

What I learned from creating 6000+ LinkedIn Connections

By Robyn Henderson

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I love LinkedIn!

And I can track that 25% of my work comes via my LinkedIn connections. 3 years ago I introduced ghost writing (writing non-fiction books, articles and eBooks for others) as an income stream in my business and listed it on my LinkedIn profile.

For more than 3 years LinkedIn was the only place that I promoted ghost writing. On average at least two or three times a week, I would receive a query about ghost writing. Some people just wanted information “just in case” they eventually wrote their book. Others were quite serious and just wanted to know how it worked and what it cost.

What I normally did, if I received a LinkedIn in-message with a ghost-writing query was:

1. Ask for their email address and I would email them a profile on my ghost writing process. If they didn't send me an email, I assumed they were not really interested or did not want to progress the conversation. Once I emailed them, I would suggest that the person phone or Skype me with their specific queries. I always gave them multiple options with times and days etc. I would say that eliminated 50% of people. Some just wanted to do everything electronically – where my thought was if they were serious, we at some stage would need to have a conversation. At this stage, I would also offer to have a 10-15 minute complimentary conversation, in or out of hours. Once we confirmed the day and the time for the Skype or phone call, I would suggest that they email me the main questions that they had, so that we would make

the most of the 15 minutes. They would always have the opportunity to upgrade from 15 minutes and pay extra for more one on one time with me if they wished. I would put this in writing as well as remind them at the start of the call.

2. Again this was a further elimination of people who were interested in ghost writing, assistance with writing and self publishing their book – or just thinking about it. If they didn't have time to Skype, there was no way they would have time to get the information together for me to write a book for them. Mind you this system was created over months of investing lots of time with people who were not so clear on what their writing goals were. In time I streamlined my systems and my results. Systems usually come from necessity, and that was certainly the case with the ghost writing queries.
3. Over time, I found that maybe 30%-40% of the original queries actually came to fruition over a six month period from their initial contact. I was also able to offer an edited 5 hour filmed DVD, CD, MP3 of my Writing For Busy People one day workshop for those who wanted more information and a do it yourself system that they could work through at home. I would also offer a 15 minute Skype call after they had worked through the pack, to answer any further questions they might have.

Why I know that 25% of my income comes from LinkedIn is that until about 3 months ago, LinkedIn was my sole promotional area for ghost writing. I now have a dedicated website www.writeitforme.com.au but that is a very recent marketing tool.

Were there times when people just wanted stacks of information and did not want to pay for anything? Yes, of course. I remember clearly linking with someone who bragged that she never paid for anything – our conversation was reasonably short. But the ones who proceeded to actually have me write their eBooks, articles, blog or books far outweighed the “tyre kickers”.

So my tip, depending on what business you are in, is to create a system of how you will respond to queries that you receive on LinkedIn. One way or another you eventually will progress the conversation via Skype or the phone – to discuss the finer details.

I have found that picking up the phones gets me to yes or no much faster than lots of emails back and forth. When it comes to ghost writing, I show potential clients a number of ways that they can write their own book and prepare their information. Sometimes a couple of Skype or phone sessions with the potential author and they realise they can write their book or eBook themselves, they just didn't have a system. I give them the system and away they go.

Today, we are all time poor, so making it easy for people to make decisions and being flexible with your availability is really appreciated.

WHAT IF IT IS AN INTERNATIONAL CONNECTION

– and phone calls or time differences are cost-prohibitive?

There are different ways to build trust online. I freelance for an international company, initially I was networked to a person within the company and wrote some articles on a trial basis and now regularly work with them. At first my contact was a guy whose profile I checked out on LinkedIn and was then able to make a few remarks about similar interests during our emails. He had looked at my website and made a few remarks about being poor at networking, so I offered to send him some complimentary networking eBooks. When I emailed them to him I said he was welcome to share them with his network. When ended up with quite good rapport and a friendly email style.

