

Background

In search of networking groups where they could build real relationships, and unhappy with mainstream options, Biznik was started as “The Biz Group” in March, 2005 by Seattle web developer Dan McComb and photographer Lara Eve Feltin. Their rallying cry: Business networking shouldn’t suck. The pair invited a dozen of their friends from Seattle’s creative community to the first event, and McComb built the first version of the website in his spare time. The core ideas behind this form of “radical self promotion” were captured in the Biznik Manifesto (<http://biznik.com/about/manifesto.html>), which emphasized people over professions, community over competition, and relationships over referrals. Word of mouth began to spread, and within a year the group, renamed Biznik in October, 2005, had grown to more than 700 members.

Today Biznik has more than 3,200 members in 65 countries. The vast major of members are in the greater Seattle area. However, with the launch of Biznik 2.0 slated for June 1, 2007, the site is set for expansion into metropolitan cities worldwide. Biznik is also gearing up for BizJam, Seattle’s First Indie Business Conference on June 7, 2007. The business-building marathon of ideas, inspiration and innovation includes daytime workshops, networking and business promotion opportunities; and the evening Biznik 2.0 launch party will be filled with fast-paced biz presentations, awards presentations, and an indie fashion show.

Founder Bios

Dan McComb began his career as an indie web developer in 2000, when he quit his day job as a publication designer at Sasquatch Books and starting building websites for Seattle nonprofits and educational organizations such as Northwest Bookfest and Meridian School. He is responsible for technical work of creating the website, and also hosts events.

Lara Feltin has run a successful photography business in Seattle, photographing children, since 1998. After spending 6 years as a member of an established networking group, she partnered with Dan McComb to create Biznik, where she handles business operations and event planning and hosting. She is a board member of the Capitol Hill Chamber of Commerce.

Biznik 2.0 Basics

Visibility: Biznik profiles are already among the most highly optimized of any social networking site on the internet. Many of our members rank #1 on Google for terms they use to describe their business. The new site has added features designed to improve this findability.

Localization: The major focus of the new version of Biznik is localization – users in Toronto, for example, will be able to see things relevant to them, rather than things in Seattle, as was the case with the original site. Also, Google maps are plotted for each member, for each event, and for all the members of a group, which grounds the online aspect of social networking with real locations.

Immediacy: There are six actions that can be immediately taken anywhere on the site that a member’s photo is displayed: Send a message, add to network, introduce to a friend, give referral, send compliment, and bookmark.

Talk: The talk forums are greatly improved, and with local forums for each city that Biznik supports. Posts are now editable for 15 minutes after posting to catch errors, and split into multiple categories. Members can also opt to receive email notifications for any conversation they wish to follow.

Groups: Groups allow anyone to create one of three types of group: private, semi-public or public. Types of group include Affinity groups (members who share an interest in a particular topic); Local groups (people in the same

region), and Professional groups (members who are all web developers, for example). Groups each have their own events, talk and members.

Networks: Members now have the ability to form their own business network by inviting other members to join their network.

Events: Events are at the core of what makes Biznik special – because no matter how cool online networking is, there’s no better way to build trust than face-to-face. Biznik has three types of events: Happy Hours (networking over drinks), Book Club (members meet to discuss a business book), and the most popular form of event, Workshops (knowledge sharing, while building visibility as an expert in the community, which often leads to more business for the host).

Quick Facts

General

- The potential market for indie business networking is huge and growing: According to the most recent figures from the U.S. Census Bureau, small business without payroll (personal businesses) makes up more than 70 percent of America’s 27 million companies, with annual sales of \$887 billion. And over 20 million businesses worldwide are members of local chambers of commerce. This technology is still in the early adopter stage and has a ways to go before being truly mainstream.

Biznik

- 3,200 members in 65 countries
- Approximately 2/3 of those members, just over 2,000, are in the greater Seattle area.
- The website receives an average of 1,800 visits per day, resulting in 5,000 page views per day.
- Since launching in November 2005 to mid May of 2007, Biznik members have hosted 200 events, posted 900 topics, made 3,500 comments, sent 7,000 messages, and accepted 1056 referrals.

