

The Official Newsletter of [Top Hat Word & Index](http://www.TopHatWordandIndex.com)

Successful Strategic Partnerships, Part One

To my brain, it's a simple and sensible concept: "Let's help one another so we can be successful together."


I see this as a core underlining principle behind the success of the strategic partnership (SP). Either party entering into one without that, and things tend to collapse rather quickly...that is, if they ever get off the ground in the first place.

A SP strategy is a big component of an overall marketing plan if you're a solopreneur, but it amazes me how often it's taken for granted or overlooked altogether in the marketing strategy of other colleagues. In some cases it is not only overlooked as a consideration; in conversations I've had on the topic with others, the concept never even flies over their house of ideas.

Initiating SPs can appear as a stretch. They require an investment of time, effort, and trust...and through the throws of it all, there's never any guarantee any sort of payoff will take place. It does involve a leap of faith...and will only work, in my opinion, with another like-minded person who "gets it."

I like to think of an SP as something that can potentially spin out of a willingness or effort to interact and build relationships with other colleagues, which should be a core component of nurturing and furthering a small business anyway. For industries that bring on more isolated work settings, such as indexing and editing, that means taking advantage of not only belonging to industry organizations, but *actually attending the events*. For some folks, this is intimidating and counterintuitive, and it involves lots of work to crack that nut. However, for a solo tech writing business to thrive, it must be done. A fire can't begin without a spark.

In my experience, conferences and other industry gatherings—in some cases gatherings I started myself, such as peer review groups—have sparked situations leading to the beginning of SPs. If you take action and create opportunities to meet other colleagues in your industry, and if you're open to conversations and advice from other solopreneurs outside of your industry (whom may have contacts on the other end), your persistence starts to build a reliable business reputation...and persistence over time feeds the perception of reliability, which we are anyway, right?

Reliability, in turn, builds trust...and assuming you can hold a conversation and follow a few guidelines, the components are in place to lead to bigger things. *To be continued...* 

A Stellar Media Kit Only Goes So Far

When putting oneself in front of publishers and other potential clients, I see it as a multi-pronged approach. There are many ways to contact and maintain correspondence with potential clients; via email, standard mail, over the phone, and in-person.


Certainly the media kit serves as one of the main staples of a technical writer's marketing approach. In my case, I have a total of two marketing kits...one specifically for indexing (for publishers, packagers, and authors), and a second that covers all the services I offer (intended for industries outside of publishing).

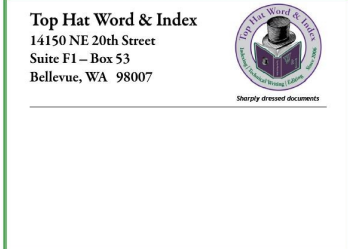
Up to this point, I have designed all the components of media kits in-house...the business cards, brochures, flyers, postcards, mailing labels (see above), and other goodies that I like to include in a kit. All those components follow my work on the design of the company logo from last year, and the content that's included in the kits. Everything has taken place in-house.

You can have a stellar logo and marketing materials, but putting the media kit into play is another story altogether. Depending on the sort of initial contact I see myself having with a publisher, manager, or potential client, I try to devise a strategy for putting myself in front of them on a consistent basis through the use of various methods of contact. Moreover, tracking your contact and activity is just as important as the contact itself.

One method of contact, however, stands above everything else. Out of all the marketing tools in the toolbox, I've always found the best asset to be face-to-face interaction. There's no question about it. Book fairs and other similar marketing events serve as prime opportunities; when you can chat with a publisher directly, it is the best opportunity to shine. In addition, at the end of the day, people prefer to do business with someone they know and are building a personal relationship with.

This brings me to the overarching idea at work here. At the end of the day, I see the marketing efforts for Top Hat Word & Index arriving at one simple goal: fostering relationships. By focusing on the *person* behind the business—with the idea of having a normal conversation—I find the rest usually falls into place.

This approach also helps with expectations. A job can't be expected to come out of the first meeting with a potential client. This is a marathon, not the 50-yard dash. 



To see additional issues of the newsletter, visit [Dexter's Corner](http://Dexter'sCorner.com) to find tidbits on each edition—and then simply click to read!


Visit the [Top Hat Word & Index website](http://www.TopHatWordandIndex.com) or contact us at info@TopHatWordandIndex.com with any questions or inquiries.


Expect to see Dexter around town!



The new marketing efforts at the company this fall have brought on a massive slew of printing materials.

On a select few of these materials, Dexter is making an appearance. He'll have a place in the media kits, and he may even appear in different forms in the mailboxes of clients!

Either way, he's sure to make an impact and spice things up a bit...or at least get your attention, which is what he's best at! 

You can find out more [about](http://www.TopHatWordandIndex.com) Top Hat Word & Index by visiting the website, where you can also see samples for [indexing](#), [technical writing](#), and [editing](#). In addition, check out client comments at the [testimonials](#) page! 

A Father and a Mentor



For over a quarter century, my folks ran their own manufacturer's rep business. It was run out of the basement of the house I grew up in through a majority of its fruitful life.

Their example and success serves as a model for Top Hat Word & Index.

Leland A. Sweum, my dear father, passed away this last August. What he meant to me, and how he impacted me in my personal life—as well as my professional life—is immeasurable.

You can read more about Dad and the far-reaching impact he had at [this post in The Commuter](#). 