After awhile I had a new person to work with and the first thing I did once I was told her name was to check out her LinkedIn profile and send her an invitation to connect. Over time we have chatted away as we have exchanged work via email each week. Last week, one of the articles mentioned some high tech coffee machines that were coming out this year and she made the comment that she loved coffee. I am not a coffee drinker, but shared that Ellen De Generis has just been in Australia and raved about our coffee and that I would send her some Australian coffee. Today I bought the coffee and of course the postage will cost me more than the coffee itself, but it's all about building trust and a connection over a long distance.

What I am doing internationally is really what I would do nationally in similar circumstances. Today we need to do things that other people don't do – that is what makes us stand out from competitors or peers. And when we are all so busy, busy and someone bothers to do something out the blue, you stand out.

The Old LinkedIn versus the New LinkedIn

When I first started using LinkedIn and went from zero to 2500+ in 12 months, LinkedIn had a number of different facilities than what they have now. These included: Polls, Question and Answer, Events, the links with Twitter and Facebook, plus linking your blog with your profile and a number of other special features on the profile page. When these features were removed, none of it was life changing – however, with many LinkedIn regulars – we did miss many of the added benefits when they were removed.

What is the big picture? Well that is hard to say in 2013 – no doubt more will be revealed in coming months. At the end of this eBook, you will find an interesting article by the founder of LinkedIn – Reid Hoffman. He certainly is a visionary and one thing is for sure – there will be continual change ahead for LinkedIn.

What I know for sure is that:

- LinkedIn is a brilliant networking tool
- It is preferable to have an open profile, which means that your connections can go through your connections directory and make contact/send invitations with the people they already know. It is also interesting to see who you are connected to.
- It is worth investing in the Premium Account – for sure – there are more benefits and features, particularly around your profile layout
- You need to take time with your profile. My suggestion would be to spend 15-30 minutes completing the various segments of your profile. You can go back anytime and edit the profile – but the old adage, the more you tell, the more you sell, certainly applies here.

What I know for sure is that:

The more facts you give about your work history, the more linkages LinkedIn can suggest for you. Definitely include a professional photo with your profile – it will make it easier for people to recognise you.

- I reject approximately 10% of the invitations I receive. These are usually from people without photos, people who have just described themselves as John Smith, CEO and the city and no information at all. If they can't be bothered investing time on their profile, why should I connect with them? If I happen to know the person with the scrappy profile, I will often phone or email them to give them some tips about LinkedIn and why you must have a decent profile. Sometimes it is someone who profile says – workers for \$4.00 per hour – that is not someone I want to connect with – no one should be expected to work for \$4.00 per hour.
- When I was not LinkedIn savvy – I used to reject hundreds of invitations, so I don't get too upset if I send an invitation and the person rejects it or declines. Life goes on.
- How you describe yourself is really important. The 6-8 words after your name are really important. They are the words that appear as people scan through messages etc. If you do a variety of work, I recommend that you list the one role that you enjoy the most or want to promote as your major skill as the first item in your description.
- Ideally you want to spend at least 15-30 minutes per day on LinkedIn if you want to build your connections. Some people think it is better to have quality not quantity. I disagree, my theory is "Build it and they will come" Yes this is a line from Field of Dreams with Kevin Costner, and I believe the theory applies to LinkedIn. As you know once you pass the 500 connection mark – your profile will show 500+ - whether you have 5000 or 25,000 connections. The great thing is that you don't have to necessarily visit LinkedIn every day, maybe you visit twice a week and spend longer time sending invitation, looking through profiles, etc.

