

“ What is often missing in business is just a good old idea. ”

## Provoking Thought

Melody D. Burns  
Idea Practitioner, LLC

### Success Magazine: Why have you chosen the term “idea practitioner” to describe your work?

Melody Burns: What is often missing in business is just a good old idea. Since I practice ideas to accomplish a goal, idea practitioner was the ideal name for my business. I didn't want to be just another marketing or public relations person—I'm more than that. I'm an idea practitioner who practices her own ideas.

### SM: What services do you offer?

MB: I have a mixed bag of services. I firmly believe in attraction marketing, telling the right story and making connections. So I help businesses, people and organizations define what they do, determine their difference from the competition, identify their ideal client, and chart a course of action to increase their bottom line. I generate ideas to solve problems and then connect people to make the solutions happen. I work with strategic partners whom I trust and recommend. I also do workshops on networking, defining your difference, and idea storming.

### SM: Why is networking so important in business?

MB: Networking is the new form of advertising. Years ago it was all about placing an ad and waiting for the customer or client to come to you. Networking has changed that. Now you meet people who, if they know how to network, become partners in your business. They essentially become your advertising vehicle. It is all about referrals—the more people who know and trust you, the more likely they will refer you. The important part of that equation is, you have to return the referral! You need to learn about your “new partner” so you can refer business to him or her. Advertising as in the past is still a valuable tool, but networking adds

a more personal touch to your advertising toolbox. If you are not sure how to network, come to one of my workshops!

### SM: Why are your services crucial to clients during this difficult economy?

MB: I look at this time as a correction period. If your business was struggling and finding every excuse to not network, not advertise, not build relationships, not be involved in your community, then you are most likely on the downhill slope, if not right off the trail. As a business owner, you have to work “on” your business and not “in” your business...difficult for many small businesses to do, often because of staffing and financial constraints. Now is the time to look at new options, build strategic partnerships, find the ideal client and stop wasting your effort on someone who is never going to be your client or customer. Because I offer an idea to solve the problem, I can help businesses reach their goals a little quicker and with a lot more fun!



**MELODY BURNS**  
Idea Practitioner

### SM: You support and contribute to many local organizations. Why is this important to you?

MB: It is so important to give and be involved. I am one of twelve children, so growing up we always had our own “organization.” My parents were (and still are even in their late 70's and 80's) very involved in our community and instilled that sense in each of us. We were taught that if we had two chocolate hostess cupcakes with the swirl on top, you gave one and a half away to someone who didn't have a snack. Not that it was easy to give it away, but it was something you were expected to do. Giving is much better than taking. Seeing someone enjoying what was nothing special to you is well worth the gift. Years later, I realized I should have given all the cupcake away since the half landed on my hips and thighs!

### SM: Tell me about your radio program.

MB: I'm excited about the new show. “Women IN” will air on TALK 1300 AM, weekly on Friday from 11:05 – 11:55 am. The show is all about women in the capital district—in business, technology, medicine, science, religion, arts, philanthropy, sports, parenting, life in general. It is not just for women, but for anyone who is interested in what women are doing, thinking about, looking for, and planning for the future. Each week I'll interview women from the Capital Region and beyond on issues important to each of us. We'll talk about women in the news and discover what women are saying about our area. I'm offering shares in the show for a fee, which has a few benefits for the share holder.

### SM: What is the most rewarding aspect of what you do?

MB: Making the connection from one person to another and watching them build a strategic partnership that is equally successful for both of them. I like to watch the energy that is created. People are just remembering how important other people are to their own success. How does that saying go? “No one man can move a mountain, a few great women can!” (OK, so I changed it a little. But, you get the point.)