

Small Business Expo Gives Entrepreneurs Chance to Network

It may look like speed dating, but it is actually a group of entrepreneurs pitching their businesses to one another in a speed-networking event. It was just one of the activities available at Small Business Expo - a traveling trade show, conference and networking event produced by Zach Lezberg.

"It's great to see all the entrepreneurial spirit around the country. All these small business owners. All these great ideas floating around. People are networking," says Zach Lezberg, producer of Small Business Expo.

People like professional organizer Rachel Sager of Restart with Rachel. Why did she come? "To figure out how to grow my business and to network," she says.

In fact, nearly everyone I spoke with at the event, which attracted some 10,000 attendees, said networking is the key to entrepreneurial success. It can be used to find clients. "It's how you make connections, build the business and when times are tough, how to keep the business," says **Toby Nadler, founder & president of WomenInBusiness.org**.

But what if you can't hire staff members or pay professionals to do things like design your logo or build your website? Again, turn to your network. Try setting up a barter with another business owner, trading your service or expertise for theirs.

"A real entrepreneur is not afraid to utilize their resources. You know more people than you think. You actually just need to go through your own rolodex and network and talk to people," says Lezberg.

None of this is new advice, but social media has certainly changed the landscape. It allows business owners to click with their audience faster and cheaper than ever before. However, Toby Nadler warns, as powerful as it is, it is important to exist off line as well. "It's not a substitute. In fact, people, especially women, love to connect face to face," says Nadler.