

Falling into Networking Changes

Fall is fast approaching, and the change of season should help to remind us to change our own networking mindframe. We've explored the idea of a networking club on page 2, and I would hazard a guess that many of you would find this to be a big change to the difficult task of finding a new job.

How about a change that would affect multiple people at once instead of you as an individual? Page 3's article details the importance of minimizing organizational dysfunction.

I'm most excited that this month marks the official unveiling of our newest product, *The Game of Networking: The Board Game*. We'll have the first orders — so many of them, thanks to all of you! — shipped by the end of the month, but the response has been so positive that it wouldn't surprise me to find that we're still maniacly packing boxes and shipping them out to the masses well into the winter.

As usual, I encourage you to forward newsworthy articles or ideas for future editions. Feedback and article ideas can be emailed to newsletter@flowork.com at anytime to be evaluated for placement in the next suitable edition.

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



This month's FlowTIP:
Whether you're trying to get in shape or complete a project at work, your motivation plays a critical factor in your success.
See page 2 for more information.

What's New?

The Game of Networking: The Board Game

In the next couple of weeks, the *Game of Networking: The Board Game* will be ready for shipping. There has been an overwhelming response for pre-orders, so if you're not on the list make sure you are by going to www.gameof-networking.com to reserve your copy. A forum section will be shortly added to the website so that sharing of experiences playing the game can be captured for everyone to share.



The Game of Networking Presented at the LACTE Regional Conference 2008

Martha Sealy, a College and Career Transition Coordinator for Region 2 in Louisiana presented the *Game of Networking: The Board Game* at the 2008 LACTE Meeting in Lafayette, Louisiana. Teachers and administrators were present to hear Martha present the benefits

of learning the concepts of social capital in a simulated networked environment.

Flowork Partners with Icon Events

Flowork and Icon Events have teamed together to deliver the *Game of Networking: The Board Game* as an actual live event. Icon Events are known for their organization of events ranging from music performances to corporate activities will lead this new endeavor. With the same concept as the board game, the event will actually involve the participation of people moving through the same process. Instead of 8 players, the event, dubbed the human board game, can play with up to 1000 players. This is ideal for educational, conference, corporate or any other event geared to bringing people together while at the same time simulating the social networking phenomenon.

For more information, please email humanboardgame@flowork.com.



FOUND...The Hidden Job Market!!

The Benefits of Creating a Network Hub Club

Submitted by Tarin Lewis, Project Manager, CERC

"It's not just what you know, but who you know..." It's an adage that has been muttered for years, especially with regard to gaining employment. Most sources written on successful job search techniques stress the importance of networking as 80% (or more) of jobs available are not listed.

At the Community Employment Resource Centre (CERC) in Colburg, Ontario, the "Hub Club" was designed through funding from Employment Ontario. This networking service for clients, modeled after Flowwork, attempts to facilitate a connection between community employment needs and clients. The concept is derived from identifying overlapping needs in the community in order to develop both Social Capital and "Social Ability."

Through the funding received in March 2008, CERC was fortunate to receive training from leaders in both fields. A session on Social Capital was led by Flowwork International, "Social Ability" by Suzie Routh and Madelaine Currelly.

Social Capital, very simply put, is one's personal resources based on their knowledge of contacts and their ability to access and utilize those contacts to achieve a goal (such as employment or training). A key ingredient for increasing Social Capital is "Social Ability," which is loosely defined as one's skill to successfully interact with others, to communicate ideas and thoughts effectively and to present themselves in a positive manner. It is believed that the better one's "Social Ability," the better able they are to increase

their Social Capital. Hence, weak ties are broadened to secure meaningful employment.

CERC's goal is to act as a weak tie to its clients. Each office (Cobourg and Port Hope, both on

the North shore of Lake Ontario, and Colborne Outreach) has an area designated as the "Hub Club," including an enlarged Flowwork networking board, Flowwork self assessment tool, stress and nutrition centre, printed resources, handouts and visual aids to assist the clients in their job search. All materials are geared toward improving a client's chance of success in achieving their employment or training goals. Leads are posted on the networking board; these listings represent the "hidden job market" since they are not generally posted on the job bank or in the local classifieds. These hidden leads are, rather, shared client to client, staff to client, employer to staff, or employer to previous client.

