

MAXIMIZING YOUR NAWBO MEMBERSHIP

By Dora Vilk-Shapiro, DMD, FAGD

You attend to NAWBO meetings as a guest. You fill out an application; pay your dues, and now what?

Many women join NAWBO, attend a few dinner meetings, expect to get business right away, and when they do not see immediate results, they do not renew their membership. But, this is not how life works. You can only get out of life what you put into it.

My first year as a NAWBO member I had one patient from NAWBO, Saulene Sutton from Chic Ideas. Now, maybe half of our membership sees me for their dental care. This happened because I chose to take all I could out of NAWBO **and I was willing to contribute and give back.**

NAWBO helps you increase your customer base by exposing your business to other women business owners who are the decision makers in their companies. It does this through the roster, website, ads in the newsletter, and through self-introductions during monthly networking and dinner meetings. Members can also be presenters at the mini-seminars to share information about their industry. New and longtime members can also host a new member reception and showcase their place of business. National and International meetings can increase your networking capacity from Ft. Lauderdale to the world!

NAWBO helps you learn about business. Seminars and lectures are available in a whole range of topics from motivational, to specific business topics such as, how to get publicity, media exposure for your business, or how to “brand name” yourself. You can attend a National and Regional conferences for short or full day programs on many business topics from nationally recognized speakers such as Suze Orman or Robin Fisher Roffer.

NAWBO helps you develop leadership skills. You can hone your leadership skills by chairing a committee or becoming a member of the executive board of directors. NAWBO will give you the tools for doing this through Leadership Training Seminars.

NAWBO of Florida is our political arm for influencing public policy on the state level. NAWBO can help you become more politically astute and learn how to lobby for women business owners, as well as, other issues that affect your business.

You can learn of various business opportunities from NAWBO like new government procurement contracts or publicity opportunities such as interviews by the Sun-Sentinel for upcoming articles. And of course, benefits like special programs and discounts for NAWBO women business owners through our national and local Corporate Partners. Not to mention the many NAWBO businesses that offer member to member discounts.

Through all of this, you can grow your company, improve yourself, and make your dreams come true.

But to reap, you have to sow. Choose to get the most value for your paid membership dues. It is so simple to do, and a wonderful return on investment. Begin by joining a committee. Then educate yourself about NAWBO. Consider attending a national conference. Is your time limited? That applies to us all. But to begin to build those necessary relationships and obtain the education you need to propel you to business and personal success **you must attend.** It will not come through osmosis from a NAWBO roster and will not come because you mailed your dues check.

Getting involved in NAWBO costs little, and the benefits are great. Like the NIKE ad says, “Just do it!” Your life will never be the same, and you, like me, will feel that NAWBO has exceeded your wildest expectations!