What I know for sure is that:

- I do aim to visit LinkedIn every day, though occasionally I miss a few days here and there. I have a quotations book, and I regularly write a favourite quotation – making sure that I quote the source. If you just have quotations floating round in your head and are unsure who may have been the first to say them – you can use a source like www.copyscape.com to check where the quote came from. Personally I think it is critical to always acknowledge your sources – particularly in this wired world. Taking credit for someone else's knowledge is just not on.
- Groups are a big area where you can invest a lot of time or waste a lot of time. It is worthwhile looking at the members who share the same groups and finding like minded people. I am a film buff and belong to the movie addicts group as well as many of the general groups.
- I also review my groups every two months, and if I have not been active in a group for two months, I need to ask myself, Why am I in this group, What do I want to achieve and How am I
- Going to do that if I don't participate. I then make a decision whether to stay or leave the group.
- Iggy Pintado was the person who put me on to LinkedIn www.iggypintado.com – he is well worth following. Iggy gave me a few great tips –
 - a. Don't ask to be connected to someone, just approach them yourself with an interesting message.
 - b. Give recommendations regularly but don't ask people for recommendations. However the more recommendations you give, the more you will receive.
 - c. Be active and helpful

What I know for sure is that:

- One thing I am very particular about is the wording of my invitations. I rarely just send “join my network”. Some of the invitations I send say:
 - “A blast from the past. I knew you at” this is for people I knew years ago, or through a remote connection. This acts as a memory jog for them.
 - “We are both members of XYZ group.....or We are both member of ABC organisation.....would love to add you to my network
 - “We have 150+ mutual connections, but I don’t think we have met yet.
 - “We met at the Chamber of Commerce yesterday/last week. We spoke about XYZ – I would like to add you to my network.”
- Classifying people as “friends” is something that can bug people who don’t think they are your friend. LinkedIn is not Facebook.
- LinkedIn today is your resume – and an extension of your Facebook.

FOLLOWING UP IS CRITICAL:

There are a couple of things that I do on LinkedIn that I believe really get a return on investment with my time:

1. I always respond to an invitation I am accepting with a thank you message – e.g. “Thanks for your invitation to connect on LI, isn’t it a brilliant networking tool? Feel free to download complimentary articles and a blog from my website www.networkingtowin.com.au Enjoy XYZ (either the following month or the weekend etc.) Robyn Henderson”

This thank you message may vary slightly in text, but basically it is a follow up message with a small plug for my website. Does everyone visit my website, definitely not? However, driving traffic to your website is one way of increasing your return on investment.

2. If someone does make a general LI query about networking or writing, I do try to respond within a day – sometimes it is longer depending where I am and what I am doing. I will often include on the return header - call me on XXX and then respond a little in the message. I can usually send a link to a relevant site that will assist them.
3. I am also good at referring other professionals, who may be in a better position to assist than I am. With the law of abundance, there really is enough for everyone – so I do believe in sharing work around.
4. I do scan updates whenever I am on LinkedIn – I don’t keep it open all day, as I think that can become a huge distraction, similar to Facebook. It is very easy to lose a day or two on social media, if you are procrastinating or looking for a distraction from the task at hand.

If during the update scanning, I see something interesting or click on an article that is useful, I will usually make a comment or pass it on to my LinkedIn network. Again this might be something I do 4-5 times a week.

5. If I am looking for something to share with my network, I will often visit the NEWS button (located at the top right on your home page). Here you will find a variety of great articles from lots of interesting authors on all sorts of business related topics. I usually scan down, read the headings that are of interest and if I do enjoy it, click the share with LinkedIn button. I can nominate if I want to share it with my groups or specific connections or my general update area.

BE SEEN, GET KNOWN, MOVE AHEAD

Recruitment agencies are using LinkedIn as a research tool for their potential candidates. Your profile says so much about you and your recommendations reveal your professionalism.

When it comes to recommendations, Iggy Pintado taught me NOT to ask people for recommendations. If they want to give you one accept it graciously, but don't ask for one.

Sometimes I am asked by someone I barely know for a recommendation and depending how I am feeling on the day, I:

1. Delete the request.
2. Send a reply pointing out that I don't know them well enough to do that and wish them well.
3. Or if I am really on my high horse – I will check out their profile, confirm my theory that often people who ask for recommendations are usually those who never give recommendations. Once I have double checked that they have never or have only given a few recommendations – I respond with an explanation about the Law of Reciprocity – what you give out comes back tenfold. I encourage them to give my recommendations themselves and voila! - They will probably find they received recommendations without needing to ask.
4. And if I know the person well, I may send the testimonial, whilst also encouraging them to start sending recommendations.

