

# The Business Connector

A Quarterly Newsletter from AmSpirit™ Business Connections

## Fishin' For Others

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It is almost a universal axiom of life: The best way to get opportunities from your network – such as, new clients or additional business – is to provide opportunities to it.

Once we have resolved ourselves to this truism, we quietly wonder to ourselves: How do we find the opportunity to inject into our network?

Injecting opportunity into our networks seems to be one of those things that is easier said than done. Knowing where to look for our own opportunity is challenging enough.

Looking for and identifying opportunities for others seems to be one of those daunting tasks. What does this opportunity look like? Where do we look? What do we do when we find it?

The fact is that finding opportunity for others in our network is not as challenging as it might seem. In many respects, identifying and securing opportunities for others is like fishing.

Basically, fishing involves three steps. (1) Baiting a hook; (2) Casting the baited hook; and (3) Reeling in the catch. If we carefully analyze how we identify and secure opportunities for others, this process involves these same basic steps: Bait, Cast and Reel.

**Baiting Our Hook:** In fishing for opportunities, when we bait our hook we are simply highlighting a feature of an individual in our network or highlighting a feature of their product or service that could be potentially beneficial or attractive to others.

For example, perhaps *Carl Schlotman, III, CPCU (CAI Insurance Agency, Inc., Cincinnati, OH)* tells us:

“Most small businesses insure their computers as normal business contents, like a desk. This provides coverage for losses due to fire, a direct hit of lightning, windstorm or theft. The computers, however, wouldn't be covered for losses due to mechanical breakdown, power surges or brownouts. By scheduling computer equipment with the right insurance carrier, these losses can be covered – some companies will even provide software virus protection.”

This is a “baited hook.” Any business that does not know about this coverage would find this information useful.

Carl could provide us with a handful of “baited hooks.” So could others in our network. We could have dozens of “baited hooks” in our arsenal.

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**Casting Our Baited Hook:** Once we have armed ourselves with an arsenal of information – baited our hooks – we need to appropriately distribute it to individuals who might find it attractive or beneficial.

Building on the previous example, perhaps in a conversation with *Michelle Adams (President, Prism Marketing Communications, New Albany, OH)* we discover that her business has a considerable amount of computer

equipment. With that, we cast out a “baited hook” at the appropriate moment.

“Michelle, are your computers insured against power surges and brownouts? I was talking with an insurance agent and he indicated that there are companies that will insure your computers for these situations – some policies even protect against software viruses.”

Like fishing, we need to be patient. A cast may not immediately yield results. Today, we are lucky. Michelle bites:

“I don't know if my computers are insured for any of that. How would I find out?”

**Reeling In Our Catch:** The process of “reeling” is simply a matter of directing the opportunity:

“Michelle, to be honest, I don't know the answer. Perhaps you and this insurance agent should talk – his name is Carl Schlotman. He would know.”

Like fishing, not every bite results in a catch. Michelle may or may not want to be connected with Carl. If she does, we make the connection. We have created an opportunity – Carl may have a new client and we may have helped Michelle obtain better protection for her business.

In addition, like fishing, if a bite does not result in a catch, we just need to cast another “baited hook.” Remember, we are just fishing. We need to patiently bait, cast and reel.

Finally, unlike actual fishing, remember that when we fish for opportunities, no catch is too small. Every opportunity is a keeper.