

I began Premier in February 2000, following much prayer...

I had been on "sabbatical" from my consulting career for 4 months and was unsure about my future plans. "Sabbatical" was my non-threatening way of telling myself that I did not wish to return to my intense career. I spent my years since college in the telecommunications industry as a systems analyst and more recently, a systems architect. My clients included Sprint, Pagenet, United Telecom and Bell Atlantic. I typically sold my consulting services on long-term engagements (6 month - 2 years), out of town, where the Client generally put me up in a furnished apartment or extended-stay hotel. After 10 years, I realized that I had never spent 7 evenings in a row in the same place (even on vacations!!). My husband and I courted long-distance and were married, living in separate cities, for 2 years. I needed a change!

Nancy Schwartz and I had developed a friendship while our husbands worked together in Dallas, TX. They were then both transferred to the Philadelphia area within months of each other. Nancy had first introduced me to Premier, through company literature, during our stay in Dallas; however, I was not interested in leaving my full-time career. Instead, I decided to try selling children's books part-time. This business never took off, as I still worked my consulting job 10-16 hours a day, week after week.

I attended Nancy's mystery hostess home show in Philadelphia in November of '98, and marked "No" to BOTH the "Would you like to host a home show?" and "Would you like to hear more about the opportunity?" questions. I had never hosted a home show and had only attended 1 in my lifetime - they just weren't "my thing".

When January of 2000 came around and I had made no decisions about continuing my consulting career, I decided to call Nancy to "play in her jewelry" and to have her accessorize me...she always looked so put together! Several hours and several hundred dollars later, Nancy asked the question - "Would you like to hear a little bit more about my business?" I reluctantly agreed and was shocked when Nancy shared the marketing plan. I had no idea that her "little jewelry business" actually could pay the bills!! What a surprise! To see her commission check, practically on par with what I made, was quite an eye-opener!

I spent the next several weeks composing questions (I still have my original 3-page type-written listing I had for her), attending shows and praying.

My 3 biggest fears were my introverted personality, speaking in front of people and getting shows. My husband Stan was equally perplexed that I would consider such an opportunity. His reaction - "Are you sure that you will actually follow through on this...I mean, you do tend to start projects and not see them through..." and "you realize that sales is a people business and you're not particularly fond of social gatherings with people you don't know?".

He was right. But, what I knew in my heart was that God had gifted me in the area of evangelism - and what better career than one in which I would constantly meet new people! I prayed that if He would help develop my people skills and make me more comfortable in social gatherings, I would be faithful and watch for those seekers He put in my path. [So far, His Plan has proceeded as promised. I have had the opportunity to share the gospel with several ladies - hostesses and jewelers alike - and God has led some of them to a saving knowledge of Himself. What a Blessing to have a business that is also your ministry!]

The only remaining issue was this minor area of bookings☺. Having traveled out of state 5 days a week since we moved to Pennsylvania in 1998, I basically knew no one except Nancy. I had just started volunteering at church, but felt uncomfortable asking them to have a show for me. I didn't even invite them to my training show (silly, I know now...).

Nancy indicated that I should invite "everyone I could think of" to my training show. The list was short. I invited my 17 neighbors, all of whom I had not seen in 18 months since the neighborhood summer block party. I added one of Stan's coworker's wives (whom I had met at a dinner party a while back), my Bible study leader (though not the entire group - too intimidating), my real estate agent (whom I hadn't seen since our closing 2 years before), and the wife of our wallpaper hanger. I had 9 people attend the show (thank goodness for the "bring a friend" line on the invitation) and sales were about \$600.

Nancy helped me get 2 bookings on the calendar, which I managed to double-book, believe it or not. One person asked for the first Wednesday in April; the other for April 6th (can't recall exact dates). It turned out that the 2nd woman THOUGHT that April 6th was a Wednesday, when in fact it was a Thursday - the night she had class. Needless to say, I was completely embarrassed as we worked through that situation several weeks later.

So, I had 7 weeks from my training show date to get ready for my first show. Fully expecting that these shows might be my LAST 2, I knew that I would have to find another means of selling this jewelry! I spent a lot of time getting organized, learning the business, reading everything that Nancy gave me. Fortunately, Nancy offered me one show for the last week in March and the Women's Director at church learned what I was doing and had a staff show for me as well.

