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Taking her show on the road

Pivoted by her friends' stories of online dating disasters and blind-date debacles, stand-up comedian Susan Alexander was struck by an idea that could change the lives of some single San Franciscans forever. And now Alexander, a San Francisco resident and the founder of "Singles who Mingle," is taking her franchise on the road.

Since June, Alexander has sold out event after event at San Francisco's Canvas Gallery, where she is a regular performer.

Starting in October and November, she'll host Singles who Mingle shows in Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.

By combining her stand-up act with the kind of five-minute dating that's consistently gained popularity among single professionals for the last few years, Alexander is able to break the ice for 50 singles each night.

In San Francisco, at least, the events draw 25- to 41-year-old professionals who work in areas like finance and graphic design all over the Bay Area.

Though Alexander's comedy career is thriving, she just started stand-up about 2½ years ago. And when it comes to growing her business, Alexander says she's proceeding slowly, and with caution. "I learned my lesson in the dot-com bust," she says.

Alexander is hosting two more events in San Francisco before she leaves her show in the hands of another comedian while she tries it out on the East Coast.

On Wednesday, she's throwing an event for single, gay men at CIP Lounge; registration starts at 8 p.m. Thursday, there are two events for single men and women at The Canvas Gallery, starting at 7:30 and 9 p.m.

— Kate Lawlin