

# Networking on Social Media

## Building your professional network on social media

### What is Social Media Networking?

- ✓ It's not who you know, it's WHO knows YOU
- ✓ Social media provides a priceless way to gain visibility
- ✓ Build relationships with colleagues, industry influencers, clients, partners, etc.
- ✓ Make connections via different channels, like LinkedIn and Facebook
- ✓ It's about genuine engagement, creating relationships, interacting with professionals who share the same passion, building your following, etc.
- ✓ It's not a one-way street, you should give as much as you take and provide value
- ✓ Network to share ideas, seek feedback and increase credibility
- ✓ It takes time for your network to grow
- ✓ Network BEFORE you need it

### Benefits of Social Media Networking

- ✓ Social Media has transformed the way people build relationships in business, including:
  - The ability to create authentic relationships online
  - A way to meet people you wouldn't meet any other way
  - Makes it easier for you to share ideas and boost your reputation
  - Puts you on the forefront of latest business trends and insights

### Social Media Networking Goals

- ✓ Identify your primary networking goals to avoid getting overwhelmed
- ✓ Make sure the goals align with your strategy
- ✓ Refine goals to focus your efforts and save time

## **Types of Goals**

- ✓ Build relationships with:
  - Hiring managers
  - Potential business partners
  - Affiliates
  - Potential clients
  - Referral sources
  - Influencers in your field
  - Colleagues who will support each other

## **Examples of Goals**

- ✓ Find and build relationships with clients
- ✓ Look for joint venture opportunities
- ✓ Connect with experts
- ✓ Expand your reputation as an expert
- ✓ Learn more about your ideal customer
- ✓ Build a team
- ✓ Learn about different industries
- ✓ Develop affiliate relationships
- ✓ Find potential employers/jobs

## **What Are Your Social Media Networking Goals?**

- ✓ New goals and metrics are constantly coming to light
- ✓ Once your goals and plan align you'll be more connected
- ✓ Your value will begin to increase

## **Learning Objectives**

- ✓ Recognize the benefits of social media networking
- ✓ Identify your networking goals
- ✓ Select the best social networks for your goals
- ✓ Refine your profiles to support your personal brand
- ✓ Explain the most effective methods to build relationships

- ✓ Identify specific people to connect with online
- ✓ Prepare different messages and/or content in relation to your goals and the social network
- ✓ Create a tracking system for your connections
- ✓ Create an ongoing plan to find new contacts and develop relationships

## **Learning Activity**

1. *List 2-3 of your professional networking goals as they relate to your business goals*
2. *Outline specifically what you want to achieve*
3. *Set a time frame for each stage of your goal*

## **Set Up Your Social Profiles for Success**

- ✓ Decide which social network to focus on
- ✓ Not every social media platform is right for you and your goals
- ✓ Choose quality connections over quantity

### **Step 1 – Choose Your Channels**

- ✓ Find out what social network the people you'd like to network with use and make those channels your focus
- ✓ Main social media platforms:
  - Facebook
    - Different features like Groups, Messenger, and Live
    - Remember to keep it professional
    - Use Friends Lists to categorize your connections to limit who can see what
    - Use other Facebook features if the people you want to connect with spend a lot of time on Facebook AND they use it for business
    - Join specific Facebook Groups to share your point of view, contribute to discussions, and share helpful information

- Create your own Facebook Group to engage with clients in a group setting and share your knowledge
  - Use Facebook Messenger to build relationships in real time by sending a direct message
  - Use Facebook Live streaming to reach out to your connections in real time
- Instagram
    - Take advantage of hashtags to discover, follow, and create meaningful connections
    - Follow hashtags to see what your clients are posting about
    - Instagram is great with a younger demographic, though older generations are getting more comfortable with it
- LinkedIn
    - Majority of people use LinkedIn for professional networking
    - It's aimed specifically to professionals so people take it more seriously
    - There's less spam and people are more likely to promote authentic content and have meaningful conversations
- Twitter
    - People prefer Twitter because it's so straightforward
    - Twitter limits the number of characters in a tweet so you have to get to the point quickly
    - Twitter Lists let you focus on specific people, keeping your Twitter feed clean
    - Create Twitter Lists of influencers, newsmakers, people you talk to often, competitors, co-workers, etc.
    - Use Retweets to endorse another person's idea or thought
    - Don't retweet something that isn't professional
    - Use Pinned Tweets to highlight what you stand for
    - Pin tweets to the top of your profile so people see your best content first

