

Make Time for Facetime Offline

A few decades ago, before the advent of email and online social sites, an engineer living in North Carolina would have to wait until the evening banquet at the annual trade show to meet and network with an engineer from the opposite coast. Nowadays, those same two professionals have already “met” on the organization’s forum, exchanged contact information (and professional advice), and made plans to meet at the hotel bar the evening before the trade show even starts.

There’s definitely something positive to be said for the benefits presented by an online arena of social networking...but there are some shortcuts of which you must be wary!

We’ve utilized this month’s newsletter to present you with a few reminders that will help you keep your online relationships working for you in the offline arena. It is important to view your online networking relationships as your stepping off point to success! In order to effectively pursue your goals, you must not only build up your contact list, you must use it to your advantage! Now, more than ever, we must take advantage of every networking avenue on our roadmap to success.

With summer now upon us, I truly hope you find yourselves basking not only in the bright rays of a warm sun but also in those of successful networking endeavors. If you have feedback or a story idea you’d particularly like to see in future issues, please feel free to send an email to newsletter@flowork.com.

John-Paul Hatala, Ph.D., Flowork Founder



This month’s FlowTIP:
*Think strategically
about networking.*


See page 3 for more information.

What’s New?

Dr. Hatala on Twitter

Want to stay up-to-the-minute with social networking news, tips, and ideas? Follow Flowork founder, Dr. John-Paul Hatala, on Twitter! If you don’t already have one, sign up for your own account at twitter.com, then search for [jphatala](https://twitter.com/jphatala) and click on *follow*. You can also view Twitter updates on the Flowork homepage at www.flowork.com.

Dr. Hatala Blogging on ContactPoint.ca



Dr. John-Paul Hatala has been chosen as a Blogger on the popular career practitioner website, Contact Point, a multi-sector online community for professionals in the career

development field. To take a look, visit www.contactpoint.ca. Make sure you stop by soon and check it out!

Online Flowork Training Programs

Flowork is pleased to announce the release of two new online training programs; Social Capital Development Training and Strategic Job Search Management. Both of these programs are now available online at the Learning Community at Flowork. Flowork is also pleased to announce that if you are a non-profit, you can gain access to these training programs for your staff and clients free. Email us at onlinetraining@flowork.com to gain access to the training programs to see if they are right for your staff and clients.



Online Faux Pas and the World of Social Networking

A few staggering internet statistics:

- Internet World Stats (www.internetworldstats.com) states that there were 1,596,270,108 worldwide internet users in 2008.
- Google is now searching through over 25,000,000,000 web pages at a click of a button.
- More than 100 million users log on to Facebook at least once each day.
- Nielsen Online reports that Twitter is now growing at a rate of 1,382 percent on an annual basis.

For all the information purportedly flowing through cyberspace these days, it is questionable whether or not any of us seem to be any better at making genuine connections than our generational predecessors.

Indeed, with the popularity of social networking on the Internet, most of us have felt the pressure at least once to “stay connected” via networking websites like Facebook, Twitter or MySpace. However, when it comes to seeking new employment, online networking resources have not necessarily made us any better at professional networking.

The contrary, in fact, often seems to be true. Some particularly public gaffes have truncated the career of many an online user of social networking resources. Just look at some of the blunders committed by politicians—or for that matter just about any Hollywood celebrity.

This is an emerging reality and cyber ‘food for thought’ for anyone seeking employment or, at the very least, looking to expand their social networking reach as a preventative measure against sudden job loss.

News reports are also buzzing with gossipy stories of business executives facing termination due to compromising online profiles. Employers do not merely scan resumes anymore; they are keeping track of the public profiles of their employees online.

It seems that knowing how to network is as much about how to avoid doing it wrong, as it is about doing more of it.

Furthermore, expanding our professional network by using more online networking websites may not be enough. Many individuals fall into the illusory trap suggesting that access to social networking websites will automatically translate into a more comprehensive business circle. Social networking experts apparently agree.

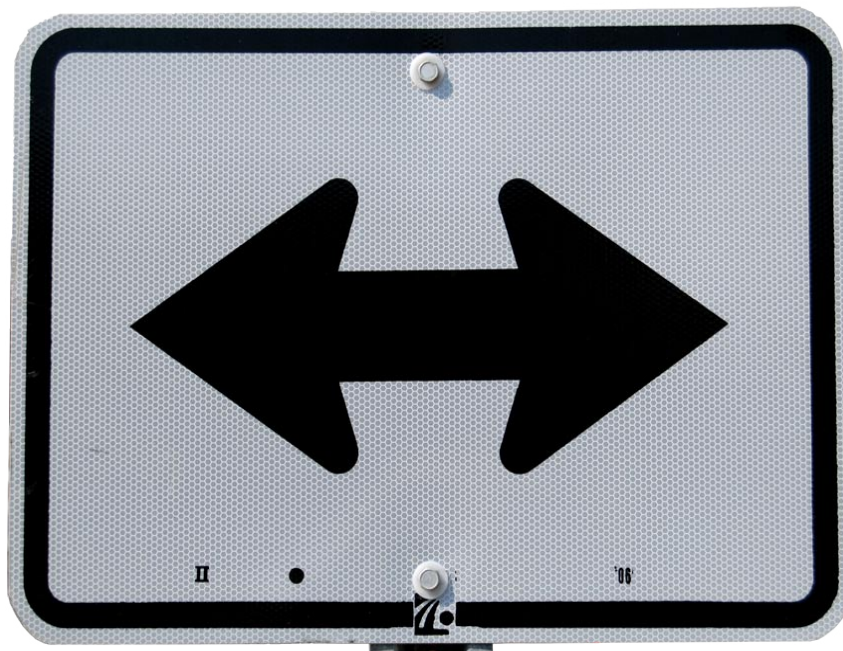
Indeed, few know how to “strategically leverage their existing social circle (which likely already possesses a potential wealth of career-related resources) much less know how to expand it meaningfully,” says Dr. J.P. Hatala of Flowork.