I am sure recipients of some of my messages disconnect from me immediately assuming I am “a real bitch”. I don’t think I am, but I am very conscious of time management and earning the right to ask for favour. And asking someone for a recommendation is in fact asking them for a favour. Have you earned the right to ask that favour? And what do you want them to recommend you for?

So here are a few of my LinkedIn habits:

- Aim to spend at least 90 minutes per week on LI. The fun thing is that you can multi-task. If I am at home watching a film or have the television on, I can easily be flicking through the “people you may know” section of LinkedIn and sending an invitation her or there. If you are going to send an invitation to one of the “people you may know” section – click on their profile first, pay them the courtesy of scanning their profile, then click on connect with them and you will be able to include a message with your invitation (refer wording from previous page).
- Aim to give away one recommendation per week – as a minimum. Whether it is a service provider, co-worker, old boss, past or current client, take the time to write 10-25 words about them. This is not the time for “cut and paste”. I received what I thought was a glowing recommendation from someone and went to their profile to send a message, only to find that the same glowing wording had been used for their last 15 recommendations. Surely we can’t all be that special in exactly the same way.
- Send a thank you message after you receive an invitation to connect.
- Remember you don’t have to say yes to everyone who asks you to connect.
- Have an open profile – I believe that is the whole point of being on LinkedIn.

MY THEORY

Is that LinkedIn long term will rival or actively compete with www.seek.com as an employment hub within the next 12 months. When you read the article at the back of this eBook, you will see the vision of LinkedIn's founder. Ultimately it will be able to predict trends in employment, locations where jobs will be created and hopefully employment opportunities on an international basis.

On the following pages I have listed the Missing Links to Networking – I believe there are four of them –

- Time – we all get 24 hours a day, how to use that most effectively is the challenge. When someone scans our profile, they have seconds to decide if they are going to connect on their profile or go to the next one.
- No systems – systems are the key to successful networking, business and definitely follow up strategies for LinkedIn. Create your systems, refine them and use them regularly.
- Be very clear on Why you are using LinkedIn

What you want to achieve from LinkedIn

How you are going to do that

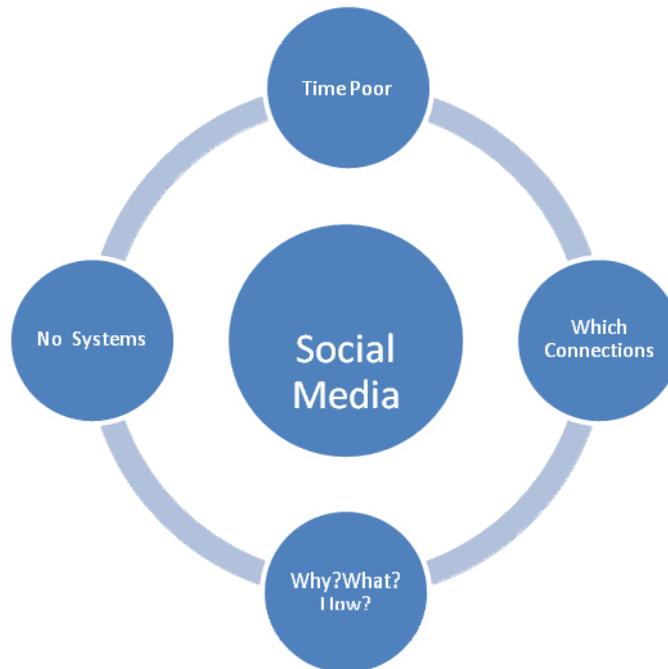
Which connections do you want to create linkages with?

I believe the stronger you grow your connections, the more you expand your connections, the closer you bring the world to your doorstep. The more people know you, the more potential business will come your way.