In the less than two months that the Hub Club has been active, there have been approximately 40 opportunities posted (with networking as the only means of advertisement). At least 25% of the employment postings are already filled by CERC clients. In many cases, an employer has filled more than one position through the Hub Club. Clients seem equally thrilled with the service and have been quick to share their success and provide leads for other CERC members. The main advantage to clients is that the competition for each of these posted positions is far less because fewer individuals are aware they even exist.

Although only in its early stages, the response from clients and employers alike has been very positive. Here's what they're saying:

"I wouldn't have been able to do it without CERC – a very positive connection!" -Client

"CERC is always seeking innovative ways to assist clients – it appears as though the Hub Club is just that tool!!" - Employer



This month's FlowTIP:

Whether you're trying to get in shape or complete a project at work, your motivation plays a critical factor in your success. The same goes for networking. What motivates you to continue to network in a meaningful, mutually beneficial way? Research at Flowwork on this topic has identified two simple ways; one, be realistic and two, maintain an appropriate activity level. If you're not realistic about what you hope to gain from networking the less likely you are to see success and the less likely you are to continue to network. Make sure you're realistic on what you hope to accomplish (set SMART goals) and determine who in your network is most likely to help you. Additionally, if your networking activity is limited (which is essentially telling everyone what you hope to accomplish) the opportunity for identifying those contacts who can help is drastically reduced. It's really simple – be realistic about what you expect from your network and maintain an appropriate level of networking activity and ultimately you'll remain more motivated to network.

Minimizing Organizational Dysfunction: Improving Employee Performance

Whether you're an organization employing 500 people or a staff of five, the need for staff to work cohesively is paramount to maximizing performance. Many organizations today tend to focus on the mechanics of operations (i.e., procedures) and lose sight of the impact relationships have on organizational effectiveness.

"Most organizations are dysfunctional, there's no avoiding that, although some are more dysfunctional than others" states Dr. J.P. Hatala, Flowork founder. He goes on to explain. "Dysfunction impacts an organization's ability to successfully implement mechanisms that make the wheels of productivity turn. If ultimate organizational effectiveness is to be reached, these issues of dysfunction need to be addressed and minimized to the point where change can occur."

The question, then, becomes one of: how do organizations minimize the dysfunction so that adequate levels can be maintained in order to function as a team at a higher level?

We need to start off by asking additional questions. How does management get along with front-line staff? How do team leaders work with their team? How do colleagues treat one another? These are but a few of the questions that can be addressed to determine the level of dysfunction within an organization.

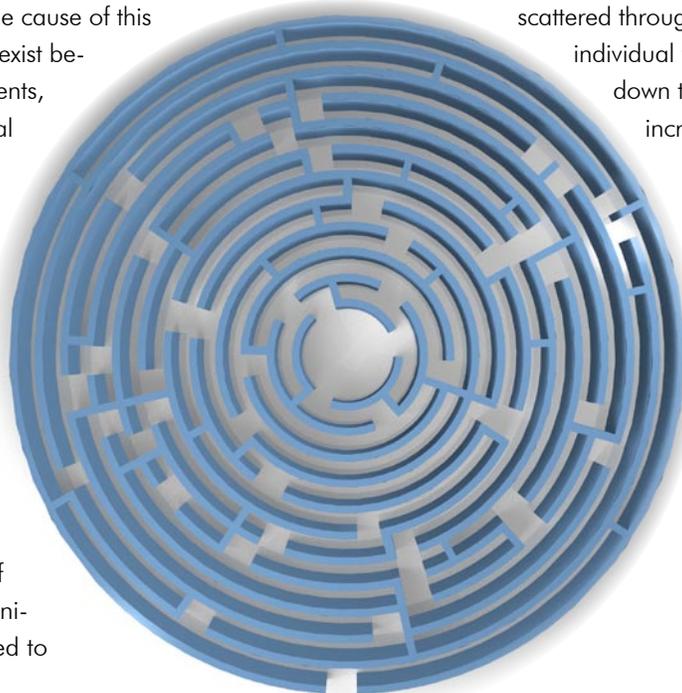
There is a natural tension that exists at every level within an organization. The greater the tension, the more likely it is impacting performance. In many cases, the cause of this tension is the hidden agendas that exist between various individuals, departments, units or groups. It is therefore critical to uncover all agendas in order to successfully get buy-in.

