

Summerville networking group helps female entrepreneurs find kinship, inspiration, and connections.

By: Jessica O'Connor

© 2023 Southern Business Digest

Being an entrepreneur can be a lonely role at times-especially for women. It can be tough to find a “tribe” of like-minded individuals who understand the highs and lows associated with running a business, but Jennifer Robinson is dedicated to making doing so a bit easier for Summerville businesswomen.

A life coach who specializes in helping busy women regain control of their stress levels through her own business, Peaceful Living Wellness, Jennifer understands the struggles female entrepreneurs face. In 2019, she partnered with a fellow businesswoman to create a networking group especially for ladies like themselves, but the pandemic put a stop to their events in 2020. Around March of 2021, Jennifer found herself missing those interactions and created Summerville Women in Business as a result.

“I needed to get out of the house,” she recalled. “I work out of my house, and networking is so important. I really just needed to be around other women entrepreneurs, so I decided to get this thing started again.”

The group’s monthly meetings combine education, networking, and fun for the women who attend. Generally the evening begins with time for formal networking before moving into more casual social networking over dinner. Jennifer also plans a different game for each month’s event with a fun twist-the winner then gives an educational presentation of her choosing at the next meeting.

Jennifer currently caps the number of attendees at 15 to encourage more intimate, meaningful conversation and networking, although she hopes she will be able to increase this number to 20 upon finding a larger venue. Unlike networking groups such as BNI, however, Summerville Women in Business doesn’t limit attendees to a single representative for each type of business.

“Collaboration is so much more important than competition,” she said. “We’re women-we do things differently. We don’t have to be in a scarcity mindset. We can be in an abundance mindset, because there’s a big, amazing world out there. There will be clients for all of us.”

The group’s networking events have shown to be an excellent resource for business women in the Summerville area. Jennifer noted that a number of attendees have continued building relationships outside of the monthly meetings, and they often refer those they’re making connections with to people in their own circle who may benefit from what those new connections offer.

If you're interested in organizing your own group like Summerville Women in Business, Jennifer had some sage advice to offer. First, don't hesitate to use Facebook to create a space for women who may be interested in attending your events. A dedicated Facebook group can serve as a starting point for those who have an interest in connecting with other female entrepreneurs in your area, and provides a "safe space" to begin networking, spark friendships, offer support, and share the unique knowledge that every member brings to the table. These groups are also a great place to post your event dates and times, along with sign-up information. Eventbrite is another tool that makes creating sign-up portals for events quick and easy, and the landing page can then be shared to your Facebook group/event listing.

Second, consider having your meetings at a restaurant or providing food of some sort. Most importantly, however, ensure that you're creating a welcoming environment. "Just be really open," Jennifer said in conclusion. "That is what has made this so successful. Just be really open and inviting, and people will come."

Summerville Women in Business meetings are held on the first Monday of every month. As previously mentioned, the events are currently limited to 15 attendees, and the link to sign up can be found within the Facebook group at <https://www.Facebook.com/groups/swinbnetworking>. There is a seat-saver fee of \$20 to hold your spot, but the fee is refunded if you show up as promised.

For more information on Jennifer Robinson and Peaceful Living Wellness, visit www.peacefullivingwellness.com or email jennifer@peacefullivingwellness.com.