What members say about Biznik

“Biznik has done for me in one week what LinkedIn wasn't able to do in two years.” --[Sterling Peake](#)

“Fun, creative, happy people reaching out to connect with other fun, creative, happy people. What a concept. No one is in your face about how great they are. No one is pushing their business on you. Just a relaxed, informal setting where you get to meet and learn about people like you - authentic and self-aware.” --[Peggy Foster](#)

“I literally feel that if I miss an event, that I'm taking a big gamble and missing the opportunity to meet someone brilliant. Biznik events have SUCH an amazing energy, I think I'm addicted!” --[Giannina Silverman](#)

Press Contact

Robert Nachbar, Kismet Communications, 206-427-0389, rob [at] kismetcommunications.net


Screenshots from new site (see next page)

You are logged in as Nadja Haldimann. [Log Out](#) [About](#) [Invite](#) [Feedback](#) [Help/FAQ](#)

biznik BUSINESS NETWORKING THAT DOESN'T SUCK

Welcome [Your Profile](#) [Members](#) [Events](#) [Biz Talk](#) [Biz Groups](#)

Your profile [Messages \(13 new\)](#) [Bookmarks](#) [Network](#) [Events](#) [Groups](#) [Account settings](#) [Order history](#)



★ Nadja Haldimann Edit

Designer : Branding | Web | Software
Seattle WA

2063548423


About You

What I do Edit
I am a branding consultant and an interaction designer with 9 years of professional experience in Corporations and with independent clients. I understand how to organize information in a meaningful and user oriented way. In addition to my design background I am also a painter. I approach fine arts from a design perspective and combine industrial and organic shapes and forms to create compelling compositions that nicely complement contemporary architectural spaces.

What I do best Edit
My main focus is on brand strategy and corporate identity both for print and for the internet. My work is highly conceptual and I focus on delivering complete design solutions that enable my customers to have a better understanding of their business and present themselves in a highly professional way.

What I need Edit
I'm looking for fashion designers to participate in the BizJam indie fashion show on June 9, here in Seattle. Call me!

Education Edit
After getting a degree in business from Basel, Switzerland I



Map Level

- Map to your city
- Map to your zipcode (US only)
- Map to your street address

Your activity stats

- ➡ Invited 0 members
- ➡ 12 referrals given
- ➡ 10 referrals received
- 💬 3 Biztalk posts
- 💬 4 Biztalk comments
- 📅 6 events attended
- 👤 0 events hosted

Streamlined interface: Members can edit their profile simply by clicking the item they wish to edit.

Inbox

From	Subject	Date	
★ Peggy Foster	You have received a referral from Peggy Foster	10/ 1/2006 8:31 AM	Delete
Giannina Silverman	Re: You have received a referral from Nadja Haldimann	05/21/2007 6:57 PM	Delete
Samuel Omweri	You have received a referral from Samuel Omweri	07/30/2006 1:44 AM	Delete
★ Joe Shirley	You have received a referral from Joe Shirley	05/19/2006 3:53 PM	Delete
★ Beth Cosker	Re: You have received a referral from Nadja Haldimann	05/21/2007 6:57 PM	Delete



Thanks a million! It was great to meet you and I really appreciate your help with this.

FYI - I mailed your packet to the carrier as well as copuies for you yesterday afternoon. You should get your copies by the end of the week.


Thanks again!

Beth







[Reply](#)
[Close](#)

★ Dominic Canterbury	Re: You have received a referral from Nadja Haldimann	05/21/2007 6:57 PM	Delete
★ Lara Eve Feltin	You have received a referral from Lara Eve Feltin	03/17/2006 10:08 AM	Delete

Visual Messages: All messages show you a picture of the member who's contacting you.

