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## Life Is A Highway: A Road Map To Increased Sales By Eric Ostrow, CPCE, President, Foundation of NACE

The sales process is not unlike a complicated highway system. You have to make fast-paced decisions, focus on getting where you want to go, and avoiding messy accidents. At Experience! 2008 in Philadelphia, I will present my tried and true

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## Q&A With Linyette Richardson-Hall, of "Whose Wedding Is It Anyway?"



### How often do you appear on Whose Wedding Is it Anyway?

According to my fans - not enough!! :) I have been with the show since it's second season on Style Network - we are now in production for the EIGHTH season of the show.

### Has it helped your business? In what ways?

The show has had a tremendous impact on my business - in so many ways. Prior to being cast for the show, I had a respectable amount of weddings and clients - and was pleased with the revenue I was generating. After my various episodes aired, the request for my company (Premiere Event Management) and our services has literally blown through the roof!! I cannot begin to measure the marketing and advertising exposure I have received as a result of being a part of the show...the numbers are simply incalculable.

I've also been able to expand my staff and my internship program - which are excellent, healthy signs that my company is thriving. We receive many requests to manage events outside of the greater Baltimore area and if the situations are right..we'll take it on!!!

### How did it happen? Was it something you were pursuing?

Although my life's perspective has always been that everything happens for a reason - this was a fluke. I was introduced to the show and it's cadre of producers by a fellow colleague of mine in Chicago (I am a true believer in the power of NETWORKING!) - seems that WWIA? was looking for consultants to fill the roster and they wanted folks who had some experience in media and the wedding industry under their belts.

My colleague sent me a fax saying "this sounds like something right up your alley - give them a call" and provided me with the producer's contact information. I gave them a call, had a brief phone interview, they asked for a bio, headshot and some video of me in "action"...I sent it off to New York. I received a call a few days later saying that while they LOVED what was on paper - for budgetary reasons, they were going to stick with

planners in NYC and L.A., but that they would keep my info on file.

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Fast forward about 2 weeks - and I get another phone call from the producers. The network brass had taken a look at my information and wanted to do a "screen test" with me - they sent a cameraperson down to Baltimore, we shot on location at the property of fellow NACE member, Julie Brown-Edwards (who was at the Inner Harbor Marriot - and who graciously allowed me to come in and "play TV"), I answered a few probing questions...and it was a wrap. The screen test was on a Wednesday - I got a phone call on that Friday saying that a spot in the cast was mine, if I wanted it. The rest, as they say....is history!!!!

I've been doing television for a good part of my 16 years in the industry

-I find it to be a compelling medium to promote what you do and show off the knowledge you've acquired. It's been a wonderful thing for me - and I have no plans of slowing it down at all!!!

### What advice do you have for people who want to market themselves by participating on these types of shows -- how do they "get in?"

I have to go back to my habit of good "networking" - it's not necessarily what you know - but who you know. That's how this opportunity came up for me, and honestly - it's how many television appearances can happen for others.

The other thing to understand is that you have to be on top of your game - whatever your field of expertise might be. You have to be a serious expert and able to literally fire off sound bites and tiny pieces of random knowledge at a moment's notice. I would strongly suggest that if you want to go this route - get your headshots done (professionally), consult with an image stylist to make sure your outer look is on point (this is television, remember), craft an excellent bio, put together a great B-roll tape of you doing what you do best and stay on top of what's happening in the world of television. Many of the reality shows cast out very large nets for new on-camera talent, and it can be as simple as going to the various websites of the productions companies OR the shows themselves to see what they are looking for.

Word of caution - DON'T apply for what you are not able to do. That is a waste of your time and definitely that of the networks and it will not bode well for you in the future, should you decide to apply for something else. Casting directors have incredible memories.....

### 5. How has being on the show changed for you, personally -- are you recognized?

Oh my goodness - I can't even do regular grocery shopping, I kid you not!!

I had this strange notion that no one watched this show - honestly, I had never seen it, even when I was being cast. My theory that it was a small cable show...limited audience. WRONG!! "Whose Wedding Is It Anyway?" is Style Network's number one rated show with a viewing audience that encompasses the United States, the Caribbean and Europe - with that kind of viewing power, I get recognized everywhere - from Heathrow Airport in London, to a resort in Turks & Caicos (while on a family vacation), to the Target here at home.

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methods for successful sales.

I will present coaching strategies on answering the phone, developing a script and settling on three main bullet points, topics you wish to get across.

And we will go over prospecting, which is the process of establishing connections with people who can use your product, or who can refer you to those who can. Prospecting is a systematic method of determining who you are going to connect with and how you are going to do it.

We will also review many other tricks of the trade I have learned in more than 20 years of sales in the catering world. Please join me in Philadelphia to hear my presentation, and discuss strategies that you have learned as well.

If there is one thing I have learned in sales, it is that one can always learn more!