

Business Owners and Entrepreneurs Give Tips on How to Effectively Network Online

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Though there are times when networking online can seem somewhat daunting there are benefits of doing so. Being face to face with a person gives you a sense of who they are. You can play off their facial cues, figure out if they like to joke and generally get a sense of their personality. Online it is harder to do such. Not everyone can get their point across in text efficiently and give a sense of who they are. Below we have rounded up some tips on how to effectively network online and not get lost in the shuffle.

Rescue a CEO and CEO Blog Nation asked entrepreneurs for tips on how to effectively network online.

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Getting on LinkedIn

LinkedIn provides the perfect place to do networking. First of all, when I ask someone to connect I change the standard greeting and write something about why I want to connect with them. Often they reply back when they accept. Secondly, when someone asks me to connect, I write back something like: "I'm curious why did you decide to ask me to connect?" Nine times of ten they will reply. The building of a relationship has begun with a stranger.

Thanks to [Kathy Condon](#)



Photo Credit: Kathy Condon

Starting my own LinkedIn groups

As someone who's considered an expert in my field, I was looking for a way to distinguish myself from other firms & practitioners, while networking with them & continually educating myself. Three years ago, I started my own LinkedIn group, Charles Krugel's Labor & Employment Law & Human Resources Practices Group. My group now has 2,080 members & a number of discussions, including one going on today that discusses employer insurance reimbursement for birth control & sexual harassment. Others have told me that the group has become one of LinkedIn's more active groups. I've even had interest from other media outlets about crowdsourcing my group's content for Q & A from other business owners & operators. My online networking activities, including HARO & my LinkedIn group has been a tremendous resource for networking & developing business, media & social relationships.

Thanks to [Charles Krugel](#)



Photo Credit: Charles Krugel

Putting out important information

As an introvert, I've found networking online to be an invaluable energy saver and social connection expander. At conferences, I use the hashtag to tweet to fellow attendees. When I bump into them in person, it's like we already know each other and the conversation flows easier. Ongoing, I put out information that is important to my customers. If it works for them, I believe it will for others who I connect with on Twitter and Facebook. In the process, I am seen as a valuable resource, and potential customers understand what they can get by working with me.

Thanks to Lauree Ostrofsky, [Simply Leap, LLC](#)

Related Post: [Tips for Email Marketing](#)

Making relevant Tweets

As a business networking expert and author of the award-winning book *The Intentional Networker: Attracting Powerful Relationships, Referrals & Results in Business*, I much prefer the power of in-person networking and THEN using online networking as a way to build the relationships and stay in touch. However, sometimes you can “meet” someone online (Twitter is my favorite vehicle there) and engage in a conversation that leads to a powerful, rewarding and lasting connection. This type of online networking can be particularly effective if you are planning to attend a conference. You can start tweeting useful and relevant tweets using the hashtag provided by the event planner. If you’re tweets are thoughtful and valuable, others will follow you. Then you can watch for those people or attend tweetups associated with the event. I’ve met several dynamite people this way! The main thing is to find a connection point — something you have in common or something universally useful to share — and then let the connection build from there. Please don’t try to pre-sell people on you or your products or services here! One of my other all-time pet peeves with online networking is the LinkedIn request from people I’ve never met — unless they come highly recommended by someone I already know and trust. To me, this is the sign of a networking amateur and is distasteful. Don’t do it!

Thanks to Patti DeNucci, [DeNucci & Co LLC](#)

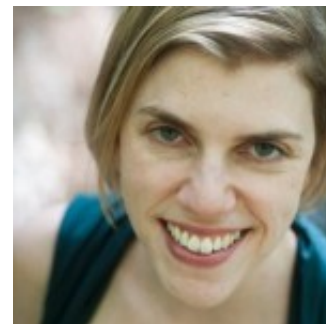


Photo Credit: Lauree Ostrofsky



Photo Credit: Patti DeNucci

Starting conversations with those who comment

We create great content on our blog or guest posts on other blogs. Then we interact with everyone that tweets the post or leaves a comment. It’s a great way to network with like-minded individuals and it’s also a great way to land more guest blogging opportunities.

Thanks to Steve Young, [SmartShoot](#)



Photo Credit: Steve Young

Following up and connecting with Twitter

Last week, we launched a marketing platform designed to help small business owners make sense of marketing. We work with marketers, small businesses, non-profits, and strategic partners. Over the last several days, I have been successfully making contact with marketing professionals by using Google Maps. Simply type in a keyword and businesses related to the keyword show up within the area you have zoomed in on. It’s been great for a couple reasons. First, the information has been very accurate. Second, many times it shows a website address which allows me to get additional information like owner, etc. It’s been far superior to the marketing consultant database I have. Because I am only trying to network, over 80% of my prospects have agreed to give me their email address. From here, I plan to follow up, connect via twitter, etc.

