

The Give and Take of Networking

The seasons are about to change. The hot stuffiness of Summer will soon become the cooler breezes of Autumn. It's only a matter of weeks before you're adjusting your wardrobe, your diet, your daily routine to accommodate the transition in nature.

It is, similarly, important to also transition your networking skills to accommodate the changes around you. With the economy the way it is, and the job hunt (or candidate hunt, if you're on the hiring end) so much more difficult to navigate, you are likely reaching out to your social resources to gain a leg up. You've learned how to access your resources and focus your energies on those outlets that offer the most advantageous results. But as you take from your network, are you giving back to it as well?

I invite you to utilize this month's issue as a way to actively seek a positive transition in your networking habits. If you're not seeing appropriate results from your resources, perhaps there are ways you can give of yourself to gain a bit more in return? In order to succeed, you must be willing to put forth the effort, to seek out opportunities to give, to dedicate energy to a contact who may, in turn, offer you a step up. In the end, you'll not only be one step closer to achieving your goals, you'll also know you've offered something in return for the assistance required to get there!

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. See you in October!

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



This month's FlowTIP:
*Gaining focus is
key to networking.*

See page 2 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.

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



Your Social Capital Savings Account

Being Wary of a Zero Balance

Most of us have had a savings account in our lifetime. Utilization is pretty simple: you put money in so you can save it for tomorrow. If you continue to take money out and fail to replenish it, eventually it will end up at a zero balance.

This simple concept holds true for social capital as well. The more you take from your network and the less you give back, the greater possibility that your contacts will stop sharing resources with you.

There are situations for both “give” and “take” when it comes to tapping into the resources existing within a network, and the approach for each is completely different. Taking from the network for some comes quite naturally, while for others it’s an uncomfortable process. On the other hand, some individuals have no problem giving to the network but become jaded from that fact that they’re not creating win-win scenarios and thus will stop over time. Finding a balance between “the “give” and the “take” is key if you’re going to benefit from social capital. Here are some strategies for both:

“Giving” to your network

- Make sure you reflect on what you can actually *offer* your network. If you consider it thoroughly, you’re bound to find something useful that you can offer others.
- Always remember that a great way to give back to your network is to introduce your contacts to each other.
- Share new information with those whom you feel would benefit from it the most. This gives you a great reason to deliver it in person or to disseminate through social media websites (like Twitter, Facebook).
- Volunteer with organizations or simply help out in a neighbor. This is a powerful way to “give” and you will be surprised how many people you can meet this way.
- Share knowledge that is applicable to as many people as possible. Ensure that the knowledge you are sharing is targeted.

“Taking” from your network

- The first thing you need to do is set goals, and it’s important to be sure you’re able to clearly articulate what it is you’re trying to accomplish. This is one way to motivate yourself to reach and connect with people that can potentially help you.
- Determine how you feel about connecting with others. If you feel that you are inconveniencing people by asking them for help, take a look at how much you’re “giving” to your network and make sure they balance out. Networking is about both the “give” and the “take.”
- Think strategically about your networking efforts. Once you’ve linked goals to contacts in your network, develop connections strategies that are going to increase the likelihood of the individual meeting with you to discuss them helping you.
- Don’t go in for the kill right off the bat. Even if you’re looking for employment, don’t go to your contact list and directly ask for a job. Instead, ask for information about a particular industry. Work your way up to the “do you know of any job opportunities” question.
- Maximize the opportunity to leverage an individual’s help when you meet with them. Make sure you’re clear on what you want to accomplish, how the individual can help and outline the next steps.
- Most importantly, *always get commitment.*

Finding a balance between “giving” and “taking” is critical if you want to leverage the social capital you have. If you don’t find a balance, the network will either stop giving to you or you will lose faith in the network.

The key is to build trust among your network members so that they know you are willing to give back as much as you ask for. Thinking strategically about your social capital can help you acquire the necessary resources to accomplish your goals in a timely manner.

This Month’s flowTIP:

Gaining focus is key to networking. If you want to be successful at networking, gaining focus is one of the most important things that you can do. Realize first and foremost that the benefits derived from tapping into social resources are long-term and that there is often a delayed reward to networking. With this understanding, you are then able to focus on building mutually beneficial relationships. The long-term commitment for taking an opportunity that’s linked to a goal to a solution is more likely. You may feel discouraged to connect with someone you assume will not have an immediate value to you. But instead of focusing on what you can get from the contact right away, focus instead on who that individual is connected to and how you may help them in the future. This slight change will help you to keep your eye on potential opportunities that otherwise maybe missed.

Blogging Social Capital

Top 10 Ways

TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO GIVE BACK TO YOUR NETWORK

Social networking is not just an opportunity to take – it's a powerful chance to make yourself useful to others who can help you down the road.

If you're in the midst of a job search, you know that networks are important. Powerful. Essential. Most jobs are found through some kind of networking contact, so bolstering your relationships with all members of your network must be among your first priorities as you pursue your next role.

Effective networking is all about giving. And although the holiday giving season is far behind us, when it comes to your network, giving is a year-long activity.

One of the best gifts you can give to members of your network is help in building their personal brands. When we make others look good, we look good – to them! So consider these free or very low-cost, Web 2.0-focused personal-branding presents. It's time to demonstrate your personal-brand attribute of generosity and your knowledge of social media.

