

## Success in Africa

It's been a very exciting few weeks since the last time I wrote to all of you.

What a successful trip to Africa! I visited Lome, Togo, and Lusaka, Zambia, and was given the honored opportunity to train researchers, producers and poultry association officials on the concept of leveraging social resources to accomplish goals. The focus was to prepare the poultry sector for the dissemination of Best Management Practices (BMP) on how to avoid the spread of avian influenza. As long as poultry sector members are aware of what they hope to accomplish, they're more likely to implement the BMPs, which not only benefit them personally but the sustainability of the sector as a whole. The key to utilizing the BMPs is to connect them to what producers hope to accomplish and fit them into a strategic plan.

This was the first of two trips I will be taking to both countries. The next visit will focus on the strategic positioning of the BMPs and the how best to disseminate them to the sector.

I've shared a few photos we took while in Africa, but had to keep them small. You can access much bigger versions of these on our Web site as well, at [www.socialnetworkaudit.com/africa.php](http://www.socialnetworkaudit.com/africa.php). I'll be sure to add more photos on my next trip.

I hope all of you have experienced similar successes this summer. As usual, I strongly encourage you to forward newsworthy articles or ideas for future editions. Feedback and article ideas can be emailed to [newsletter@flowork.com](mailto:newsletter@flowork.com) at anytime to be evaluated for placement in the next suitable edition.



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



Top, Participants involved in Social Exploration Training, Lome, Togo. Middle, Participants participate in the training. Bottom: A Togo market where poultry is brought to be sold.

## What's New?

### Flowork Joins University of Ottawa on Project to Expose Immigrant Talent in Canada

With funding by Workplace Skills Initiative (WSI) division of HRSDC, the University of Ottawa has embarked on 3-year pilot project to identify and mitigate organizational practices that limit access to management positions for highly skilled immigrants, and consequently limit organizational growth and development. Qualitative data has been collected via focus groups for human resource professionals and highly skilled immigrants, in private, public, and non-profit sectors, in Montreal, Toronto, Thunder Bay, and Ottawa/Gatineau. Participants shared perceptions of organizational practices to identify practices related to talent management, professional development, and communication practices that unwittingly create barriers to advancement for skilled immigrants, and identify strategies to lower them. Phase 1 identified the implications for employers who seek to create an inclusive workplace to attract and retain skilled immigrants. The second phase will involve the development of the online learning module in which Dr. Hatala will develop the social capital component to the training. Updates of the project will be provided in future issues and the opportunity for HR practitioners to take the training will be made

available once the project has concluded. Stay tuned for future updates.

### Flowork's Game of Networking: The Board Game

Flowork's Game of Networking: The Board Game will be launched in the coming weeks. The game itself can be played in a number of different contexts, the first two being the 'Career Edition' and 'Immigrant Edition.' The edition allows specific populations to work with goals that have been created for specific areas (i.e., career development). Future editions will include such diverse areas as 'The High School Edition,' 'Leadership Development Edition' and 'MBA Edition.' More information on the game and ordering details will be provided shortly. In the meantime, if you're interested in putting your name on a pre-order list, please email us at [gameofnetworking@flowork.com](mailto:gameofnetworking@flowork.com).

**This month's FlowTIP:**  
The key to accessing social resources is to make sure that you're aware about how you feel about leveraging your contacts for help. See page 2 for more information.

# Turning Social Capital into Social Income: The Importance of Goals

Regardless of their social ability, everyone has a certain level of social capital. Whether considered the biggest jerk on the face of the planet or the most caring person in your office, both of these individuals have a level of social capital regardless of who they are and what they represent. One could easily argue that the number of people in your contact list is meaningless unless there's something to gain from knowing them.

When economists look at social capital, they immediately look at the cost/benefit scenario. After all, maintaining social capital is an expensive task, especially if you have many strong ties (consider all the time you spend maintaining a relationship). So from the economist's perspective, turning social capital into social income is the key to successfully leveraging our relationships for something meaningful. Not too romantic, but it demonstrates the potential utility of our connections (i.e., emotional and financial support, contacts, information, knowledge).

The key to successful networking is developing mutually beneficial relationships so that the social capital doesn't dry up. Just like a bank account, if you continue to make withdrawals and don't deposit more funds, you're eventually end up with a zero balance. It's important to realize that when we refer to leveraging contacts, the need to approach networking that is mutually beneficial is crucial....I take something from the network and I give something back.

So how do we look to our network and identify what social resources exist within it? To catalogue all the embedded resources would seem like an impossible task; where would we start?

