

By Deborah Burstyn

# Mastermind & Mentorship Magic for Growing a Business

Champagne glasses raised, the group of businesswomen toasted themselves, their successes and their mentor, Ellen Looyen. Looyen, a Walnut Creek-based branding, marketing and sales expert had just led the group of nine entrepreneurial women through a comprehensive, ten-week *Marketing Mentorship Circle*. This was their graduation day, a day of celebrating but also a day of reckoning in which they put together all they've learned to stage a final, polished sales presentation before the group.

"Many women are brilliant at what they do, but most lack confidence (the #1 reason people buy) promoting themselves effectively because they feel uncomfortable about tooting their own horn," explained Looyen, who for the last 20 years has helped all types of businesses (from major corporations to start-ups and non-profits) articulate their uniqueness and value. "It's challenging for businesswomen to create a unique and memorable brand identity and a polished sales presentation that connect emotionally with their market—a key to successful branding. That's a big part of what we do in my quarterly *Marketing Mentorship Circles*."

In guiding professional women on how to re-focus and power up their businesses, Looyen helps each participant create a strong marketing presentation that includes creating a professional flyer and a charismatic sales presentation with compelling sound bytes and visuals. Additionally, she also steers the group into becoming their own powerful "Mentorship Circle and Mastermind Group" encouraging participants to provide each other with

candid feedback, encouragement and support in between the weekly meetings.

Laurie Zerga, a culinary education consultant for schools, corporations and non-profit groups, [www.lauriesculinarycamp.com](http://www.lauriesculinarycamp.com), enrolled in Ellen's *Marketing Mentorship Circle* because she wanted to ramp up her Alameda-based business from part-time to full-time.

"I've really enjoyed working with such an amazing group of women," she added, "Especially with a master facilitator and branding expert like Ellen Looyen."

"To get a mastermind approach around each business as we developed our unique brand has been beyond expectation! I received a lot of confirmation about what I'm doing, positive feedback and ideas about where I'm going with my business; and I've really learned to articulate my value with greater confidence and charisma."

Cathy Curtis, an Oakland-based Financial Planner, who works primarily with women and couples, joined the group to create a unique brand identity and to enhance her website: [www.curtisfinancialplanning.com](http://www.curtisfinancialplanning.com), added,

"I got lots of ideas from Ellen and the other women in the group about how to brand myself (that I actually used when re-writing my website—and it's fabulous). Ellen's program taught me how to communicate my value and what I do in a more charismatic way. She helped me improve my

impact and project my personality; and I'm now attracting more business than ever before."

Tamara Steele, an attorney based in San Leandro, offers career coaching to other attorneys and executives, [www.newheightscompany.com](http://www.newheightscompany.com) said,

"Internally many women business owners may not realize how great they are and that's where Ellen helps. You can have a wonderful website, a beautiful brochure and catchy sound bytes but unless you believe in yourself, it won't happen," Steele observed.

"Ellen really wants you to connect with what makes you sizzle, what makes you unique and what you say you're all about," Steele said. "That was a very powerful process to take us all through."

"Brand-building," according to Looyen, "takes the sting out of self-promotion and is really about consciously creating the perceptions you want others to have of both you and your business. And by creating your own Mastermind circle with some of your closest associates, you can become both mentor and marketing focus group, providing each other with candid feedback, practical advice and on-going emotional support...the ingredients so necessary for sustaining business success."

From a leading gynecologist, transitioning her private Ob-Gyn practice, to re-brand herself as a menopause expert and Keynote Speaker, to a former Gap corporate

## Ellen Looyen

Ellen Looyen, Branding & Marketing Guru in business since 1988, is endorsed by the best-selling "Guerrilla Marketing" author, Jay Levinson. Each season, Ellen mentors ten businesswomen wanting to grow their businesses. Her Fall Mentorship program begins, September 24th in Walnut Creek. To enroll or to learn more about her services and see samples of her work, visit: [www.ellen4marketing.com](http://www.ellen4marketing.com) or call: 925.944.1403.

executive, ramping up her life coaching practice, all the participants agreed that being led by a powerful woman like Ellen was an incredible experience. In addition to sharing her branding, marketing and sales expertise, Ellen was rooting for each woman to become her best.

"By using a classic Mastermind approach," Looyen added, "each woman achieved much more than they could have done alone. The Mastermind concept, developed in the early 1900's, states that when two or more gather in the spirit of synergy and support to work towards a specific goal, they actually magnify each others' creativity, commitment and results."

Graduates of the Spring 2007 Marketing Mentorship Circle (left to right)  
Front row: (Leader) Ellen Looyen, Dr. Sondra Altman, Jennifer Lee, Tamara Steele

Back row:  
Cheryl Krier,  
Tambra Harck,  
Cathy Curtis,  
Laurie Zerga,  
Natasha Jefferson