At some point during these 7 weeks, I opened the yellow pages and proceeded through every category - assessing how I could market my product to those in that industry. I kept notes online as I went and knew it was time to stop when I hit the "W's" and "Welding" - I thought..."welding, welding...welder's wives, hmmm" -- OK - enough already. I proceeded to call the places I had identified, using Nancy's training on "Jump Starting Your Business". I carefully documented who I spoke with, what their reaction was, and color coded my entries. Red highlighting meant - No interest; Yellow - Follow up with another call, catalog, etc.; Green - Appointment made.

After some additional follow-up and meetings, I had several promising events -- including a health fair for a retirement home, a bridal fashion show, and a Mother's Day event at the local swim club. Two additional lifestyle bookings didn't hurt either from my nail technician and my shampoo gal.

The months shaped up as follows:

March - 2 shows (29th and 31st)

April - 3 shows (original 2 bookings + 1 lifestyle booking)

May - 3 shows (health fair + swim club)

June - 6 shows

July - 4 shows

At this point, I was pretty nervous, as I only had 3 more shows on my calendar for August. I decided to offer "Dynamite Dates" at my first August show - where I gave an extra incentive to host within 3 weeks. I had 4 people take me up on the offer...from there, God blessed my fall season...

August - 8 shows

September - 4 shows

October - 13 shows

November 15 shows

December - 6 shows

My November ended up being the highest in the nation with, I believe \$16,900ish in retail.

Fortunately, since learning the little tricks to getting bookings at the show, rather than after the show, I have been able to consistently keep my calendar reasonably booked. Occasionally, of course, I need to pick up the phone to fill in a particular month, but I no longer have a fear that I wouldn't be able to get things started again if necessary. It takes work, discipline and stepping out of your comfort zone, but I believe that the Lord will bless the effort.

I continue to thank God for this business, Joan and Andy for their initiative, Nancy and Rick for their constant support and encouragement and an incredible downline for bringing joy to my daily business. Premier is simply a Blessing!

Barbara Haas has one of the greatest and inspirational stories of a jeweler getting her business going from "nothing to something" by just sheer determination! Enjoy her story!

Greg Terrell, Diamond Executive Director

From ZERO bookings to almost \$17,000 retail in only 9 months!!

"I spent my years since college in the telecommunications industry as a systems analyst and more recently, a systems architect. After 10 years, I realized that I had never spent 7 evenings in a row in the same place (even on vacations!!). My husband and I courted long-distance and were married, living in separate cities, for 2 years. I needed a change!

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2. Speaking in front of people
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Barbara Haas, 5-Diamond Designer, PA

bbhaas@comcast.net

Hi Barbara!

Here are some questions we received to your story ... what do you recommend?

- 1. Do you happen to know what the "extra incentives" were that she offered?**
- 2. What booking activity did she use in her presentation?**
- 3. How does she define "dynamite dates"?**

Barbara's answer to these three (3) questions:

Hi there,

I didn't use a formal booking activity (still very nervous back then). I offered the old "booking bracelets" as my activity and concentrated on getting the date that night, rather than accepting "maybe's" to call back, as I had been doing up to that point. I found that I was better able to get the date when my confidence level depicted a, "this is just how I run my business" attitude. Now, I am offering the tennis bracelets and they work well for me too.

For Dynamite Dates, I passed around a decorative clipboard with a signup. It included 3-6 specific dates in the upcoming 3-4 week timeframe. I offered \$25-\$100 in additional jewelry (enough to get their attention) with a minimum \$200 show. I think it's in your advertising during the show. I discussed the Dynamite Date clipboard during my Hostess Benefits talk and passed it around while I completed the presentation. I know there are many variations of this type of activity floating out there - this was just what I used at that time. I have attached an example (it's a bit boring...a creative person can really liven it up).

More recently, I offered 15% off their order that night for a dynamite date (within 3 weeks) and had 4 ladies take me up on it (saved my April:) Only one of them moved her date and it was only by 2 weeks - still not bad. This time, however, I didn't advertise it - I did more of a 1-on-1 discussion during checkout after they mentioned that they wanted a show 2-3 months out.