

touch with the networks of several influencers and result in a bestselling book. Selling your idea to a global partner who is seeking the next great idea in your industry can make it available to millions in a matter of months.

Business owners are no longer constrained by geography to communicate their message and value. They can think bigger. But they must be strategic. A small introductory project can lead to more and larger projects as you build credibility and value with your partners. But you'll never know until you ask.

Think about your core customer demographic. What do they buy, read or listen to in addition to your product or service? Can you align yourself with one of these companies to reach a higher number of your target customers?

Spend some time thinking about how this collaboration will benefit your collaborator. With a genuine goal of creating mutual success, you will be a collaborator of choice for many like-minded businesses.

## [contact]

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“Aligning with like-minded companies exponentially increases the value of your marketing efforts and dollars.”

— Michelle Massman, Massman & Associates

and how to handle a premature end to the project. Your attorney should also outline unforeseen circumstances in the event that one or both partners cannot complete the project.

With proper planning and managing of expectations at the front end, your collaboration will have a greater chance of success.

Collaborative marketing increases your resources. There are financial resources, to be sure, but also human resources. By tapping into the knowledge and networks of your partner, your market expands exponentially.

Collaborators may have access to things you don't, such as an outstanding e-mail database, incredible buying power with media (radio, television, newspaper) or storefronts with huge traffic. If you build on existing strengths it can save lots of money.

When negotiating the roles of each partner in a marketing campaign, review their professional skills. One partner could have a crack public relations team while the other partner excels in customer relationship management. Take this opportunity to

learn from each other about best practices.

Each partner should share a power base where appropriate. Make a list of influencers who could support your collaboration through communication, endorsement or future partnership. Take professional networking to the next level by seeking national and global partners.

In my 15 years of producing the Women's Showcase in St. Cloud, I have met countless influencers and always have asked them for referrals to other business partners. One of our recent partners, Schwan's Home Food Service, committed to sponsoring the Women's Showcase Food Experience and was able to use our event to launch a new dessert. The product development specialists came onsite to distribute samples and were able to gather customer comments first-hand.

## Global focus

No matter the size of your business, technology is allowing collaboration on a global scale. A single collaborative e-mail campaign can put you in