusual point of view. I once wrote an op-ed defending the woman who was awarded \$1.7 million after spilling McDonald's coffee in her lap. It ran in 80 newspapers because I sought "the other side" of this outrageous case. (Did you know McDonald's had more than 700 similar complaints before this lawsuit?)

What's the value in an op-ed? Why bother? Well, one of my clients runs a disaster training company. He is working with the government of Vietnam to develop a search-and-rescue operation. Yet, he was filled with angst because his brother was killed in Vietnam 40 years ago and now he was "helping the enemy." We talked at length and I helped him through several drafts and eventually we published a fine piece that talked about his business and his personal feelings.

Someone who read it liked it so much he asked my client to come to Europe this summer and speak to 60 international government figures who are interested in the type of maritime training my client offers.

Op-eds can and should be a part of your overall marketing and public relations strategies. They establish you as a knowledgeable expert in a field that is important to your clients or potential clients.



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