



**Business - Ensuring
Your Business is Strong
- Developing
Appropriate Networks
For Consulting**

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email office@drlindahancock.com

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As solo professionals, we often have problems and therefore need to know who and where to get help with them. It is important to develop a network of individuals who you can consult with for both personal and professional expertise.

FAMILY AND FRIENDS - I always advise my clients to let their family be their family and their friends be their friends. Expecting them to be your financial advisor, therapist or parenting resource can cause problems and actually hurt your relationship with them. They likely do not have the training or objectivity that you could obtain from a professional in the field - and you can't fire your mother-in-law. Families and friendships have different types of boundaries and styles. Be cautious when you are seeking help from these sources. They may give you bad advice or make suggestions that you are not prepared to follow or even try to solve the problem in a controlling manner. You can offer and receive support from family and friends but be very careful about what you share!

PROFESSIONAL HELP FOR PERSONAL ISSUES - You cannot be competent if you have untreated issues such as addictions or mental illness. I have a client who stated "Everyone needs a therapist" and this might be something for you to consider for yourself. Loss, hurt or relationship problems can interfere with you being able to live well and work competently. It is a good idea to be honest about your problems and then seek appropriate competent services to help you deal with them.

PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT - Over the years I have been able to build good relationships with individuals who work in psychology, social work and similar fields. These people have taught me so much about ways to improve my practice. They are also usually very willing consultants who I can access when needed. Your regulatory body can also provide information, educational opportunities or practice advisors for specific issues. Widen your circle to include other business people and professionals. We are all in this together and can always grow with the support and help that others provide. The professionals who work with similar clients understand better than anyone else as they have gone through similar experiences.

ORGANIZATIONS AND INTERNET SITES - When you feel that you are lacking knowledge, you can always phone the organization that deals with that topic. For example, my sister has Multiple Sclerosis and when she had a problem with itching skin we contacted the MS Society for advice. Within 24 hours she was called by an expert and was taking the appropriate medication to resolve the itching. Most organizations have websites which offer not only articles on common themes but also contact information for resources.

Begin developing support networks in the above areas and expand them over time. You will find that strong bonds of trust and relationship will help all of you to grow both personally and professionally.