

# AIIP Gem Sponsor Spotlight

## Ruby Sponsor: Mary Ellen Bates

By Marilyn Harmacek

Mary Ellen Bates has been a professional info entrepreneur longer than the World Wide Web has been in existence. While much has changed over that quarter century, her business focus has not. “I have the same philosophy now as when I started, and it’s worked for 25 years.” After trying all the typical marketing tactics of cold calling and direct mail, she realized it’s better to attract clients than chase after them. That’s how she’s made her mark and, “it’s why I can pivot with the times.”

When she started concentrating her skillset on client outcomes, asking “how can I help you make better informed decisions and reach your goals?” she also focused on her reputation and how she could become sought after by the clients she wanted to attract. AIIP members helped her understand you had to be open, visible, generous, and someone the client could trust. Today, we know it as being transparent.

Transparency translates into making it easy for others to see what actions are performed, bringing clarity to what is real and true. “I was an AIIP member for a year before I went independent. I listened and found out what other members were doing and how they were doing it. [Transparency and attracting clients] was scary stuff at the time. And then I realized, if they could do it, I could, too.” Putting yourself out there and becoming engaged is the key.

Becoming an AIIP Jewel sponsor is one way Mary Ellen stays engaged. “I see a sponsorship as giving enough to make a difference to me and to the organization,” she states. It’s not something she takes lightly. “It’s where I really have to pause and think twice about writing that check, and then realizing it is going to make a big impact on everyone involved.” To her, it’s the feeling of going above and beyond that makes the difference. “When I sponsor, I feel more engaged. I want to know the money is used smartly and will be spent well.” An AIIP sponsorship means “prepaying a commitment to AIIP for what I value and what I want to receive.” She doesn’t just look at the cost and the practicality of what’s included, but the significance of what it means personally and professionally. “It’s important enough to give more.”

Integrity, transparency, and joyful engagement in life and business is Mary Ellen’s daily mantra. Peer-to-peer learning—co-learning or group engagement—gives her vitality. “That’s where I find all the good stuff.” And why AIIP means so much to her. As director of membership and outreach, she would love to see every member of AIIP joyfully engaged and bringing their business skills to the table. “We’ve all got what it takes to show our creative and strategic selves. Let’s see that brilliance!”



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