When warm weather finally arrives in Colorado (at press time, it was in the teens with a blizzard threatening) look for Peggy Roth around town, ducking into other local retailers, restaurants, as well as office parks and buildings in Parker and the nearby Denver Tech Center. Roth, owner of Sweet Pea Floral and Gifts, is a woman on a mission: By year’s end, she wants to have 10 new business clients — a number that will more than double her current list of regular clients. To hit that high mark, she’s prepared to shake a whole lot of hands and leave a lasting impression.

“You have to go out there and meet people,” said Roth, who worked in the uber-competitive title industry for 25 years before buying Sweet Pea in 2010. “Anytime I’m out and about, I talk to people” and remind them about the shop.

In addition to Roth’s sales experience and naturally outgoing personality, she’s employing a few targeted tools to gain more B2B work. Among them, SAF’s B2B Kit (see More Online, p. 6). This spring and summer, Roth plans to customize the kit information and use the resources during her pitch sessions.

“The kits are fabulous,” she said. “I wish I’d known about them sooner.”

Three years after buying her shop, Roth has already built up an impressive list of business clients: high-end restaurants (and the “glamorous” 8 a.m. Sunday setups for brunches they bring); an emergency hospital for animals ("people spend a ton on their pets — that’s a great market") and an oil and gas company that routinely uses Sweet Pea to recognize employees’ personal and professional milestones. Always the saleswoman, Roth has also worked with her former title company and a catering company she worked for decades ago. She said she’s surprised how often business owners express dissatisfaction with their current florist — blooms that droop, sales staff who are surly. Roth is only too happy to swoop in and capture the business for herself.

“I probably spend 10 to 15 percent of my time trying to grow this part of my business,” Roth said. “That’s my goal, to get the kind of consistent, weekly work that get you through the slow periods. And I’m very goal-oriented.”

‘NEWBIE’ FLORIST TAKES AIM AT B2B

SWEET TALK Peggy Roth, owner of Sweet Pea Floral and Gifts in Parker, Colo., is using her sales background, outgoing personality and SAF’s B2B Kit to build sales in 2013.
FOLLOW UP LIKE A PRO

You researched your contact, hand-delivered your promo vase and made your pitch, but the business prospect you hoped to land still hasn’t set up an account. If you want to close the deal, you have to take the next step, says Mike Brooks of EyeonSales.com.

“At the end of each contact with a prospect, it is imperative that you schedule a date, or at least get the OK for a day and time to follow up,” he wrote. “Even if they won’t have an answer yet, that’s fine — what’s important is that you have a day and time to check back in.”

When you follow up with a prospect, have a short script prepared, in case you get voicemail. Remind the prospect that you agreed to check in and leave your contact information — slowly. It’s important to rehearse voicemail messages before you leave them; keep it brief and clear. Brooks also suggests accompanying each voicemail with a short email, drafted from a follow-up template you keep on file, in case that’s a more convenient way for the prospect to communicate. (Chris Drummond, AAF, of Plaza Flowers in Philadelphia said he rehearses his in-person pitches, too. Read more about his efforts, beginning on p. 24.)

“Always get an appointment for follow up, use a structured and integrated voice mail and email approach and script these communications out in advance,” Brooks says. “Start following this approach and you’ll begin seeing more contacts and more deals.”

RECOVER FROM REJECTION

Tired of getting turned down? Grant Cardone, writing for Entrepreneur.com, says business owners can take the sting out of a rejected sales pitch by asking the prospect for feedback.

“When clients say no, find out what they are rejecting specifically,” Cardone suggests. “Ask them: ‘What is it about my proposal you are saying no to?’ Most people assume a rejection is about everything being offered, when it’s really only a small part your client doesn’t like. Break down the no to clarify what exactly your prospect is rejecting.”

Cardone also likes to keep a “help list” of prospects who have turned him down, or even refused to meet with him.

“I keep this list with me everywhere I go so I can ask a client to scan the list and see if they can help me with anyone on it,” he said. “This has resulted in many more deals for me.”

The humble and decidedly low-tech list can lead to great things in B2B. Read about how Heather Waits of Bloomtastic Florist in Columbus, Ohio, uses a list by her register to build up her prospect list for B2B work, on p. 27.