

Working with a Private Matchmaker

Finding that perfect someone can be hard work. Hiring a professional matchmaker can make all the difference. **Gentry Wealth** speaks with Sameera Sullivan to see why more and more busy Silicon Valley executives are turning to her for advice.

Gentry Wealth: *How did you decide to go into matchmaking?*

Sameera Sullivan: I have always been a matchmaker at heart, and before I even started with my professional life, I was known to make matches! I matched my friends, cousins, and even acquaintances. It's in my blood and I love what I do.

There is nothing more satisfying than finding other people love. My educational background is in psychology and education. I was also a recruiter in the aerospace and defense industry, where I searched for difficult-to-fill positions. This is where I get my searching skills and the guts to pick up the phone and call some random stranger.

I worked for another so-called "matchmaking agency," and there I learned what not to do! I realized that a matchmaking service will never be successful if you match two clients together. It's only successful when you are actually able to recruit matches for your clients based on their criteria and lifestyle. This is the most important aspect of matchmaking.

GW: *What made you decide to open Lasting Connections?*

SS: I started Lasting Connections because there was an increasing need for a reputable matchmaker in Portland who didn't just take anyone as a client, was truly selective, and really cared for the client's well being. In this industry, I have seen and worked with many great matchmakers and I have also seen many scams, and agencies that take advantage of vulnerable people.

I wanted to have an upscale matchmaking service for sophisticated, elite professionals who really wanted personalized service.

I wanted to start something where we could give 100% to finding a match for our client and offer personal, concierge-type services.

GW: *What prompted you to expand beyond Portland?*



SS: I have done a lot of research, and I have found that agencies that are really big have sales reps in each city. What I wanted to do was expand to other cities, but at the same time keep it personalized and small. By this I mean that I want to meet all the clients and be involved in the matchmaking process. This is why for now I want to be in just the West Coast cities.

GW: *You also offer image-consulting services—what makes this so important?*

SS: Not every client needs image consulting, but everyone can use a little help! Sometimes we have men and women

who have been married for years and all of a sudden they are single. They have no idea about dating and putting themselves out there. Dating can be scary for a lot of people who haven't dated in years. I help them understand that in order to be successful in dating, you have to care for how you look to the world. Your image is your brand, and you have to really work on that brand if you want to get noticed.

Many people refer to me as the modern-day "Hitch," and I think I am just that! I have helped many people get their mojo back and boost their confidence levels due to image consulting. All of a sudden they stand taller, attract more people towards them, and are being asked out at Starbucks for dates.

GW: *Who is the Lasting Connections client?*

SS: Our typical client is a busy executive, businessman, doctor, surgeon, lawyer, and even famous celebrities who don't have the time and want to hire a personal concierge who can find him/her a life partner.

GW: *A favorite recent match?*

SS: I introduced an incredible couple to each other earlier this year. He is an entertainer and she is an executive for a Fortune 500 company. They were in love from the first date on and I knew in my heart they would be! This doesn't always happen on a first date, but when it is supposed to happen, my intuition is right on. Sometimes it can happen on the first date and sometimes the fourth. It has been over a year and they are still madly in love. The man called me a month ago and said that he will be proposing to her right after the holidays. It gives me jitters every time I think about it! ■

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