

## Learn to Stand Out from the Crowd

Let's pretend you're an accountant, recently laid off and starting the first day of your job search. You're resolved and ready; you've cut your hair, bought the perfect interview suit, and printed multiple copies of the perfect resume (with only a few extra initials added to your name). You're hitting the pavement and you're going to find the perfect job.

At the end of the first unsuccessful month, you're feeling a little stressed but tell yourself it's normal to hit a few deadends before you find a way to the highway. Month two ends without an offer; no sweat, you're qualified and it'll happen soon. The third month concludes, you're feeling discouraged but tell yourself you won't need another cash advance for next month's mortgage payment. By the time the sixth month rolls around (the average job search takes 4 to 6 months even in the best of times) you find yourself agonizing to the cashier at your local grocery store...only to find out her brother, whose bakery hit the jackpot with a new cookie recipe, spent the last four months looking for a bookkeeper. And he finally hired one last week.

The job market is tight and difficult to navigate without the proper resources. That's why it's so important to drive with your social network as your GPS system! It can be intimidating, daunting, nervewracking — hey, downright embarrassing — to face individuals you know and asking for help, but if it guarantees you the perfect opportunity, the higher paying position, the ultimate dream job, would you be willing to take the chance?

I've said it before: who you know is very important, but always be sure to consider who *they* know and how *they* may benefit you in the long run! This principle applies to corporations as well; even the most financially secure businesses can benefit from the knowledge of who lies just beyond their circle of contacts!

As I always say, 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](mailto:newsletter@flowork.com). See you next month!



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

This month's FlowTIP:  
Take the stress  
out of networking.  
See page 3 for more information.

## What's New?

### The Job Search Management Board Going Online

The purple job search management board will be going online in the next two months. We're in the process of looking for beta testers, so if you're interested, please contact us at [betat testers@flowork.com](mailto:betat testers@flowork.com).

### Online Social Exploration Learning Form (SELF)

The SELF will also be going online and will be ready for purchase in the next two months. The SELF measures an individual's perception of their comfort level of accessing social resources. This valuable tool includes a goal setting module, which allows users to establish a link between their contacts and goals, as well as a connection strategy component. You will

be able to purchase tokens as an individual or organization. Details to come soon.

### 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 are now available online in the Learning Community at Flowork (visit [www.socialnetworkaudit.com/community\\_online\\_training.php](http://www.socialnetworkaudit.com/community_online_training.php)).

Flowork is pleased to offer free access to these training programs for staff and clients of all non-profit organizations. Email us at [onlinetraining@flowork.com](mailto:onlinetraining@flowork.com) to gain non-profit access and to see if the the training programs are right for your staff and

# Business Networking

## *In the Age of Facebook*

The traditional global economy is currently undergoing a massive shift from its twentieth century manufacturing focus to one fueled by the information age. As such, placing importance on forging stronger relationships has never been more pertinent.

With the advent of social networking via the Internet, there now exists a window of opportunity for networking that businesses simply cannot afford to ignore. Business is truly global, and “who you know” has never before in history involved such geographical distance.

Moreover, as the Chinese and Indian powerhouse economies gain steam — while our domestic economic stability looks progressively more uncertain — experts are now suggesting that survival requires a much more strategic response from the global business community. The key to the success of this can only be found in bridging international and inter-departmental divides. According to experts, leveraging the potential of business relationships is key, and it can be best accomplished through strategic “social networking.”

It is true, social networking acquired its present fame in the public eye via the popularity of personal networking sites like Facebook, but its applicability for businesses that choose to apply networking skills training company-wide cannot be ignored. As we’ve said in past issues, it’s not just about “who you know” in business, but also *what you know about them* and *what they know about you*.

Flowork founder, Dr. John-Paul Hatala is an expert in social capital theory, which addresses these very issues. He travels around the world attempting to bridge the gap that exists between theoretical insight and pragmatic business application. Poignantly, he notes that strategic networking is a teachable skill, offering companies a huge potential return on investment when they train all employees to think strategically about all of their business relationships. After

all, what good are “relationship resources” if a business cannot effectively leverage them? This is known as *strategic social networking*.