Indeed, merely posting on sites like Twitter or MySpace may be no more useful than showing up in a downtown square and shouting “Who wants to meet me?”

“Networking more is not necessarily the answer, but rather networking more strategically,” Dr. Hatala continues. Having access to a larger social circle, it would seem, is of little supplementary value if one does not know how to avail him or herself of its full resource potential. Moreover, Dr. Hatala cites the direct relationship that can exist between one’s social circle and the potential resources that are inherent to it, stating that “one’s social capital can turn into one’s social income, but only if they learn the essentials of how to network more strategically.”

Thus, as times get tougher and people find themselves job hunting again, online social networking resources by themselves may

be sorrowfully lacking in terms of viably expanding one’s social circle in a meaningful way. Individuals must first learn to network correctly when tapping into the seemingly ever-expanding cyber universe. It is, therefore, not merely a question of networking on social websites more, but knowing how to network more strategically.



Has Twitter made us lazy?

Have sites like Facebook and LinkedIn made us impatient? Is developing relationships in 140 characters or less even possible?

It seems the ongoing increase in popularity of online social networking websites has changed our expectations about how we should communicate. However, while the result may indeed be an unprecedented increase in the amount of online communications, these days it is questionable if we have anything to show for it...at least in terms of forming more valuable connections in our networking.

It is true that online social networking does bring about a quicker response when it comes to seeking to form new relationships, compared to the seemingly laborious efforts of the pre-internet age. But is it making us lazy? According to social networking expert Dr. J.P. Hatala, truly effective communication still requires the time and effort necessary to source and leverage valuable relationships.

Fostering relationships offline may be longer and harder, but it is typically far more effective. The tools of the internet have not replaced the importance of in-person communication, but as social networking tools, they have offered a preliminary and highly effective first step by providing a wider reach in which to effectively pursue networking.

According to Dr. Hatala's research, for social networking to be effective it needs to encapsulate a two-step process. The first essential piece is access to social resources, followed by the second: utilization thereof.

Social networking websites are the tools that provide the means of "access" to a wider, online audience. However, truly effective and valuable networking does not end at this online stage. As Dr. Hatala notes, "the fact that you have access to social networking resources does not mean you can utilize the resource found in them."

Indeed, an increasing number of us these days are sorrow-

fully lacking in this department, having become increasingly dependent on the wide reach of the internet to 'do our work for us' and thus are missing the skills to leverage even our existing social networks, much less one that has been expanded online.

The failure to utilize or "leverage our social networks" is not a permanent problem, however. The good news is that it is a "teachable" skill and Dr. Hatala's research directly informs the Flowork model in aiding those of us who are overly dependent on internet websites to do our networking for us. Dr. Hatala's research translates into some intriguing food for thought, whereby "the return on social capital directly impacts one's social income".

Beyond the stats and research, the bottom line is that, once learned, the ability to leverage an expanding social network will bring about the very results we seek from networking in the first place. We are still the crux to our own success in networking and, regardless of the alluring promise of the vast online reach readily available through social networking tools, nothing can ever replace the 'human effect' in communicating with one another.

Networking effectively is a skill we still need to learn to do well, if we are to maximize the potential of our social networks beyond a mere online 'friend' or 'follower' tally.



This Month's flowTIP:

Think strategically about networking. It's important to think about our network in terms of how we can help our contacts and how our contacts can help us. For this to occur, we obviously have to be clear on what type of help we are seeking and what we bring to the table in support. Now, more than ever before, remember that it is ok to ask for help! Whether it's planting a garden or finding a job, determine what needs to be implemented in order to make your dream a reality. This almost always requires the help of others. So the next time you want to do something, ask yourself: can I do it alone or do I require help? If I need help, who in my network is most likely to lend a hand? Then develop a connection strategy. Thinking strategically about what you want to accomplish and networking could mean the difference between the success of accomplishing your objective and failure.

Is Social Networking Making You Anti-Social?

The Chicago Tribune • By Wailin Wong • Posted Wednesday, May 27, 2009

CHICAGO - The turning point came around November for Jessi Odenbach.

