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Silicon Yenta

on 07 September 2007, 13:43

by Red Herring Staff



By Marisa Taylor

Finding true love has never been easy. But it's even harder when you're a Silicon Valley executive working 60-plus hours a week with barely enough time to enjoy your hard-earned riches, much less meet the perfect mate.

Good thing entrepreneur Amy Andersen has come up with one solution for the dating-deprived. Her company, Linx Dating, matches all-work-and-no-play Valley guys with San Francisco gals fed up with playboys and dim bulbs. "Guys down here [in the Valley] are not players at all," Ms. Andersen says. "They've been so focused on work and academics that a lot of them have not put the effort and time into dating that they should have. They are fabulous catches for women in San Francisco who are really frustrated with the scene."

Founded in 2003, Linx now boasts more than 650 carefully screened clients—75 percent of them have graduate degrees, and about 800 people are on the waiting list. The secret to Linx's popularity is that it's an old-fashioned matchmaking service that manually screens applicants, and singles have found it a refreshing change of pace from impersonal online dating sites that spit out matches based on search algorithms.

Ms. Andersen does all the screening herself and rejects about 50 percent of applicants. She accepts only those who are well-educated, physically fit and attractive, have interesting hobbies, and have done "something extraordinary" in their lives. Clients range in age from late 20s to early 60s.

Membership in Palo Alto, California-based Linx starts at \$5,000 per person for eight introductions over two years and goes as high as \$9,000 for 15 matches. The top tier of membership also includes dating coaching, a personal trainer, a makeover, wardrobe advice, and a visit to a top dermatologist.

Ms. Andersen, 30, came up with the idea for Linx from her own dating experiences. She was working in marketing at Merrill Lynch and living in San Francisco's Marina district, home to former frat boys who now work in finance. She became increasingly frustrated meeting the same type of guy over and over again: extremely good-looking, smart, engaging, and wearing the right Gucci loafers and Rolex watch, but only interested in hooking up. "Emotionally void. Vacant," says Ms. Andersen, who resembles a blond version of Angelina Jolie. "I was shocked by the lack of chivalry in the city."

Ms. Andersen's accomplished women friends in San Francisco had similar problems with men in the city, leading her to conclude that there was a market for a high-end matchmaking service. She decided to focus on Valley men because many have started their own businesses, and as a result, they tend to be more serious and down to earth, Ms. Andersen says.

Although Marv Su doesn't have his own company, the 44-year-old vice president of marketing at San Mateo, California-based startup Vindicia has been a Linx client for two years and fits the service's profile in all other ways: he's highly educated (degrees from Stanford and MIT) and has worked hard to become a Valley executive.

So far, Linx has introduced Mr. Su to more than a dozen women, and he believes Ms. Andersen's personal approach to matchmaking will eventually bring him success. "It's certainly not an inexpensive service, but it's totally worth it," he says.

Another Linx member, a 34-year-old finance executive at PayPal who lives in San Francisco, likes the fact that the service takes care of everything for her. Ms. Andersen "can look for those qualities that I want and she does all the work," says the executive, who asked that her name be withheld. "I definitely think her clients are quality people."

Amber Kelleher-Andrews, COO of Kelleher and Associates, a nationwide matchmaking company that originally started in the Valley, says singles are increasingly using traditional matchmaking services for dating for the same reasons they use executive search firms for jobs. "A lot of people are too busy to date," she says. "Why not hire a search firm in your relationship, too?"

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RED HERRING'S GLOBAL VC 100

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RED HERRING 100 UPDATES



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The Red Herring 100 is a mark of distinction and prestige. Only 200 companies are chosen as finalists from across Europe. **Update:** Finalists announced. [click here](#) The Winners will be announced on site April 2 in Berlin.



Red Herring North America Submission

The Red Herring 100 is a mark of distinction and prestige. Only 200 companies are chosen as finalists from a pool of thousands. The deadline has been **Extended:** March 21. Finalists are announced in mid-April. [click here](#)

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Initial success for Capcom's zombie-killing game.

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100 Million Nintendo DSes Sold

And it's still going strong.

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The search-engine giant looks to cash in by placing cookies tracking your surfing habits.

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Date and price of the new Fab Fours' game released.

From Guitar Hero to Just a Guitarist

Taking a look at Optek's instructional, light-up guitar.

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by m0ldb on 14 January 2008, 19:17

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by sd5f6 on 01 February 2008, 07:53

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by Ken Lin on 03 February 2008, 17:50

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