How do we uncover hidden agendas? The organizational agenda should be transparent, although with most organizations this is not necessarily always the case. It is important that the vision, mission, goals and values are communicated and engrained in the very fabric of the organization. If not, a communication strategy should be developed to get the word out.

Another way to do this is by aligning these elements to any change initiatives that are introduced. For example, with a training program, it is imperative that the content and desired outcomes be aligned with the direction of the organization. This can be included in the actual training content and reviewed throughout the program. The learning output should be aligned to the organizational direction, therefore increasing the likelihood the new learning will be transferred back to the job. If you want to make sure that non-management agendas are dealt with, include them in the planning process.

Now that the organizational agendas have been addressed, it's time to turn our attention to individual employees. There are a number of ways to do this, but there are two easy methods to consider initially. The first is to identify individual goals of each employee. This is typically done through performance reviews but is seldom aligned with the goals of the organization. Staff should be able to express what they hope to accomplish on the job and in their career, but should be responsible for linking them to the organizational goals as well. This will kill two birds with one stone, so to speak, as it will ensure that the employee is thinking strategically and will also reinforce the goals of the company.

The second method in addressing staff agendas is to get staff members to create performance paths. These are maps that outline optimal performance in any given function. Once the paths are created, goals can be aligned. Theoretically, if goals are scattered throughout the path and are realistic, the individual will be more motivated to continue down the performance path, ultimately increasing productivity.



If organizational and individual agendas can be aligned, the likelihood for staff buy-in is dramatically increased. When staff are on the same page, the ability to lower dysfunctional levels is more likely to occur. Keep in mind that dysfunction will always exist. The key is to minimize it as much as possible.

Social Networking for Business Uncovered

Submitted on www.bestsyndication.com by *Bian Salins* on August 22, 2008

A social network can be defined as any type of community for people with shared interests and activities, who are interested in exploring these interests and activities with others. With the advent of the Internet, social networking sites have allowed individuals and businesses from around the world to connect for this endeavour.

This is obviously the appeal of the Internet to many, as it is in a sense one large group network where people engage in activities of interest which connect them to others and to the products and services they purchase. Social networking sites appeal to consumers of all age-groups and social strata, from the more generalised, generic demographics to ones catering to specific niche interests. Apart from the communities these social networking sites provide, blogs, video and photo sharing are also great ways for individuals to share information.

From a business perspective, it is important to have a presence where your prospective customers are. In 2007, nearly 15 million households in Britain (roughly 61%) had Internet access, an increase of over a million households since 2006 and nearly 4 million since 2002. Additionally, 84% of those with access to the Internet had a broadband connection, up from 69% in 2006. It is therefore imperative that businesses - from small businesses to blue-chip corporations - create an online presence to raise their profile, and marketing via social networks is a powerful supplement to a company website and email.

Marketing to consumers online is different from traditional advertising in that it is targeting active, rather than passive consumers. For example, PPC (Pay-Per-Click) adverts only appear next to organic search results after a consumer has entered a search string into a search engine. This is different to broadcast mediums such as television adverts, which are seen by individuals who are really just looking to watch television programming.

Using social networks to reach consumers is done most effectively by presenting solutions to issues and questions, rather than the solicitation of traditional advertising, as consumers using social networks are usually seeking solutions to things happening in their lives and not looking for a hard sell. Thus, social network marketing should be thought of less as a campaign and more as a long-term investment in your brand.

Some social networks allow companies to join for free, while others charge, and some will also allow you to advertise onsite as well. In all cases, you will do best by taking an active part in a business community which closely matches your own industry and begin offering relevant and useful information and solutions. Long-term, social network participation will improve your online presence, increase revenues and branding opportunities, lead to greater consumer interaction and, if done effectively, will be a cost-effective addition to a successful online marketing strategy.

Bian Salins is the Managing Editor of BT Tradespace - an online community where businesses can advertise and sell products and services, and everyone has the opportunity to shop, chat and share their opinion.



Flowork offers the benefits of social capital to anyone of any age. The ducation 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 and click "contact us" to discuss your needs.



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