

Collaborating within the Family
“Don’t you let that deal go down”
By Jill Matlow, Wall Street Dead aHead Family Member



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We're all familiar with the saying "You can pick your friends but you can't pick your family". However, Deborah Solomon, founder of Wall Street Dead aHead Networking Events® (WSDaH), has found a loophole. In establishing her networking group, Deb has come as close to selecting her "Family" as she can.

The WSDaH members, known affectionately as "Family Members" seem to transcend the love and caring you would find in a typical nuclear family and Deb makes sure to nurture these traits. The chemistry, camaraderie and success of the Family is of utmost importance to Deb, which is evident in her quote from the *Fortune Magazine* article "The Grateful Dead as Business Pioneers" dated March 23, 2016:

“The key to the group’s success, explains Solomon, is that its members — or “family members,” as they’re called — espouse the band’s culture of community and kindness through their work. “Effective business and networking is all about being kind and connecting on a deeper level,” says Solomon. “People try to help other people with the family, even if there’s nothing in it for themselves.”

This tight-knit group of Family Members (a worldwide group at that!) encompasses all walks of life and professions. While a mutual love of the Grateful Dead is at the core of all members, each Family member also embodies the sentiment which The Grateful Dead and now Deborah Solomon have been professing to the masses for decades: “Be kind”.

So it would make sense that with an environment breeding kindness and trust, Family Members can easily look to one another for professional opportunities. After all, trust is the backbone from which most business opportunities originate and networking is the backbone of WSDaH.

I can speak from experience that this type of environment is not commonplace amongst other networking groups, where there seems to be an unavoidable awkwardness. However, at every WSDaH event I’ve attended, the networking and conversations unfold organically between the Family Members. As I learned from my first WSDaH event in 2015, there is a natural camaraderie and flow amongst the attendees, the perfect segue for future business relationships.

I was curious to see how this magic unfolded and reached out to Family Members “*who once told me you’ve got to play your hand*”. Here’s what they had to say:

“I met Jon Egan at the WSDaH annual event in 2017 where we quickly hit it off and began our business relationship. Jon works at Gallagher Insurance in Risk Management & Consulting and I’m the Regional Managing Partner - Northeast at CohnReznick LLP, a national advisory, assurance and tax firm. Both our firms work across multiple industries and after a productive lunch, we decided to put an event together on ‘What’s Now and Next for M&A’. The event was held at the Yale Club and was a success with over 100 attendees coming from different areas of the M&A world. The event touched on important issues and we had some strong speakers. Working together was easy and we had a great time doing it. As Jon explained: ‘Once you really connect with someone through WSDaH you know you have a trusted partner that you can rely on.’”

[Alan Wolfson](#), Regional Managing Partner-Northeast, CohnReznick LLP
[Jon Egan](#), Vice President, Gallagher Insurance

“In addition to my assistant responsibilities at WSDaH, I do marketing work for the start-up Picasso Labs. When our office lease was ending, my boss tasked me with finding the next space. I quickly accepted, and was immediately faced with the challenges defining Manhattan real estate. Luckily, due to my insider WSDaH knowledge, I was made aware of Roy Abraham’s new job at WeWork Space Services. While I didn’t yet know the role he would play in my search, I reached out to get his professional advice. Upon meeting him, I discovered his specialty is exactly aligned with what I was looking for – private office space leasing. The synchronicity was obvious and a seamless business relationship followed as Roy signed on to help me that very day. He was conscientious of the speedy timeline my company was requesting and made room in his schedule to provide his assistance. Together, we scoured office spaces and found a perfect spot for my team a short while later. Roy was completely professional and generous in helping a fellow Family member and I felt so grateful to have such a rich pool of resources at my fingertips thanks to WSDaH. I can easily say that this was the most efficient business deal I have ever experienced!”

[Rebecca Gitomer](#), Executive Assistant, Wall Street Dead aHead Networking Events®

[Roy Abraham](#), Managing Consultant, WeWork Space Services

“I attended my first WSDaH event in 2014 and had the pleasure of meeting Andy Bernstein of HeadCount.org when we were both riding the same elevator. We laughed and shared stories of music and business. Over the next few months, Andy and I remained in contact and I shared my newest editions to my artistic portfolio with him. Come Spring of 2015, Andy reached out inviting me to illustrate one of four commemorative postcards to be distributed to fans on Participation Row during the 2015 Fare Thee Well shows in Chicago. As Andy said: ‘Una was one of the first people I thought to call for this project as she was skilled in the Grateful Dead aesthetic’. Thank you to Wall Street Dead aHead Networking Events® for the opportunity to make these meaningful connections. This is what it is all about. We come to WSDaH events because we know that business is better when we are working with fellow lovers of the finest music”.

[Una Toibin-Hamilton](#) - President/Owner, Art Illustration & Graphic Design

[Andy Bernstein](#) - Executive Director, HeadCount.org

“Since it costs a lot to win, and even more to lose”, what steps are you taking to close the deal? Do you feel comfortable making the first move? I think it’s time to step out of your comfort zone like some of the other WSDaH Family Members have. Their success stories “goes to show, you don’t ever know...”

References:

Lindzon, Jared. “The Grateful Dead as Business Pioneers” *Fortune Magazine* March 23, 2016.