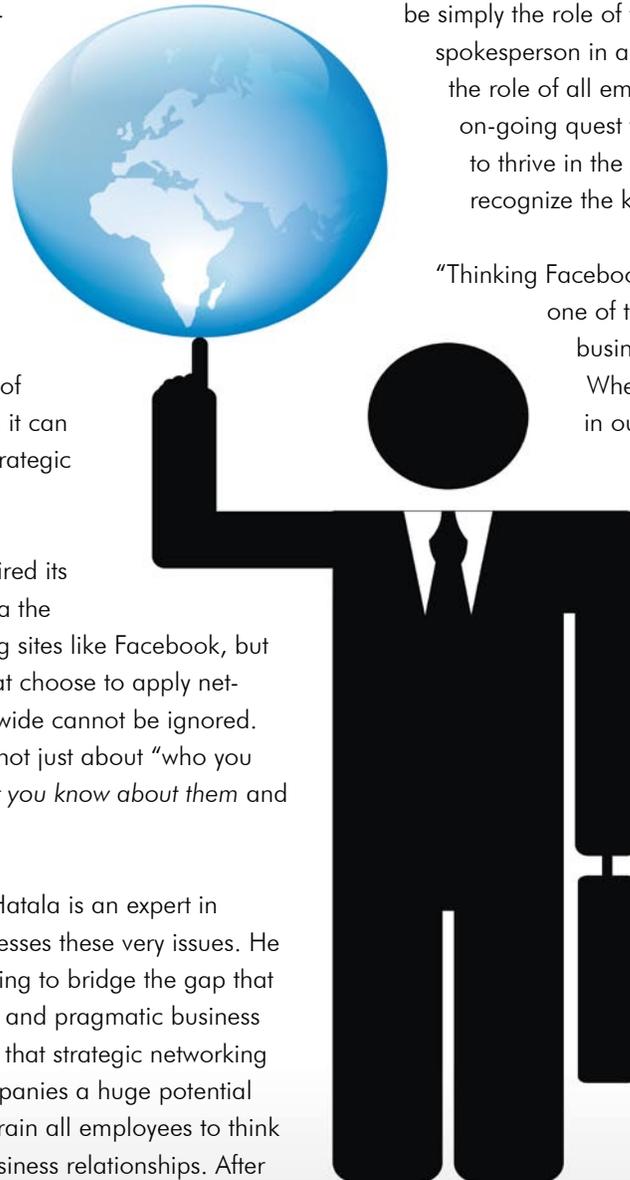
Social capital theorists cite the importance of leveraging the potential that is innately present in the existing relationships within the business — for example, relationships of its current employees. Looking to the Facebook analogy for a model, we can observe that those who are strategic about leveraging the potential from their online “friendships” benefit the most.

Businesses cannot afford to be any less strategic in leveraging the intrinsic potential of their networks. Indeed, what used to be simply the role of the company sales force or effective PR spokesperson in a successful company is now becoming the role of all employees. Not unlike a Facebook user’s on-going quest for “friends,” global businesses that wish to thrive in the present economic uncertainty need to recognize the key opportunity this implicitly suggests.

“Thinking Facebook” in terms of business strategy could be one of the lowest cost options available for any business seeking to survive the credit crunch. Whether it is applied to our personal lives or in our business endeavours, the process of smart and beneficial networking does not change. Smart personal networking is yielding ample opportunities to individuals, so we can easily imagine the possibilities this offers companies with an otherwise good product or service as they seek to contend in the international marketplace.

What’s more, strategic networking even offers significant benefits when properly applied internally, since better inter-departmental relationships will naturally yield improved productivity.

Of course, talking about leveraging relationships and actually knowing how to do it effectively are two



different things. Most people scarcely know how to successfully avail themselves of their own personal network's resources let alone motivate employees to do so for the good of the company bottom line. This obstacle to motivation highlights perhaps the greatest challenge of implementing this kind of training initiative.

After all, why should an individual employee in a company care about being a "better networker" on behalf of their company? The employee's first response to receiving this kind of training might very well be, "Why? What's in it for me?" Ironically, social networking experts suggest that this perceived problem may very well be moot, since applying this kind of training contains real and measurable gains for both employer and employee alike.

Dr. Hatala suggests that the aforementioned problem of employee motivation need not be the obstacle many might anticipate. The individual employee also directly benefits, since strategically leveraging and developing relationships on behalf of a company simultaneously develops one's personal circle of contacts. Employees are highly motivated then, not only because of the potential for internal promotional opportunities, but also because they are concurrently creating a personal job "safety net" they are creating for themselves. After all, they will have exposed themselves to others in the industry, a very valuable asset should they ever face job loss.

This investment in the employees' networking skills has a definite two-way benefit for both employer and employee. It fosters a greater sense of loyalty and belonging for the employee on the one hand, while yielding higher productivity returns for the employer on the other. Clichés aside, everybody wins.

For global businesses, the benefits of providing this kind of training for all employees are considerable. For one, it can increase international marketplace visibility and augment internal productivity levels. At the same time, it greatly impacts

staff performance in numerous positive ways. The bottom line is that this kind of training allows companies to more readily meet their organizational objectives, both internally and externally. Its universal applicability to any industry makes it a no-brainer for businesses seeking to be competitive in today's economy.

In a world of excessively large and oft-labelled "faceless" corporations, leveraging the relationships that exist between companies may be the determining factor for the success of some organizations versus others. Leveraging the resource of "who you know" and "what they know about you" allows a business to cross all divides, from the international and the inter-departmental. Companies that see their relationship's intrinsic value and respond by training all employees to think strategically about all their business relationships (both internally and externally) stand the best chance to weather the storm of the present-day, globally-driven economic realities.



