

## Collaboration's Greatest Enemy

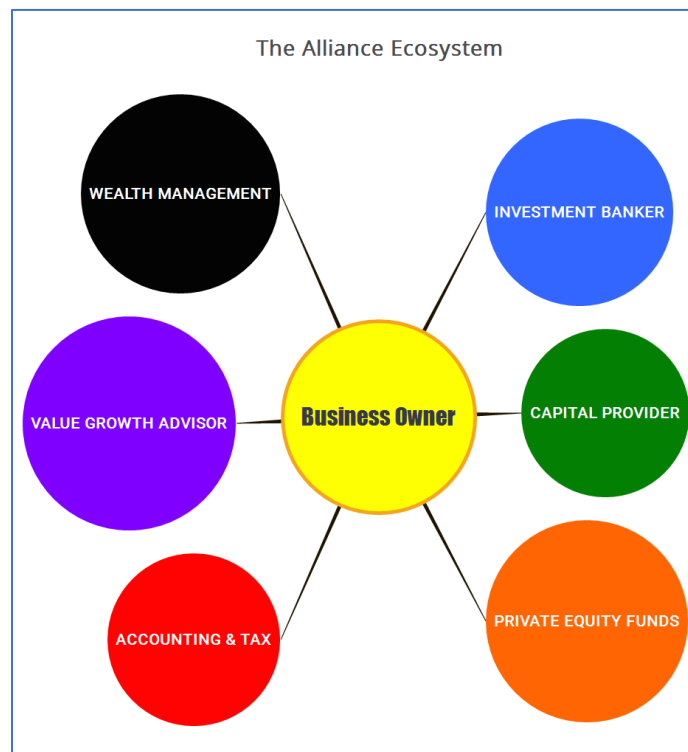
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We all face a common enemy – ignorance. It impacts our lives daily in the work we do, the money we earn, and the communities we live in.

In the AM&AA community, this formidable enemy comes from many sources. Perhaps it springs from a lack of appreciation in the value that another part of the ecosystem brings to the table. Maybe it's driven by fear of the competition or an overabundance of confidence in one's capabilities. It could also be fed by the fact that we are all very busy professionals, working hard to close deals, finish projects, successfully run our companies and have a semblance of the good life.

The most profound disconnect in the Alliance ecosystem is the bond between the business owner and the members of AM&AA. In fact, the disconnect is so significant that many don't think of the business owner as being part of the ecosystem in the first place. But without him or her, what else do the rest of us have?



Certainly, advisors in the ecosystem have relationships with owners and referral relationships exist between advisors. We attempt to connect business owners with those referral sources as the needs arise. Yet ignorance is still pervasive. For example:

- Do business owners understand which role each of the advisory circles play?
- Is it clear to us as advisors, and more importantly to business owners, where our talents and responsibilities may overlap or must stay distinct?
- Do we appreciate where we complement one another and can work together to move deals to close faster and more lucratively?
- How many business owners (and advisors) understand that bringing the diverse group of advisors all to the table, at the same time, may be more efficient, effective and lucrative for them?
- Do business owners understand how important it is to build advisory relationships with all elements of the ecosystem? Do they see the value of the relationships throughout the life of their company rather than just when they want, or are forced to sell?

We can rid our ecosystem of this ignorance. In fact, as members of the Alliance, we have an obligation to do whatever we can to do so. Educating of our communities' business owners and leaders will always be the foundation upon which we stand. Simultaneously, we must continue to learn more about each other, take the risk and try new approaches to collaboration, and expand our horizons.

In a recent Alliance leadership call, we explored the launch of additional educational opportunities. The Mid-Market Alliance platform is an excellent resource for delivering and finding content for thought leadership. There are discussions of adding Alliance sponsored webinars in the future. Plans are already underway for additional education and collaboration at the Summer conference in Chicago. Get involved and contribute to the conversation between your Alliance ecosystem colleagues. Connect, collaborate and educate. Working together, this ignorance may fade.