 ★ Kelly Hobkirk
Ad Agency
owner/Graphic and
Web...

View Kelly's profile

-  Send message
-  Add to network
-  Introduce to a friend
-  Give Referral
-  Send Compliment
-  Bookmark

Compliments are public testimonials that, once accepted, will appear on the complimented member's profile.

I'm a client/customer

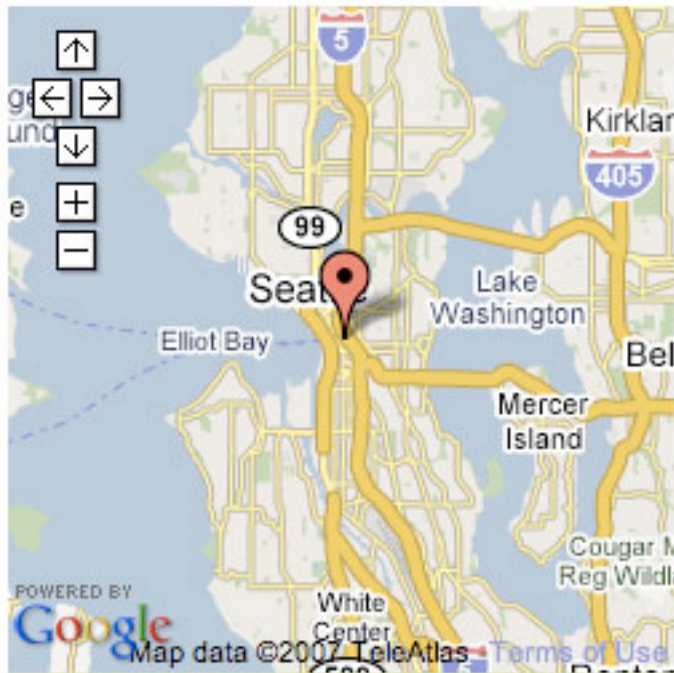
Compliment

As a client of Kelly, I have to say that he rocks harder than Slayer!

Send Compliment

Cancel








Instant Communication: Actions such as sending a message or a compliment can be taken on any member, anywhere within the site, instantly, without going to another page.



Map Level

- Map to your city
- Map to your zipcode (US only)
- Map to your street address

Your activity stats

-  Invited 0 members
-  12 referrals given
-  10 referrals received
-  3 Biztalk posts
-  4 Biztalk comments
-  6 events attended
-  0 events hosted

Privacy controls: Members can choose to map their location to their city, zipcode or street address, to make it convenient for other members to know either very precisely or more generally where they are located.

Photos from recent events



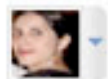
Recently heard...



Posted by [Jason Shindler](#) Nov 15, 2006

I'm helping organize a luncheon fundraiser for the Bellevue, WA-based Children's Response Center. We are in need of Table Captains (to help invite people to...

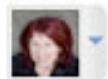
[View this topic »](#)



Posted by [Giannina Silverman](#) Nov 14, 2006

Hello all, Just wanted to let you know about a cool program I helped one of my clients develop and promote. It helps schools in...

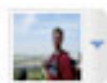
[View this topic »](#)



Posted by [Amy Woldtke](#) Nov 14, 2006

hi- since i am doing web design

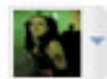
What I need...



Posted by [Arhur Torelli](#) 6 days ago

I need to talk to business owners that would like to take credit cards for payment or business owners that currently take credit cards and...

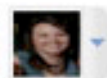
[View Arhur's profile »](#)



Posted by [Kristen Gruber](#) 6 days ago

advice and guidance to help me make that big leap from the corporate world to self employment.