## **Step 2 – Perfect Your Profiles**

- ✓ How you present yourself is how people first view you
- ✓ Your social profile should be a professional representation of who you are and what you stand for
- ✓ Your profile should reflect your core message and business goals
- ✓ People should get an immediate sense of who you are, what you do, and the value you offer

### **Tips for the Perfect Social Media Profile:**

- ✓ Keep your profile brief and to the point
- ✓ Lead with your expertise
- ✓ Use pinned posts to show off your best content
- ✓ Add a professional headshot
- ✓ Use the same profile picture across platforms
- ✓ Untag yourself from unflattering pictures and posts
- ✓ Use a simple username that is the same across platforms
- ✓ Include SEO keywords in your profile
- ✓ Complete every field in your profile
- ✓ Use language that is engaging and easy to read
- ✓ Link to your other social media platforms and your main website and/or lead magnet page
- ✓ Ask a few connections for reviews or endorsements
  
- ✓ Take the time to set up your profile completely
- ✓ Set up your profiles properly before reaching out to new connections

### **Learning Activity**

1. Select the social media channels you'll focus on, based on your goals and where the best potential connections are.
2. Build a complete social media profile on the channels you've selected.
3. Refine your social media profiles to reflect your core business message.

## Pick the Best Social Networking Tactics for Your Goals

- ✓ Identify which tactics you'll use to successfully network
- ✓ Your networking goals will dictate your tactics
- ✓ The tactics you will use are either direct and indirect

### Direct Tactics

- ✓ Best used for existing connections
- ✓ If a potential connection doesn't know you, there's a chance you won't make an impact and you may even be ignored completely
- ✓ You're reaching out to people who are already interested in you or your brand
- ✓ This means your direct approach is more likely to be welcomed with open arms
- ✓ The most common direct tactics are private messaging and cold emails
- ✓ You may decide to network offline
- ✓ Use your best judgment when it comes to cold calling

### Tips

- ✓ Remind people how you know them or how you're connected
- ✓ Get to the point quickly
- ✓ Make it personal by using their name and something personal about them
- ✓ Keep it professional and make sure your spelling is correct, avoid using slang, and don't be too formal
- ✓ Find out what you have in common so they will be more likely to respond
- ✓ Make it about them and proactively think of ways you can be of service to your connections
- ✓ Don't be afraid to ask for something like a meeting or mentorship, just make sure your 'ask' is clear
- ✓ Follow up so you don't lose all of your hard work reaching out

## **When to Reach Out**

- ✓ Share a professional update or announcement
- ✓ Send a welcome message to a new connection or follower
- ✓ Share content that would be of interest or value
- ✓ Request a recommendation
- ✓ Congratulate a connection on a new job opportunity or recent success
- ✓ Collect feedback
- ✓ Ask for help, advice, or guidance

## **Indirect Tactics**

- ✓ Indirect tactics are ideal for people you've never met or can't contact directly right away
- ✓ You can often reach a larger audience than direct tactics that typically target one person at a time

## **Some ways in which you can indirectly network are to:**

- ✓ Join and participate in groups
- ✓ Follow pages and influencers
- ✓ Post questions
- ✓ Contribute to discussions
- ✓ Post your original content
- ✓ Share content regularly
- ✓ Following different company pages

## **Tips**

- ✓ Be a valuable part of a community and be an active contributor
- ✓ Don't be one that's always asking for something from others
- ✓ Post and share consistently
- ✓ Don't be overbearing or your followers may become annoyed and you risk losing those connections
- ✓ Keep your profile updated and always add new skills or experience
- ✓ Use specific hashtags that are specific and targeted

