

COLLABORATION PREP SHEET

Serendipity is a wonderful thing, but waiting around for something special to happen is passivity. If you want to collaborate with others and experience bigger wins, you have to actively look for and opportunities and most importantly, be ready when those opportunities arise. Before you even open LinkedIn one more time, or go to an industry conference or attend that networking event, spend the time preparing to collaborate. It will make all the difference in the quality of conversation.

“A ship in harbor is safe – but that is not what ships are built for.”

- John A. Shedd



Whom do I serve?

This is a micro version of work marketers often do for ideal client/buyer personas. For collaboration ideas, you can keep it simple, by either referring to people by title or a simple description. *For a deeper dive into the persona development, read our guide, “The Perfect Persona.”*¹

What are recurring questions or themes my most ideal client is struggling with?

Thinking deeper about your audience and putting yourself in their shoes is the first mindset shift in how you show up. Start by asking questions like, “What is keeping them up at night? What is motivating them to get up in the morning? Questions like this tap into more of who they are as a person and help you develop empathy for the challenges they are facing. *For a template to help you craft a full persona download our guide, “The Ideal Client Persona Template”*²

¹<https://info.littlebirdmarketing.com/the-perfect-persona>

²<https://info.littlebirdmarketing.com/ideal-client-personas>

How do I uniquely solve problems?

If you were locked in a room with only one or two other people, what could you not NOT do? Another way to figure this out is to ask someone who knows you. Often we don't see ourselves clearly or appreciate the small ways we are gifted that contribute positively to overcome obstacles or introduce perspective-shifting insights.

What are some of my best and brightest thoughts that have made a difference in the past?

If you're looking to collaborate for something in your career don't limit yourself to past work projects. Consider how you made a difference for a PTA project. Did you find a solution to a challenging family problem? These solutions or approaches that may be non-traditional in a work environment just might be the answer. This is the cross-pollination of ideas I am referring to in the book that is rewarded in the future of work.

How can I build rapport and get known for what I do?

By combining an knowledge, understanding or at least an appreciation for what your audience is troubled with, you can think of some helpful tips, tricks or mindset shifts to share. For example, your ideal client might be extremely stressed and overloaded with work. Sharing a simple time-saving tip you can build rapport. You can offer this to them as it applies to their life, but also share how it has helped you excel in your line of work.

How do I couch the sharing of my thought leadership and expertise?

When we're thinking about inviting collaboration, thought leadership and expert tips should be reviewed for tone of voice. While you might be justified with a rant about something in your industry, that approach will not attract others who are interested in understanding and solving the issue and those who get embroiled in controversy rarely make great collaborators. How would you describe the tone of your last opinion-based articles or conversations?

How can I be seen as a problem solver?

When people ask you what you do for a living consider explaining what you do only in terms of the problems you solve. This immediately takes the focus off of you and shows empathy for those you serve. It is also important to have some stories ready about HOW you've done this in the past. Jot down a few examples to you are not scrambling next time someone asks!

How can I speak the same language the customer uses in their buyer's journey and let go of industry jargon to explain things?

Write down a list of jargon everyone in your industry uses. You'll find often these phrases are over used or improperly used anyway and provide no real clarity in the conversation. Write every tired phrase down that you want to avoid. Don't forget the acronyms because even when people don't know what they mean, they will not ask. Using jargon walls you off from your audience and does little to create a collaborative spirit in connecting.