To make this process more simple, the first step is to be clear

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*"The social explorer is no longer setting goals for themselves but the network itself"*

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about what you want to accomplish before you even consider going to the network. This means setting clear and concise goals that can easily be communicated to contacts. By setting goals, we're able to determine if there are social resources in our network that can help. By doing this, it makes the task of cataloguing resources more manageable and will motivate us to continue to network. If you require a plumber to fix a leaky toilet that is causing damage to your bathroom, who in your network can either fix the problem or is most likely to know someone who can? When you go to the

network with that specific goal, the contact can easily determine if they can help you or if they know someone that might be able to. It's as simple as that. Be clear on what you want to accomplish and make sure that you're able to communicate it to the network in a concise way. If this can be accomplished there is no telling what can be achieved.

Turning social capital into social income can only be accomplished if we're clear on what goals we want to achieve. When we set goals, the social explorer is no longer setting goals for themselves but the network itself. This means that goals need to be clear, concise and to the point. After all, if we make our contacts figure out what we actually need, the likelihood of them helping dramatically reduces.



## This month's FlowTIP:

The key to accessing social resources is to make sure that you're aware about how you feel about leveraging your contacts for help. For example, if you're uncomfortable with initiating contact with someone you hardly know, develop a strategy to connect with that individual rather than not connecting at all. Research has been conducted to identify the competencies required to be successful at accessing social resources. It's been demonstrated that effective networking is a learnable, trainable skill and the key is to take it from the unconscious to the conscious level. Make sure you are aware of your strengths, and at the same time become equally aware of your challenges. The more you know about yourself the greater the likelihood that you will be able to overcome your challenges to connecting with others to accomplish your goals.

# A Simple Lesson to Successful Networking: Get in the Flow!

You've undoubtedly heard the saying, "Knowledge is Power." Most likely you've acknowledged the truth in this old adage and agree it is accurate and basic common sense.

The best example of the power of knowledge meets us late in childhood, as a high school student facing end-of-term examinations. Regardless of how seriously we actually took them, we all knew we had a better chance of acing our exams if we increased our knowledge of a particular subject. The key concept to exams is that if you don't know what is going to be on the test, in order to be successful you would basically have to review the entire content. Think back to a time when you had to study. How did you do on the exam when the teacher gave you a solid outline of what was to be included on the test? How did you do when the teacher provided little information? If the teacher provided little information on what was going to be on the exam, you most likely studied content that was not on the test. The key was in determining which areas would be covered, then focusing your study on those areas, only browsing through the rest of the material.

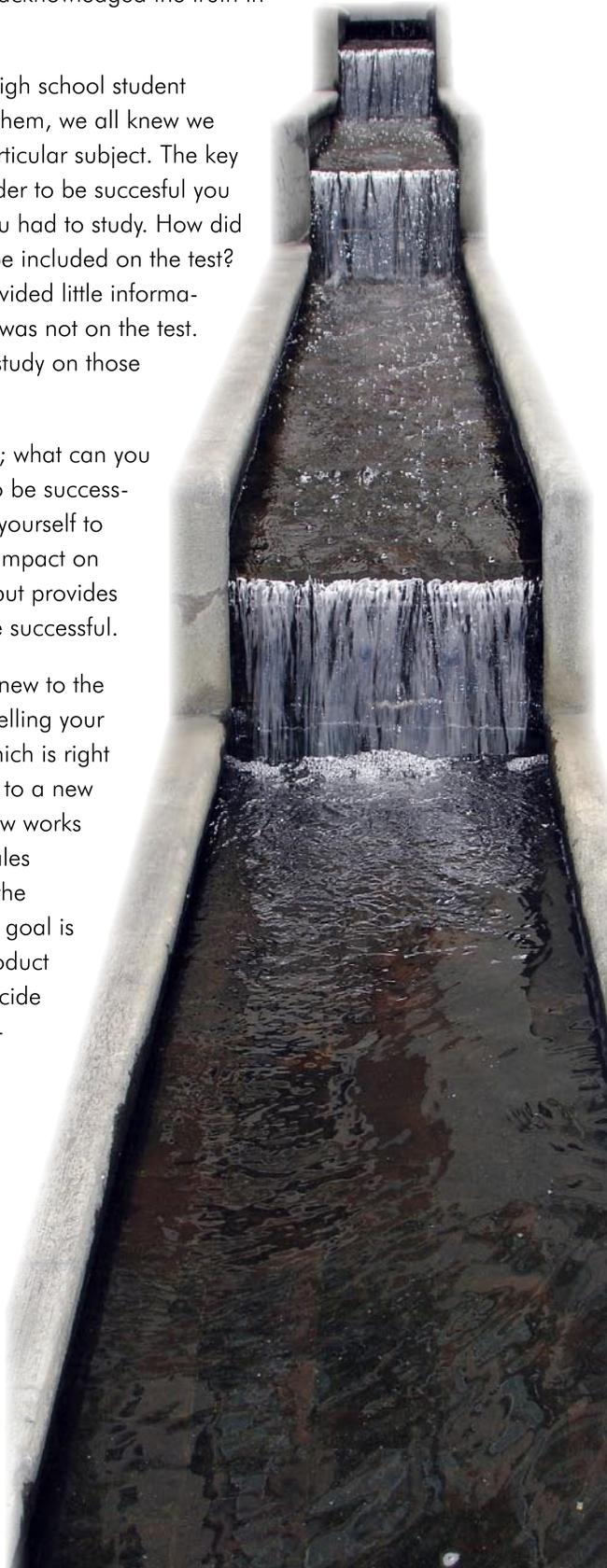
This holds true for gathering information. Which information could prove useful; what can you store for another day? This is a question that needs to be answered if you are to be successful at networking. When you become part of the flow of information, you allow yourself to gather and maintain bits of information that may have immediate or long term impact on your objectives. Getting in the flow does not necessarily lead you to a solution but provides you with the content necessary to identify some of the areas required to become successful.