Here are my Top 10 tips:

1. **Recommend people on LinkedIn.** Nothing says "I care about you" in a Web 2.0 world like a positive reference posted on your LinkedIn profile. To do this, just ensure they are in your network, then click on "Recommend." You are helping make their LinkedIn profile more valuable and credible – the best kind of personal branding.
2. **Add them to your Facebook friends.** In the world of social networking, virtual popularity is even better than real-world popularity.
3. **Buy a personal domain name for them** (i.e., www.williamarruda.com). For a year, it only costs about \$9. You can search for and buy domain names at www.godaddy.com. Even if they aren't ready for their own Web site, buying a domain name is like buying a plot of land: You own it so that when you are ready, you can build on it.
4. **Write a blog post about them or reference them in a comment on a relevant blog.** To find blogs around specific topics, enter your keywords at www.technorati.com. You can also link to their Web site or blog or put their blog in your blogroll. (We all know how much Google loves inbound links.)
5. **Discover their Google Quotient for them.** Use the Online ID Calculator to help them understand how their personal brand shows up online. In the new world of work, if you don't show up in Google, you don't exist. So help them build their online profile by showing them how they currently show up on the World Wide Web. Use the calculator after Googling them, then e-mail them the results. www.onlineidcalculator.com. It's free!
6. **Quote or reference them in an article you are writing or a presentation you are delivering** – and make sure they know about the reference. Post the article or slides online.
7. If you write a press release about your article or presentation, **include their name in all free press-release search engines** like www.freepressrelease.com.
8. **Provide positive feedback.** Rate their YouTube video and share their video with others in your network. Creating and uploading videos can be a lot of work, recognize their efforts. www.youtube.com. For your network contacts who are authors, write a review of their book or ebook and post it at amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com. www.amazon.com, www.barnesandnoble.com.
9. **Create Google Alerts for your close professional contacts.** Google Alerts allows you to stay on top of new content related to any person, company or topic. When you establish alerts for your network members, you will be notified each time they are mentioned in a blog or quoted in article. Then you can send them a congratulatory e-mail. www.google.com/alerts.
10. And here's a Web 2.0 gift courtesy of my own company: **Give your contacts a link to 360Reach so they can perform a personal-branding assessment.** Fifteen-day passwords to the newly launched version of 360Reach are free – everyone's favorite price! www.reachcc.com/360v4register. You can also perform your own assessment and include them in your list of respondents. Asking them for feedback about you shows that you respect their opinion.

Remember, networking is all about giving; and during this recessionary period, helping people with their personal branding is a valuable and appreciated gift.

Posted by William Arruda at TheLadders.com.

William Arruda, the personal branding guru, is the founder of Reach, the global leader in personal branding, and the co-author of "Career Distinction: Stand Out by Building Your Brand (J.Wiley)."

Networking 101

Give, Get in the Back Door, and Get Hired

Most people looking for a job will tell you they are networking.

And most people are wrong.

All you have to do is carry a small notebook around, log how you spend your time during the day, and you'll likely discover you weren't networking as much as you thought. Probably not even 25%.

Networking is like dieting. Most people on a diet will tell you they don't snack between meals. And most people are wrong.

Just tape a piece of paper to the fridge, write down every morsel you stick in your mouth during the day, and you'll likely discover you were eating more than you thought.

All of which means what, exactly?

If your job search is struggling, it probably says more about what you're doing (and what you're not) than what the economy or employers are doing.

And since most jobs are found via networking, what you do (and what you don't) when you think you're networking will largely determine how fast you find work.

So here are three ways to improve your networking

1) Give to Get: "We understand networking intellectually, yet we don't always do it. When you say 'networking' to most people, they think it's what they do to find a job, but to the most effective networkers, it's what they do every day," says Dave Opton, Chairman & Founder of ExecuNet, a networking community for executives.

While many folks dread the thought of approaching others, hat-in-hand, to ask for job leads, this is backwards, according to Opton. "People should not feel as if it's selfish to network. If you go through your day behaving like the person most of us would like to think we are -- happy to help and not looking for something directly in return -- the networking goes easily."

So, what's the best way to do it?

"We have a phrase," says Opton. "Information is the currency of effective networking."

That means, no matter who you are, you have knowledge or experience that other people don't. Even your time can be valuable, such as if you volunteer to help someone with a project. Whatever it is, offer it to others. Then watch your networking efforts take off.

Tip: To network effectively, give first. The job leads will follow.

2) Try the Back Door: With the growth of social networking web sites, it's never been easier to make contact with people on the inside of companies you want to work for.

And those contacts can give you an "inside" advantage when applying for jobs, according to Doug Berg, Founder and Chief Innovation Officer at Jobs2Web.com.

"One way to research a company is to visit Facebook and LinkedIn to find out who works there, make contact with those people, and ask them about the company and its culture," says Berg.

About 30% of companies offer referral programs that can pay their employees \$1,000 or more to refer new hires, according to Berg. So, if you can forge a relationship with an employee at your target firm, they might help you get hired by referring you through the back door.

Tip: Try researching companies through Facebook, MySpace or LinkedIn -- you're likely to somebody somewhere who can help you.

Then, to earn referrals to employers, repeat the process from 1) above: give first of your expertise, knowledge, and time. Success (and job interviews) will follow.

3) Make Wishes Come True: "Through job postings, online information and network connections, [you should] create a wish list of the companies where you would like to work," suggests ExecuNet Vice President, Lauryn Franzoni.

Once you have specific employers in mind, your network can lead you to the people you need to meet. "The more you know about a company and the problems they face, the better positioned you are to demonstrate how you can help," says Franzoni.

Tip: Help others help you. You absolutely need to know what 20 companies you want to work for. With this "wish list" in hand, it's a simple matter of finding people you know -- or, more likely, people they know -- at your target companies, and getting referred to a hiring manager there.

Kevin Donlin is Creator of TheSimpleJobSearch.com. Since 1996, he has provided job-search help to more than 11,000 people. Kevin has been interviewed by USA Today, The New York Times, CBS Radio and others.

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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