"I noticed I was online more and more often," said the 26-year-old Chicagoan. "I'd go home and immediately turn on my laptop. I finally took the plunge and got the iPhone, and I can't get away from it now. ... I'll wake up in the morning and before I even get out of bed, I'm checking my e-mail and my Twitter stream on my phone."

It probably doesn't help that Odenbach started this month as the social media manager for a local camera equipment company. But she is aware of how tethered she has become to technology, and has tried to set boundaries.

Every Tuesday, for example, she plays euchre with her girlfriends.

"I make sure to put the phone down and interact with them because it's the only time during the week where we get to see each other," Odenbach said.

The strong pull of technology that can interfere with social engagement is a common experience in a culture accustomed to easy Internet access, a 24-hour news cycle and instant communication.

Even critics who recognize the benefits of social media warn against rapid and unchecked adoption of technology that has the potential to erode intimacy and further fragment attention spans. Many Web denizens are aware of the Internet's addictive quality and the anxiety that can accompany a foray into social media, such as worrying that even a temporary distraction from the screen will mean missing crucial updates and in-jokes. As a result, some consumers are partially unplugging or seeking other ways to integrate technology into life.

Yet the dark side exists. One extreme example of what counselor Hilarie Cash calls "uncritical" involvement with technology is a college dropout who spent six years playing video games and surfing the Web.

When he decided to return to school, he had to re-learn focus through Sudoku puzzles and teaching himself Japanese, said Cash, who worked with him. Cash, of Redmond, Wash., is an Internet and video-game-addict counselor.

Cash said her client realized that his self-discipline was like a muscle that had atrophied. "(He said) 'I have to build it back before I can possibly be successful again,'" she recalled.

David Levy, a professor at the Information School at the University of Washington, believes the social media phenomenon is part of a cultural swing that started with the industrial revolution.

"Really nothing has slowed us down," said Levy. "In other words, we've been witnessing a 200-year acceleration."

A computer scientist by training, Levy has studied how the Arts and Crafts movement of the 19th century emerged as a reaction against the potentially dehumanizing effects of industrialization.

Levy, who also has a degree in calligraphy and bookbinding, argues that modern society needs to restore a balance between the contemplative and technology-driven, goal-oriented sides of life.



Then there are those who believe technology can help or hinder work and even artistic pursuits, depending on how it's used.

Take Brian Mazzaferri, the lead singer of I Fight Dragons, a Chicago band that blends video-game music and sounds with pop rock. When publicizing his music online, Mazzaferri felt guilty he wasn't spending enough time writing and practicing. His early promotional efforts involved adding friends on MySpace, which he found ineffective because it didn't lead to communication with fans.

"There's so many things you can do online that make you feel you're doing something, when in reality you're doing nothing," Mazzaferri said.

He now works with Natiiv Arts & Media, a local firm that provides social media training for artists. He started talking with fans and fellow musicians on Twitter and discovered that he could share ideas directly with them, receive feedback and enhance his music.

"A lot of people, especially in our culture, tend to view artists as rarefied," Mazzaferri said. "You go off and have a meditative, creative state and shut yourself off from the world. I really like the idea of viewing it the other way - that artists have to go to work like everyone else."

But for others, the boundaries between work and play have blurred to become non-existent.

"My personal life and business life have become one, and I don't know if that's a good or bad thing," said Michael Brito, a social media strategist at Intel. He estimates he's online 18 hours a day, either behind a computer or on his iPhone.

"At this point, it's not detrimental to any of my real relationships," said Brito, referring to family and friends that he sees offline. "If it ever did, I'd have to sit back and re-evaluate my behavior."

Still, Brito limits his children's computer time and has enrolled them in swim and dance lessons. "They don't have to be behind a computer 20 hours a day," he said. "We really want them to be more balanced."

Not everyone feels like they can push back against the inertia of a technology-driven consumer culture.

Levy said he has informally surveyed more than 200 undergraduate students across the country and more than 80 percent of them say they spend too much time online. Younger people "are actually reflecting on this and they are concerned about it," Levy said. "They also feel like there is no way to deal with it."

It is possible to scale back. Ken Salkover, a 39-year-old Skokie, Ill., resident, joined Facebook and started a personal blog about a year ago. He also signed up for Twitter around the holidays.

Now Salkover rarely updates his blog, limits Facebook usage to 15 minutes a day and switched to a new e-mail account to cut off unwanted messages. The digital diet stemmed from a realization that it was too easy to "spend almost all my free time on the computer, either social networking or switching to the television network Web sites."

"I'm doing better than I was once was," Salkover said. "At some point, you realize how valuable your time is."

Flowork offers the benefits of social capital to anyone of any age. The Education Flowork Program offers educational institutions (Kindergarten through higher education) to ensure their students, faculty and staff become aware of the power of information by networking. Corporate Flowork and the Flowork Workforce Development Program introduces corporations, non-profit organizations, government, and workforce development groups to ways they might increase the flow of information between individuals, departments, divisions and units. Floworks founder Dr. John-Paul Hatola is available for speaking engagements nationwide. If you are interested in booking him for an on-site speaking engagement, please call us at 1-877-flowork or visit www.flowork.com and click "contact us" to discuss your needs.



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