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Biz school tricks can help you find mate

TRISH CRAWFORD
LIFE WRITER

Goodbye romance, hello hostile takeover.

Marriage-minded females are being urged to forget Cupid and use the tricks of Wall Street to find them a mate in the latest "how to snag a man" book — a best-selling guide to marriage by biz school graduate Rachel Greenwald.

In a field awash with books, Web sites, advice columns and dating services, the latest trend is to apply the rules of business to the quest for a mate.

Greenwald, an M.B.A. from the Harvard Business School, outlines classic marketing techniques women can use, in *Find A Husband After 35 Using What I Learned At Harvard Business School*. (Web site: findahusbandafter35.com)

She lists 15 steps in the manhunt that guarantee success in less than two years. The married-with-kids Greenwald talks about searching for a mate as an organized campaign involving friends, family, co-workers and casting the widest net possible to snare prospects.

The Denver resident suggests throwing "event" parties filled with people who know lots of people so they, in turn, can introduce you to their friends. While some of the tips are obvious, such as preparing yourself to look your best when you go on the market, the world of marketing can offer women a few new sly tricks.

Greenwald suggests women give themselves a "brand," a set of descriptions that instantly send out messages about who they are. They must be accurate and the woman should ask friends and mentors for advice. They also will use the "brand" description when telling potential dates about a woman, such as, "redhead, adventurous, great chef."

Rachel Bandura, a 32-year-old newlywed, agrees branding is a great idea for finding a mate.

A marketing specialist with Toronto's Delvinia Interactive, Bandura notes, "Branding is all about how you dress the product. People need to be attracted to the product, to feel its appeal and want to look inside."

Branding allows people to highlight certain attributes, says Bandura, who used to be marketing chief for Pepsi in Russia. She reiterates Greenwald's point that there must be truth in advertising and says she has sometimes been uncomfortable setting up single friends who want to be referred to as "slim" when they would be more accurately called "Rubenesque."

Bandura got married this past August without having to resort to mass marketing: She met her husband a year and a half ago at an IT (information technology) program.

Although she was in a relationship at the time and not hunting, Bandura says she was

dressed nicely for the first day of school and had just had her hair done when they met. Her packaging was in fine shape.

After her other relationship ended, the couple started dating and were living together within three months and married the next year. Kindly, they arranged for all their single friends to sit near each other at the reception in the hopes of sparking some chemistry. She doesn't fault women who launch all-out campaigns to get husbands.

"I think if they have a mission to marry, they should go down that path. I can identify with that."

Karen Fraser, who runs Women Like Me, a company that plans events and networking activities for professional women in Toronto, lauds the new approach in Greenwald's book.

"I like it. I think it's very practical. For many people, the traditional methods aren't working."

Fraser, 56 and in an 18-year relationship, says women make the mistake of going hunting in places where there are bunches of men, such as a ski hill. But, unless the woman is an avid skier, the relationship will be doomed come winter. Fraser says women are better off going to activities and events they enjoy, such as auctions, and meeting people with common interests.

"Cast a wide net, keep it general so you have more choice and don't box yourself in," says Fraser, reiterating Greenwald's golden rule.

Society has changed greatly with women working, travelling and having great careers but the downside of all this for the marriage-minded is that "there's no time" to find a mate, says Fraser. And people aren't always well connected to their communities or living near their families where people might naturally "fix up" a single person, she adds.

Gloria MacDonald, 46, owner of Toronto's Perfect Partners (perfectpartners.ca) uses executive search techniques to match people up. The headhunter does all the legwork for prices ranging from \$200 to \$2,000, depending on the details of the search.

In most dating agencies, women far outnumber the men, she says, and the agency relies on matching those who are already signed up. MacDonald, however, goes out into the community to find the men, and women, who meet her client's criteria. When a corporation seeks a new president, it doesn't just look at its inside workforce, she points out.

MacDonald, who worked in consumer affairs and marketing for Telemedia and AOL, puts ads in the paper, cold calls people who look interesting, passes out her card at networking sessions for business executives and asks all she meets if they know someone interesting who is looking for a relationship. Her niche market is women over 40.

She devised her company after her marriage of 17 years broke up and she tried a dating service and came away thinking she could do better.

"I literally go out and proactively look for men and women."

She says she's not a dating service; the people who come to her want relationships.

MacDonald herself is not in a relationship because "I have a very clear line. I cannot date clients or prospects." Right now, nearly every man she meets fits into those categories. Writing books about relationships has become a boom industry, with many jostling for space on bookshelves.

Lisa Daily, 35, author of *Stop Getting Dumped: All You Need To Know To Make Men Fall Madly In Love With You And Marry*, is married with a second child on the way and

has sold more than 35,000 copies of her book in the United States this year. Among her rules is the admonition not to chase a man. "A lot of men are attracted to women who don't need them," Daily says in an interview from her home in Florida. "If you are just sitting around, waiting for someone to give you a life, that is the kind of pressure no one wants."

Daily, who met her husband in a Virginia bar called the Hot Tuna, has a background in advertising and receives many questions from the lovelorn each week. Among recent dating queries were how to tell if a man has a penile implant and a worried virgin who frets she'll never find love.

Daily is death on sex on the first date. You must wait a month or two, she says. "I've asked men about this and it's not that they think less of the woman or she's a tramp. But they have a measuring stick for what is acceptable wifely behaviour and they don't want their wife to be someone whom they slept with on the first date."

Steve Nakamoto, 49, unmarried but in a relationship in Huntington Beach, Calif., is author of *Men Are Like Fish* and he, too, says early sex wrecks the chance for a long-term relationship.

"If it comes too early, it tends to ruin your chances of real love. The emotional level is not high enough for the sex act. If the emotion is high, a kiss is special, holding hands is special."

Bachelors may press for sex and think that's what they want from the woman, says Nakamoto, a motivational speaker, but "the woman has got to set the pace."

He says the frenzy over finding a partner is at a fever pitch.

"With *Joe Millionaire* and *The Bachelor*, it's getting crazy."