[View Kristen's profile »](#)

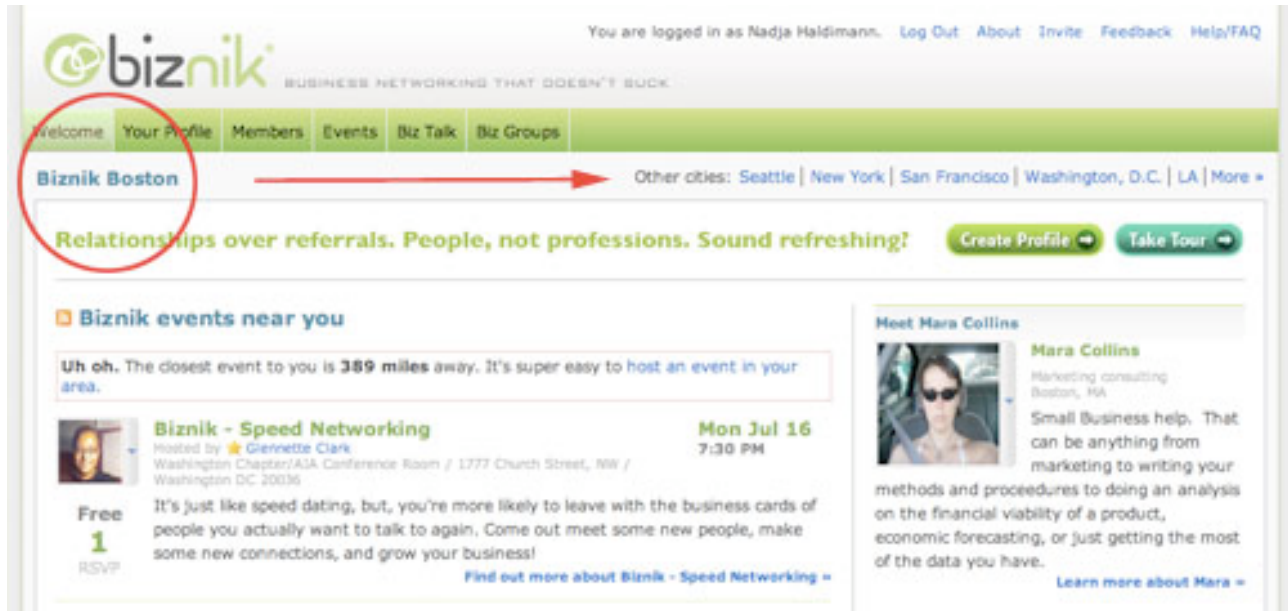


Posted by [Natalie Bow](#) 6 days ago

I'd love to hear about new businesses and unique services.

[View Natalie's profile »](#)

Community: On the home page, recent photos from events, recent conversations and recently updated "what I need" items are displayed to help connect members.



The screenshot shows the Biznik website interface. At the top right, it says "You are logged in as Nadja Heldmann." with links for "Log Out", "About", "Invite", "Feedback", and "Help/FAQ". The main navigation bar includes "Welcome", "Your Profile", "Members", "Events", "Biz Talk", and "Biz Groups". A red circle highlights "Biznik Boston" in the location selection area, with a red arrow pointing to "Other cities: Seattle | New York | San Francisco | Washington, D.C. | LA | More >". Below this, a banner reads "Relationships over referrals. People, not professions. Sound refreshing?" with "Create Profile" and "Take Tour" buttons. The "Biznik events near you" section features a warning: "Uh oh. The closest event to you is 389 miles away. It's super easy to host an event in your area." Below this is an event listing for "Biznik - Speed Networking" on "Mon Jul 16 7:30 PM" hosted by "Glennette Clark" in "Washington DC 20036". The event is "Free" and includes an "RSVP" button. A description states: "It's just like speed dating, but, you're more likely to leave with the business cards of people you actually want to talk to again. Come out meet some new people, make some new connections, and grow your business!" with a link to "Find out more about Biznik - Speed Networking". To the right, a "Meet Mara Collins" section features a profile picture of Mara Collins, a "Marketing consulting" professional in "Boston, MA", with a description of her services and a link to "Learn more about Mara".

Localization allows members in major US cities to select their location. Selecting Boston, for example, displays local members, events and discussions.