## **Best Practice Tactics**

- ✓ Make your presence noticeable:

- Regularly update your profile
- Consistently post and share content
- Frequently participate in groups
- Actively comment on posts and engage in discussions
- Share what you have in the works
- Send messages tailored to each connection
- ✓ Reciprocate and nurture your connections:
  - Do something for someone else with zero strings attached
  - "Build the right relationships with the right people and nurture them over time and you'll always have a leg up on the competition." - Paul May, Buzzstream CEO
  - Use direct tactics to message connections when it's appropriate
- ✓ Trade contacts:
  - Introduce contacts who may benefit from the referral
  - You'll start to be viewed as the expert by your network
- ✓ Find your story:
  - Figure out what makes you unique and use that to be more memorable
  - Avoid being like everyone else
  - Use what separates you from the competition to stand out
- ✓ Personalize everything:
  - Always use their name, business info, and a little about your connection
  - Avoid using the default messages on LinkedIn and send a personalized message instead
  - This creates a more genuine connection
- ✓ Listen and observe:
  - Avoid dominating the social networking space by talking only about yourself or your business
  - Try to "listen" to others so you can make a genuine contribution
- ✓ Keep it professional:
  - Don't be overly formal or informal
  - Represent yourself in a professional way and still be likeable
  - Be careful with what you share
  - Make sure your spelling is correct
  - Avoid using slang or curse words
  - Proofread long posts
  - Remember, social networks are casual and it's okay to be human



- Have fun with it and be true to yourself
- ✓ Do what you promise:
  - Gain trust in others by doing what you promise
  - Follow up timely - the promptness of your reply is usually just as important as the message
  - Your follow through is the most important step in networking and one of the easiest ways to grow meaningful connections

## **Learning Activity**

1. Identify the best methods to reach out to people on each network, based on your current relationship status and type of social media network

## **Start Networking... the Right Way**

- ✓ Identify exactly WHO you want to connect with
- ✓ Every connection you make should lead you to new connections
- ✓ The whole purpose of networking is to engage with others to share information and make connections

## **Prepare to Connect**

- ✓ Create a plan
- ✓ Be better equipped to make meaningful connections
- ✓ You'll save yourself time in the long run
- ✓ Being prepared pays off

## **Identify Who You Want to Connect With**

- ✓ Start by making a list of who you want to connect with
- ✓ Your connections will either be existing, (people you know) or new (people you want to know)
- ✓ Don't discount anyone
- ✓ Think about what connections others might be able to introduce you to

### ***Some ideas of who to connect with:***

- ✓ Past or present co-workers, colleagues, managers, employees, etc.
- ✓ Alumni and past or present teachers

- ✓ Past or present clients or customers
- ✓ Mentors or coaches
- ✓ People you've met offline and want to connect with
- ✓ Industry peers
- ✓ Service providers & suppliers
- ✓ Friends & family
- ✓ People you can help
- ✓ Influencers & leaders
- ✓ People who you want on your side

## **Refine Your List**

- ✓ Refine your list to make sure it supports your social media networking goals
- ✓ Rank each of your connections by whichever connection you deem most relevant
- ✓ This helps you know which connections to start focusing on

## **Create Templates for Reaching Out**

- ✓ Creating content that you can use to personalize and connect with each person individually will save you time
- ✓ There are core guidelines you should follow to help ensure you receive a response
- ✓ Include the following any time you're contacting someone:
  - Start out with how you know the person
  - Build rapport
  - Get right to the point of the message
  - Include a 'call to action'
  - End with a proper sign off

## **Common Scenarios:**

- ✓ First contact for potential partners
- ✓ First contact for potential referrers
- ✓ Information relating to your business
- ✓ Information relating to you personally
- ✓ Invitation of an introduction to another contact
- ✓ Invitation of assistance

## **Start Networking**

- ✓ Make contact and start networking
- ✓ You'll apply both your direct and indirect tactics

### ***Direct Tactics***

- ✓ Start building your social media network through direct tactics
- ✓ Use your refined contact list to send a personal message to the people you'd most like to connect with
- ✓ Use the templates you've prepared and customize each message.