After the article from Reid Hoffman, I have included some pages on networking in general. Remember LinkedIn is all about connecting and staying connected. Networking and LinkedIn can open up the world for you; you just have to put the time in to build your network before you need it.

THE MISSING LINK –

Making the social media and face to face networking connection



10 Habits of Master Networkers

- Follow up with a LinkedIn invitation after meeting people
- Say thank you often (e.g. after receiving an invitation, receiving assistance or a referral)
- Send recommendations at least once a week
- Regularly connect people for potential referrals/work
- Understand the power of client revenue enhancement
- Pick up the phone regularly, rather than send emails
- Speed or response is a priority
- Flexibility is critical
- Patience is a virtue and an income building strategy
- Consider www.mosaichub.com www.maven.com
- Invest in your network with time, energy and effort

Reid Hoffman, arguably the most connected man in Silicon Valley, is cofounder and chairman of Silicon Valley's best-performing social networking company, LinkedIn. In February, the LinkedIn's shares were up more than 80% year-over-year after the Mountain View, Calif.-based company beat analysts' estimates for the seventh quarter in a row.

The real way to build a social network

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If there is a guru of networking, it is Reid Hoffman. Here he explains how to do it right -- and wrong -- in an excerpt from his new book with Ben Casnocha, *The Start-Up of You*.



PHOTO: GREGG SEGAL

Reid Hoffman travels with several devices so that he can constantly stay in touch.

FORTUNE -- *Forget Dale Carnegie. He understood how important connections were, but missed out on the authenticity part -- which, say Reid Hoffman and Ben Casnocha, authors of The Start-Up of You, is the key to building a truly helpful professional network. Here's how to leverage that network into the career you only dreamed of.*

Many people are turned off by the topic of networking. They think it's slimy, inauthentic. Picture the consummate networker: a high-energy fast talker who collects as many business cards as he can and attends mixers sporting slicked-back hair. Or the overambitious college kid who frantically e-mails alumni, schmoozes with the board of trustees, and adds anyone he's ever met as an online friend. Such people are drunk on networking Kool-Aid -- and are looking at a potentially nasty hangover.

Luckily, building your network doesn't have to be like that. Old-school networkers are transactional. They pursue relationships thinking solely about what other people can do for them. Relationship builders, on the other hand, try to help others first. They don't keep score. And they prioritize high-quality relationships over a large number of connections.

Building a genuine relationship with another person depends on at least two abilities. The first is seeing the world from another person's perspective. No one knows that better than the skilled

entrepreneur. Entrepreneurs succeed when they make stuff people will pay money for -- and that means understanding what's going on in the heads of customers. Likewise, in relationships it's only when you put yourself in the other person's shoes that you begin to develop an honest connection.

The second ability is being able to think about how you can collaborate with and help the other person rather than thinking about what you can get. We're not suggesting that you be so saintly that a self-interested thought never crosses your mind. What we're saying is that your first move should always be to help. A study on negotiation found that a key difference between skilled and average negotiators was the time spent searching for shared interests and asking questions of the other person.

Follow that model. Start with a friendly gesture and genuinely mean it. Dale Carnegie's classic book on relationships, despite all its wisdom, has the unfortunate title *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. This makes Carnegie widely misunderstood. You don't "win" a friend. A friend is not an asset you own; a friend is an ally, a collaborator. When you can tell that someone is attempting sincerity, it leaves you cold. It is like the feeling you have when someone calls you by your first name repeatedly in conversation. Novelist Jonathan Franzen gets it right when he says inauthentic people are obsessed with authenticity.

Strengthen your alliances

The best way to engage with new people is not by cold calling or by "networking" with strangers at cocktail parties, but by working with the people you already know. Of the many types of professional relationships, among the most important are your close allies. Most professionals maintain five to 10 active alliances. What makes a relationship an alliance? First, an ally is someone you consult regularly for advice. Second, you proactively share and collaborate on opportunities together. You keep your antennae attuned to an ally's interests, and when it makes sense to pursue something jointly, you do. Third, you talk up an ally. You promote his or her brand. Finally, when an ally runs into conflict, you defend him and stand up for his reputation, and he does the same for you.