Let's imagine that you are trying to sell one of your products, a widget. It is not new to the market, but your widget has some features that are quite unique. You've been selling your widget for about a year, and have a general understanding of its sales cycle, which is right around eight weeks. These eight weeks start when you first introduce the widget to a new prospect and continue until they actually purchase it. Your widget sales cycle now works as a framework or timeline that helps you gauge your movement through the sales process. You know that if you're not moving from step to step within that cycle, the likelihood of making the sale drastically decreases. Throughout this period your goal is to gather as much information as possible about the prospect. How can this product benefit them? What are they doing now without your widget? When will they decide to buy your widget? These are merely a few of the questions that need to be answered to determine the likelihood of closing the deal.

Essentially, the sales cycle has become a date-driven process involving the collection of information that can assist you in making a sale. Is there more than one person involved in making the decision to purchase your widget? When do they plan on buying your widget or a similar product? Is the prospect aware of the widget's price? These questions can take one day or a number of days to answer. Whatever the length of time, if you're not in the flow of information, you're much less likely to close the sale.

The above situation is but one illustration of the importance of being in the flow. If you're not gathering information in whatever you do, you're not growing as a person. Whether it's for business, career or a simple hobby, the influx of information adds to our knowledge base, allowing us to make

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# Lack of 'Social Capital' Impedes Performance

Published in the UK HR Zone News ([www.hrzone.co.uk](http://www.hrzone.co.uk)) on June 23, 2008

Barriers to the development of 'social capital' in the workplace mean that half of UK employees feel that their work is not appreciated by their employer, research from the Workplace Intelligence Unit (WUI) has found.

The survey also discovered that many employees do not believe that their employer acts in their best interests, while 40% of respondents felt their colleagues did not value their time.

The findings were published in the WUI's 'Social Capital in the Workplace' report, which analyses the factors barring the development of social capital and preventing a group of employees becoming an efficient team.

"Social capital itself can be summarised as the networks of interaction that we all instinctively understand as a sense of community," it said.



The report found that email was the most commonly used form of communication, even within departments, ahead of face-to-face or telephone conversations. However, it added that the quality of interaction deteriorates the more remote a form of communication gets.

Limiting face-to-face communication can be detrimental, explained Ann Brewin, one of the founders of the WUI. "One of the great things about social capital is its impact on knowledge sharing," she said. "It's far more effective and cost efficient for people to learn from one another informally on a day-to-day basis than to implement formal training schemes."

## A Simple Lesson to Successful Networking: Get in the Flow! *continued from page 3*

decisions that lead to solutions. If you're not in the flow, the chances of getting useful pieces of information that can complete the picture are much less likely. As in the sales situation above, the more information you gather, the better your ability to determine whether you have a chance at being successful. By being in the flow, you have a chance of gathering information that will assist you in reaching your full potential. If you're not in the flow, many of the opportunities you identify will remain only opportunities. Converting these opportunities to solutions does not happen overnight and requires the ability to see things through. Getting in the flow will allow you to maximize the number of contacts who can provide information to help you reach a solution.

### Here are the 5 top strategies for getting in the flow:

- 1. Acknowledging that information is always available, we just need to find it.**
- 2. Research your network and what information exists within it.**
- 3. Be willing to share it.**
- 4. Create a knowledge repository.**
- 5. Don't be afraid to ask for information.**

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 Hatala 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](http://www.flowork.com) and click "contact us" to discuss your needs.



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