

4 Tips When Making “The Ask” & More from Guru Michael Roderick

fwa.org/spotlight/4-tips-when-making-the-ask-more-from-guru-michael-roderick/

For 75 minutes, you almost forgot that a delicious luncheon was being served. No noises from cutlery and no small chatter! Everyone was busy furiously putting pen to paper, trying to capture all the networking jewels that Michael Roderick, CEO of Small Pond Enterprises, packaged so brilliantly at the Financial Women’s Association Entrepreneurs Committee’s event, “*It’s Time to Rethink Your Network Strategy.*”

The takeaways were abundant. Below are just a couple of the highlighted tips that will yield greater and more effective success in your networking and business development efforts.

1. Understand your relationship to “The Ask”: We all have anxieties, especially related to the act of asking for something, whether it’s a raise or a deal.



FWA member Justin Winters; speaker Michael Roderick, CEO of Small Pond Enterprises; and Alana McNichol, FWA member, assistant co-chair of the Entrepreneur’s Committee and assistant treasurer.

Some of us dread the action of asking, preferring to walk on hot coals. At the other extreme, we have the “steamroller” ask. In this situation, the person making “The Ask” is so wrapped up in themselves that they literally end up having a monologue. No one else seems to be part of the conversation!

To know where you fall on that continuum, to really be aware of your own level of anxiety, can help you achieve greater success. The more we understand what is behind our anxiety around “asking”, the more receptive we are to ask more effectively and use more sophisticated asking techniques.

2. Comprehend how you position yourself during “The Ask”: When you’re about to make “The Ask,” it’s important that you know that you’ll be perceived into one of four different categories, which are as easy to remember as “ABCD.” That way, it is much more likely to receive whatever you’re asking for. They include:

- *Advocate:* You support the work of the individual to whom you are reaching out
- *Boomerang:* you show reciprocity and are always willing to offer help
- *Client:* You express an interest in the services of the individual you are contacting

- *Drain*: Someone who shows no consideration for the person being contacted and, thereby, becomes a drain on their resources



Guests Sharon Benner, Maian Goldman, Masako Matsunaga and FWA member Linda Hamilton

3. Know your audience: Knowing your audience is critical, as you want “The Ask” to be on target with their pain points. Roderick refers to the “T.C.M. Index” – time, connections or money. One of these will always hold greater importance.

4. Appreciate the nuances that distinguish connection, referral and favor: A big help in Roderick’s own career was to heed Fred Wilson’s famous blog advocating the double opt-in introduction that says, “When introducing two people who don’t know each other, ask each of them to opt-in to the introduction before making it.”

In closing, Roderick playfully mused about networking events which serve such a large role in our day-to-day lives.

He said, “Networking events are filled with creatures from the sea. Some are sharks, ready to devour their young. Some are dolphins, glad to stay and play only with their own kind. But some are ‘floundering’; drowning! We’ve all seen them ... hugging the food bar or trying to look busy, busy, busy on their mobile phones.”

Here, Roderick suggests that we play the role of lifeguard. Throw out a lifesaver to the flounders by introducing yourself, striking up a conversation and showing an interest in them. And, indeed, your memorable deed will be remembered as networking, at its core, which is about making yourself valuable in the eyes of others.

Special thanks to Alana McNichol, co-chair of the Entrepreneurs Committee; Marian Knowles and Susan Erickson, committee members who handled registration and photography; co-chair Diana Merenda and co-chair Professional Development Committee Sharon Lewis for the newsletter write-up, and to Justin Winters of the FWA Men’s Alliance for connecting the Entrepreneurs Committee to Michael Roderick and Small Pond Enterprises.