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Network and Nibble: It's not Where You are Going, It's Where You are Connected

By Chrystal R. Mincey

"Hello and welcome to Network and Nibble. I am Jaineen Brown", is just what you might hear at a trendy new hot spot on the first Wednesday of each month from 5:30 PM to 9:30 PM. Network and Nibble is the brainchild of Jaineen Brown, owner of Crossroads Employment Service.

Network and Nibble was birthed from Brown wanting to introduce this set of friends with that set of friends who. "Imagine proposal writers, engineers with solutions, and entrepreneurs in government contract 8a companies wanting to meet with past performers. These are my friends and they wanted to see me in a more social setting, "states Brown, who as owner of Crossroads Employment Services, recently left her job at NASA as a security Analyst to "take it up a notch".

Network and Nibble started at Crème Café and Lounge on U Street. Brown started the Network and Nibble there because it was a small business that served great food. She felt it was a great way to introduce the food and the chef to about 50 people.

At Network and Nibble, people introduce themselves and pass out business cards. "Likeminded people are here, "states Brown. The crowd does not mind Brown changing the energy of the room. If she feels that you have been sitting and talking with the same person or persons a bit too long, she urges you to change the energy, mingle with other people. And of course everyone becomes accustomed to the probing questions: 'What do you do? What brings you here? How did you find out about Network and Nibble? Who are you and what are you looking to gain?'

Since the first Network and Nibble, Brown states she has seen circles expanded business developed. Business has also expanded for Crossroads, Network and Nibbles sponsor. Network and Nibble helps Brown share resumes with her networks. Although Crossroads seeks IT skilled professionals with three to five years of experience, if Brown can help someone with other skills she does, by sharing that information with others, "If I want to help someone regardless if I get paid or not."

Brown produces an employment newsletter each week and relies on social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter, which has helped Crossroads and Network and Nibble pick up more business in the past eight months. Brown relies on the social media and word of mouth.

Because Brown believes in expanding the circle, she uses her connections across the pond and will hold the second international Network and Nibble in London, July 22, 2010. “I want to get into more international recruiting. Because the 2012 Olympics will be across the pond, now is a good time so start expanding the circle. Last year’s event yield twenty-five participants.

April 1 is the one-year anniversary of Network and Nibble. Brown hopes to see more circles expanded and more businesses developed with Network and Nibble. She would love to meet sorority and fraternity members. “I rely on candidates to make my network their network, “Brown states. “I love when people come and bring other people, or bring their smiles and business cards.

You can do just that on April 7 from 5:30 PM -9:30 PM at the City Club located on 555 13 Street, NW Washington, and DC. There will be a $10 cover charge for this month’s event but the information you will gain is priceless. All attendees will receive a one-week pass to the City Club of Washington.