

Outreach to the Business Community: How to Get Started

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Objective

To understand the value of a close relationship with the business community, and learn some basic ways to make those connections.

What's the point?

Three reasons to spend the time:

1. Government leaders at all levels want to keep businesses in their communities.
2. Business owners hold influence in local decision-making.
3. Business owners who understand the value of library services become library advocates.

Where do I begin?

Three things to try:

- Join the local Chamber of Commerce or Business Association
 - Check their web sites for annual dues – look for nonprofit, government, or educational organization rates
 - Check their calendars for networking events
- Make a list of local businesses using RefUSA.
 - Research email addresses.
 - Send a blanket email to each contact to request a 15 minute meeting.
 - Start outreach with the people who respond first, i.e. low hanging fruit.
- Explore Meetup and local social media groups for business networking.
- Other ideas?

Introductory email example

Dear NAME,

I want to introduce myself as your local librarian and share some free business resources that the library offers, such as **digital business magazines and databases to help with marketing.**

Please let me know if you have some time next week for me to drop in for a quick 15 minute chat.

Thank you!

YOUR NAME

Participate!

Get involved:



- By meeting them where they are.
 - Many groups have informal “coffee clutch” morning meetings before business hours.
 - Show up and mingle. Bring lots of business cards.
 - Do house calls (library card, laptop and hotspot in hand).
- By offering to host once they get to know you.
 - All this takes is coffee, donuts, and the willingness to start your day earlier than you are used to.
 - Have a public computer (or more than one) booted up and showing some business resources (like ReferenceUSA).

Business Resources

for new and existing business, nonprofits and entrepreneurs

Municipal Public Library
Offers free business resources to help you plan, build and grow your business.

From reading the latest business news online, finding local business contacts or researching statistics, the library has what you need to plan for success.

Book & eResources
Need free business information or using a library resource? Book a computer to check out on-site appointments. Visit municipalibrary.org/bookshelvanon or call (978) 744-0308 ext. 2235.

Books, eBooks, Magazines and more!
We strive to give you access to the latest business materials. You can download business eBooks and audiobooks to your smartphone, eReader or computer without ever leaving your desk. We're even set up with frequently used business reference books and magazines in-house for faster access. Want a title you don't want to leave on the shelf? We can hold you the business collection you need.

Online Information Available 24/7
The library connects you with online services and content to help you through every stage of your business, including:

Business Source Elite
Database full text for nearly 1,500 business publications, including almost 500 peer-reviewed publications, dating back to 1985.

Legal Information Reference Center
Offers access to hundreds of full text publications and thousands of legal forms. It covers a wide range of topics, including business, copyright, and more.

ReferenceUSA
The No. 1 source of information on businesses and people.

Regional Business News
Businesses coverage of 75 business journals, newspapers and newsletters from 45 metropolitan and rural areas within the U.S.

Small Business Reference Center
Contains a variety of information on small business and entrepreneurial subject areas, a links and advice section, business plans, and more.

Other ways we can help:

- Conference room reservations for meetings (for services, call 948-3447)
- Computer classes
- In-house and mobile printing
- Free Wi-Fi
- Internet
- Fax (21, 500 pages)
- Online language learning and translation

Please note that you must have a valid ID, library card to access online resources.

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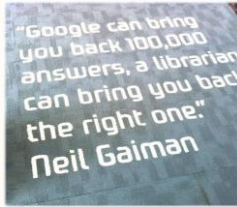


Award from the North Essex Chamber of Commerce for contributions to membership

Tips & Tricks

Explain your value

Why would a business owner need the library? Just quote Neil Gaiman.



What we've learned:

- LISTEN. The more you absorb, the more you can find ways to help and have an impact.
- Say "free" as often as possible.
- Don't get hung up on what library card they have.
- Contribute. Offer to write a short article for their newsletter, or host a meeting.
- Other recommendations?



Donation from the Greater Swedesboro Business Association

Conclusions

- Make the first move. Accept that business owners are not going to find you on their own.
- Be flexible. You must be willing to leave your building to make connections.
- Be patient. It will take time for word to spread, but word-of-mouth really works.

You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you.

Dale Carnegie