Thanks to Scott Hill, [Mark2Media](#)

Related Post: [How Do Your Use Twitter?](#)

Palms up, not palms out

The best approach to networking is what I call “palms up, not palms out” – you give before you get. By giving first to others in your network, what you give will come back to you in abundance. You can do this online by making e-introductions within your networks. Connect people you know who have similar interests, or who work in areas that dovetail together. Later on, you can reach out to others to do the same, letting them know what you’re working on and asking whether they can recommend any good connections for you to talk to. It is a surefire way to open up opportunities and connections while being able to give back and pay it forward.

Thanks to Elle Kaplan, [Lexion Capital Management](#)

Diversification is key

I personally do not focus on one or two specific online networking tactics, but rather have a highly diversified set of techniques that I employ, which is what I believe allows one to maximize effectiveness. Testing initially and then choosing the most effective techniques to reach my target audience through different online networking channels, has helped me continuously expose my brand and connect with many great and like-minded people as well as gain new leads and clients. The key is to spend your online networking time without limiting yourself to only one or two methods. Some of the methods I use are LinkedIn, which have led me to make some great connections, Marketing and Small Business Forums, sites such as MeetAdvisors.com and PartnerUp.com, and Yahoo Answers. Focus on exchanging ideas, building relationships, and offering valuable advice rather than marketing yourself and your services and trying to get new clients that way and you will find long-term value in online networking.

Thanks to Nicole Elmore, [Nicole Elmore, LLC](#)

Connecting with quality people

I love networking online and offline. Using both Facebook and LinkedIn, I enjoy the connection with people around the world. It’s been more about the quality of person I connect with than the business opportunity, so I’ve been amazed at how much business has flowed from my Facebook friends and LinkedIn connections. Some of my friends and colleagues have started off as Facebook friends first, then we connect in person after discovering how much we have in common in business. Others have been people I’ve met in person briefly, then deepened the connection through keeping in touch on FB or LinkedIn. Here are some key tips that I’ve learnt from my own experience and from others: 1. 60% personal, 40% business is a good guideline. People do business they know, like and trust, and getting an insight into who you are as a person gives them a good idea of what you’re about. No-one wants to have a continuous blasting of your sales offers, but if you offer something occasionally, then it generally gets well received. 2. Keep it positive: If you don’t have anything positive to say, then keep quiet. No-one wants to hear you whining about things repeatedly going wrong in your life. I unfriend anyone who uses foul language or is continually running others down in their posts. 3. Be selective. Don’t accept connections or friend requests from people you wouldn’t spend time with in the real world offline. You get judged on the company you keep. 4. Think about your brand and how you’d like to be perceived – then make sure all your posts, both personal and business, fit with this image or brand. 5.



Photo Credit: Scott Hill



Photo Credit: Elle Kaplan



Photo Credit: Nicole Elmore

Have a purpose – know why you’re going online each time you go there – is it just to kill time or is it to get connected to those who fit your target market. Is this part of your marketing strategy or are you simply responding to whatever you see posted by others? HAVE FUN! Online networking is fun, so enjoy it.

Thanks to Jill Hutchison, [Evolved Dynamic](#)

Staying connected via Twitter and Facebook

I started my independent PR consultancy nearly two years ago, and the primary reason for my growth is due to online networking. For those of you who are entrepreneurs, you know how hard it is to manage your already busy day without having to factor in networking into your day. I’m no different than all of you. And like you, I realize how important it is to business promotion and growth to network. It’s not an option – it’s mission critical. I’ve found it a challenge to make every networking event in person, so instead, I pull out my computer or smartphone and I hop onto Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn to keep connected and social. I’ve met so many people in my city this way that I would never have met in person at events. I’ve learned where to find the relevant conversations pertaining to my, or my clients’, business, and I’ve engaged in them as much as possible. Rather than investing money into attending events, I’ve invested time into online conversations, and I’m happy to have met many wonderful contacts as a result. My business has grown as a result.

Thanks to Natalie Harper, [Harper PR](#)

Related Post: [How to Share on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn](#)



Photo Credit: Jill Hutchison



Photo Credit: Natalie Harper

You need to be authentic

Making new business relationships online isn’t challenging. You just need to be authentic. I respond to tweets, Facebook posts, blogs (via Hacker News) and more everyday. I respond via blog comments, forums, Quora, Twitter, Facebook but mostly email as it still is the best way. Naturally, there are many who never reply but the greatest mistake is not even giving yourself a chance to expand your network. It never hurts to try. By just starting the conversation this way, I’ve met angel investors, journalists and advisors. I don’t think UpOut would have seen the success it’s had without online networking.

Thanks to Martin Shen, [UpOut](#)



Photo Credit: Martin Shen