### ***Indirect Tactics***

- ✓ You can often reach a larger audience than by using direct tactics that typically target one person at a time
- ✓ Follow someone to gain a potential connection if they decide to follow you back
- ✓ Post to your feed:
  - Post a status update
  - Post a photo of your day or of something that relates to your industry
  - Post a question
  - Create and post a poll
  - Live stream or upload video to your feed
  - Share others' content
  - Share a funny meme or joke (in good taste)
- ✓ Join groups to help others and demonstrate your expertise
  - Don't join too many groups, pick 1-5 targeted groups
  - Participate consistently by posting or commenting at least 1-2 times per week, per group
  - Don't sell or self-promote
  - Follow the group rules and don't offer your services outside of the group
  - Pay attention and avoid being repetitive
  - If you notice people are always asking similar questions, take initiative and position yourself as an expert by providing a solution

## **Networking Tips**

- ✓ Make sure you're non-promotional and you're offering something of benefit
- ✓ Represent yourself in a professional way while still being likeable
- ✓ Don't make it all about yourself
- ✓ Follow up and reconnect with your connections

## **Learning Activity**

- 1. Using the People to Connect With spreadsheet, create a big list of all the people you'd like to connect with on social media, using the ideas in the module. Include people you've met offline and want to connect with online also.*
- 2. Refine your list by highlighting the people you want to approach first, or put them in priority order, based on your goals*
- 3. For the people you want to contact first, identify where on social media you will contact them and the initial way you'll network*
- 4. Prepare the messages and/or content you'll use to reach out or build awareness for each person, based on the method you identified for each*

## **Create Your Systems for Growing and Nurturing Your Network**

- ✓ Put systems in place to grow and nurture your network
- ✓ Although you're putting structured systems in place, make sure you are warm and personal when growing your network
- ✓ Nobody likes to feel like they are part of a calculated strategy

## **Develop a System**

- ✓ Develop a system to track the progression of your new relationships
  - Put together your main list of connections
  - Organize information about who you've met and important details about them
  - Order your connections by importance to you
  - Include the date you first connected and what you discussed
  - Include essential information about them
  - Include any of your other contacts you think would benefit from an introduction to that person
  - Include any ways you think you might be of assistance to them

- Include dated reminders of when to reconnect

## **Create a Process**

- ✓ Put together a plan to continually find new contacts and to build relationships with existing ones
- ✓ The best part about regularly checking in is that when you do need a favor, it comes from a natural place
- ✓ Identify the process you'll use to continue your networking efforts
- ✓ Add about ten names of the people who you want to connect with
- ✓ Those who are most effective visit their top groups daily and look for questions they can answer
- ✓ One of the big benefits is that social media networking doesn't take a lot of time and you can do it whenever you have free time
- ✓ There are times that you may want to spontaneously reach out and that's okay too

## **Grow Your Network**

- ✓ **Reflect on Your Process**
  - Reflect on your process by evaluating the system you've put in place
- ✓ **Seek New Opportunities**
  - Look for opportunities to meet with online contacts in person to further relationships
- ✓ **Routinely Touch Base**
  - Develop a consistent process of following-up through email, message, or via telephone to nurture relationships
- ✓ **Be Natural**
  - Networking should be natural, not forced
- ✓ **Be Inclusive**
  - Grow your network by including your connections in events you're attending

## **Summary**

- ✓ Social Media Networking is an ideal way to build meaningful connections that will help you reach your goals
- ✓ It's likely you are already using social media to network without realizing it
- ✓ The golden rule with Social Media Networking is to "use good judgment" by providing more value than you take

- ✓ Social Media Networking is an effective way to make new connections and nurture existing connections
- ✓ It's important to have a strong network in place before you need it.

## **Learning Activity**

- 1. Take the list you created in the previous module and add to the provided spreadsheet to fill out as much information you can about your connections.*
- 2. Determine how often you will reach out to each connection and which platform you will use to do it.*
- 3. Start making connections and tracking them in the spreadsheet.*