## This Month's flowTIP:

**Take the stress out of networking.** Social networking can be an extremely stressful experience, mainly because approaching people for help presents a challenging task for most people. Always at stake, though, are the many opportunities we might have to tap into our social resources and efficiently accomplish our goals. A number of factors affect our ability and confidence to connect with others, and it's important that we learn to manage these. You must first be realistic about your networking expectations. The likelihood of connecting with someone who can actually provide the information you require is very low. It's much more common to find the assistance from someone your *contact* knows — which, we must acknowledge right from the start, takes time. Nine times out of ten, the reward to networking is quite delayed. When we are aware of this, though, we can manage our expectations much more realistically and increase our chances of being successful. Networking will undoubtedly be stressful at the beginning. However, as you practice and continue to keep it at the forefront of your activities, it will become an easier — and ultimately less stressful — experience for you.

# Top 5 Ways To **NOT** Get A Job In Today's Economy

It seems that there is an abundance of job-hunting "advice" being proffered on job search boards by so called "experts." At the same time, common sense seems in short supply.

So-called "experts" tell us to either supplement our already highly specialized resumes with further accreditations to somehow outmaneuver the competition, or that our job experience just doesn't cut it alongside our many faceless competitors (or conversely that we have too much of it). This reduces the job hunter to nothing more than a few extra letters of designation on a business card. After all, there is always someone with more professional accreditations than you, even if you're the better candidate for reasons not made apparent on a resume. So, how can we avoid this job-hunting trap and distinguish ourselves among other applicants?

It is ironic that we waste hours sitting behind our computer, staring at long lists of impossible requirements for a company's "ideal" candidate — someone who, let's face it, rarely exists.

Common sense suggests that this shotgun job hunting approach simply does not work well at all, that it is defeating and highly inefficient even at the best of times. Furthermore, statistics suggest that most of us have rarely, if ever, obtained our best opportunities from this kind of approach, instead noting that 80% of job opportunities are found through our contacts. Nonetheless, we continue staring at the screen, hoping that dream opportunity will appear.

Real experts (that is, those with solid evidence on their side) are telling us that the old adage of "it's not what you know, but who you know" is more than just an irritating commentary on a reality beyond one's control. In fact, the answer to one's job hunt woes very likely does lay within his or her own social network — our very best job-hunting resource — and few of us ever correctly know how to leverage it with any degree of efficiency. With the size of today's organizations and the sheer geography involved with of the typical job hunter's scope, the issue is not remaining competitive. It's simply that it now involves so many people that it is difficult to distinguish oneself amongst the hundreds of other candidates.

Even armed with the above-noted 80% statistic, however, few of us know how to leverage the potential goldmine our own circle of contacts (friends, family, and colleagues) can yield us. After all, consider that each one of our contacts has their own circle of contacts. That greatly expands our own job search "reach," but requires an artful networking skill most of us lack. The good news: this is a teachable skill.

The Flowork model offers comprehensive insight into the "dos" and "don'ts" of strategic networking. Without this approach, we are not only wasting our time, we can almost be certain to NOT find the job we are

hoping for. Here are the top 5 sure-fire ways to NOT get a job in today's economy:

## **1. DO NOT bother to Know Your Own Network**

Information gathering is key here. Nothing is more detrimental to a job seeker's efforts than failing to know who really is in their own social network. This, of course, brings into play the job seeker's skill in doing so. (Read: the 'organizationally lazy' need not apply.)

## **2. DO NOT bother to Know Yourself and what you have to offer**

Knowing and being able to quickly rattle off exactly what you have to offer is essential when it comes to strategic networking in the job hunt. This includes your background, experience and education. Coupled with clear goals and objectives, is there any excuse for NOT approaching others in your network? (see item # 3)

## **3. DO NOT bother to Contact Others**

This is the tough part, right? Yet, stepping out of our comfort zone and initiating contact is fundamental to a successful strategic approach. Moreover, the individual's ability to "cultivate, nurture and manage network relationships is key" according to Dr. Hatala. In other words, waiting for your social network to come to you with the information you need, will obviously fail miserably. (It's much less awkward if you've applied the previous step).

## **4. DO NOT bother to Ask Others for Feedback**

Being willing to accept others comments and solicit their feedback, is key — and often overlooked. The failure to solicit feedback could present a major setback, since it sometimes offers a key insight into a specific problem we may be having in our job hunt. We've got to ask for it and be willing to hear what they have to say. We may just hear something invaluable.

## **5. DO NOT bother with present-day Technology**

Taking advantage of the reach of today's technology helps expand our reach, and social networking websites like MySpace or Facebook abound. They can be of great assistance in the job hunt/career advancement battle. Understanding technology and all of its uses is fundamentally important, if one is to avail oneself of all it has to offer. Most social networking websites, however, are designed with user-friendliness in mind.

So, avoid the tips that are implicit here, and you have a sure-fire recipe for NOT finding the position you are after (or, more importantly, are best suited for). Sadly, so many are doing precisely this, while the solution to their job-hunt woes likely lies right in front of them. The solution to the job hunt is not likely found in some blogger's pseudo-expert advice page, but rather in one's very own social network.

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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