

Making the Most of the Matchmaker – Following Up



Government
Contracting

NH Economic Development

NH PTAC

Dave Pease, Program
Manager

Jane Brezosky, Program
Specialist

You've been to a great matchmaker, and....

- You had an updated, vibrant and descriptive ***capabilities statement***, both hard copy and electronic.
- Your ***website*** was up-to-date and consistent with your capabilities statement.
- You carefully ***prepared*** to maximize your contact opportunities.
- You ***took full advantage of unexpected contacts.***

So, what now?

- It's essential that you follow up in an appropriate and timely way. Prioritize:
 1. People you made a promise to.
 2. People who made a promise to you.
 3. Existing customers
 4. Companies that are your top priorities.
 5. Companies that you wanted to meet, but failed to connect with at the event.
 6. Companies that weren't on your radar.
 7. Potential teaming prospects.

People you made a promise to:

- **Who asked you to get back to them?** Contact them within a few days, being sure to address their specific questions – even if it's to promise a more complete response soon.
- **If you're not sure what you promised, say so.** It's ok to say "I believe that this is what we spoke about, but if I'm missing anything, please don't hesitate to let me know, and I'll respond at once."

Dear Alina:

“I greatly appreciate the time that you spent with me and many other small businesses at the matchmaker last Friday. I am sure that you also have a great deal of followup to do, and I wanted to **promptly** provide the additional information **that I promised**.

My recollection is that **you had a particular interest in** our meerkat collection. I have attached a current price list, and detailed spec sheets for our most popular models. Please note that all of our products are non-corrosive and explosion-proof – suitable for use in your work environment. All these items are currently in stock, and available for overnight delivery. **We are eager to demonstrate our responsiveness, as well as our exceptional quality and fair pricing.**

Please don't hesitate to let me know if you require any **additional information**, or if there are **other points of contact** in your company that I should be reaching out to.”

People who made a promise to you:

- **Polite reminders are essential!**
 - Who promised to refer you to someone else? Politely remind them, **by thanking them for their willingness to introduce you** to “so-and-so”, possibly asking when they can expect to meet with you.
 - Promised to send you something? Again, thank them in advance, and **make it easy for them to reply** by email, snail mail, or other means – maybe offer a quick visit?
 - Promised a bid opportunity? Let them know that you’re eager to have an opportunity to **understand their requirement(s) and to compete** for their business.

Dear Brian:

“Thanks for taking time to speak with me at the Matchmaker in Manchester last Friday. I hope that it was as productive a day for you as it was for me. Your company certainly was popular with the small businesses.

I was particularly happy that **you offered to introduce me to William**, who I understand would be the best point of contact in your company regarding widget testing. It is highly likely that we can help you with your current widget challenges, and I’m confident that a **short conversation with William** will make it clear whether or not we should be doing business together.

I’ll look forward to receiving **William’s direct contact info**, and I have attached **our capabilities statement and the widget testing protocol** for you to pass on to him.

I look forward to hearing from you, and thanks once more for your time.”

Existing customers...

- Often, we make simple courtesy calls on our existing (or former) customers at a matchmaker. A quick “nice to see you – hope you had a successful day” note is always appropriate.
- If you have news about your business – a new capability, a major new contract – this is a great place to update them.

Priority Companies

- If you met with them, tell them how important it was to you and ask about next steps.
- If you didn't, tell them how important it was to you, and ask about next steps....

Companies that you missed...

- Send a note & a capabilities statement:

“While the matchmaker last week in Manchester was a very satisfying event for us, we were disappointed that we were unable to find an opportunity to meet with you. Discovering whether or not there may be a possibility that we can provide solutions for Abt Associates, Inc. remains a top priority for us. I have attached a current capabilities statement for your review. We would welcome a chance to meet with you to briefly explore your requirements and our products (services). Please let me know if we can arrange a meeting.”

New finds...

- **Be careful...**you don't know them & they don't know you.
- Incredibly important to do your **homework**.
Learn all you can about them.
- Figure out why you didn't know them.
- Approach them cautiously at first – don't show off all of your research results until you have a feel for the company culture.
- Take baby steps; listen more than you talk.

Teaming partners

- Understand the value proposition(s) for both parties.
 - Do you need each other?
 - **Are you stronger together than apart?**
 - Can a fair, mutually satisfactory relationship be established?
- It's like asking someone out on a date for the first time. Why would he/she go out with you?

Follow up – when?

- First followup within 1 week of the matchmaker.
Ten days, tops.
- Second followup within 3 weeks.
- Third followup in another 3 weeks.
- Schedule follow-ups on a calendar.

How to follow up...

- Email is usually best.
 - Individual, not a “blast” to a list
 - Individualize each note; include something personal or company-specific if you can.
- **LinkedIn** can work for you to build & maintain a relationship..

How to follow up...

- Telephone is ok.
- Snail mail can be surprisingly effective.
 - Handwrite the envelope in **blue ink**.
 - (better chance that it will be opened)

Keep doing your research!

- It's farming, not hunting.
- You're building relationships.
 - Some will lead somewhere, soon
 - Some never will
 - Some will take time
 - Don't worry too much about which is which.
- Just keep farming!

Follow up info collection:

Company Name:		Date met:		
<u>Contact Person/People</u>	<u>email</u>	<u>phone</u>	<u>location</u>	<u>title</u>
Notes:				
Followup:				
When?				
With whom?				
How?				
About:				

Thank you!

New Hampshire Procurement Technical Assistance Center
Division of Economic Development
Department of Business and Economic Affairs
172 Pembroke Road
Concord, NH 03301
Office: 603-271-7581

nheconomy.com/sell-to-the-government

Email: govcontracting@livefree.nh.gov



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