I [Reid] first met **Mark Pincus** while at PayPal in 2002. I was giving him advice on a startup he was working on. From our first conversation, I felt inspired by Mark's wild creativity and how he seems to bounce off the walls with energy. I'm more restrained, preferring to fit ideas into strategic frameworks instead of unleashing them fire-hose-style. But it's our similar interests and vision that have made our collaborations so successful.

We invested in Friendster together in 2002. In 2003 the two of us bought the Six Degrees patent, which covers some of the foundational technology of social networking. Mark then started his own social network, Tribe; I started LinkedIn (**LNKD**). When Peter Thiel and I were set to **put the first money into Facebook in 2004**, I suggested that Mark take half of my investment allocation. I wanted to involve Mark in any opportunity that seemed intriguing, especially one that played to his social networking background. In 2007, Mark called me to talk about his idea for **Zynga (ZNGA)**, the social gaming company he co-founded and now leads. I knew almost immediately that I wanted to invest and join the board, which I did. An alliance is always an exchange, but not a transactional one. A transactional relationship is when your accountant files your tax returns and you pay him for his time.

An alliance is when a co-worker needs last-minute help on Sunday night preparing for a Monday morning presentation, and even though you're busy, you agree to go over to his house and help. You cooperate and sacrifice because you want to help a friend in need but also because you figure you'll be able to call on him in the future when you are the one in a bind. That isn't being selfish; it's being human.

The diversity of weak ties

Allies, by the nature of the bond, are few in number. By contrast, there are potentially hundreds or thousands of looser connections that also play a role in your professional life. These are the folks you meet at conferences, old classmates, co-workers, or just interesting people. Sociologists refer to these contacts as "weak ties": people with whom you have spent low amounts of low-intensity time but with whom you're still friendly.

Reprinted from *The Start-Up of You: Adapt to the Future, Invest in Yourself, and Transform Your Career*. © 2012 by Reid Hoffman and Ben Casnocha. Published by Crown Business, a division of Random House, Inc.

Weak ties in a career context were formally researched in 1973, when sociologist Mark Granovetter asked a random sample of professionals how they had found their new job. It turns out that 82% of them found their position through a contact they saw only occasionally or rarely. In other words, the contacts who referred jobs were "weak ties." Granovetter accounts for this result by explaining that your good friends tend to be from the same industry, neighborhood, religious group, etc. Consequently, their information is similar to yours -- a job a good friend knows about, you probably already know about too.

Weak ties, however, usually sit outside the inner circle. Thus, there's a greater likelihood that a weak tie will be exposed to new information or a new job opportunity you'd otherwise miss. To be sure, weak ties are uniquely helpful so long as they hail from a different social circle or industry niche and therefore bring new information and opportunities. A weak-tie acquaintance whose job and background is identical to yours is unlikely to offer unique network intelligence. So when connecting with acquaintances, prioritize diversity in order to broaden the overall reach of your network.

Just as a digital camera cannot store an infinite number of photos and videos, you cannot maintain an infinite number of allies or acquaintances. The maximum number of relationships we can realistically manage -- the number that can fit on the memory card, as it were -- is described as Dunbar's Number, after the evolutionary psychologist Robin Dunbar. In the early 1990s, Dunbar studied the social connections within groups of monkeys and apes. He theorized that the maximum size of their overall social group was limited by the small size of their neocortex. Based on our neocortex size, Dunbar calculated that humans should be able to maintain relationships with roughly 150 people at a time. He also found that many businesses and military groups organize their people into cliques of about 150. Hence, Dunbar's Number of 150.

There is indeed a limit to the number of relationships you can maintain, but a crucial qualifier is that there is not one blunt limit of 150; in fact, there are different limits for different types of relationships. Think back to the digital camera. Either you can take low-resolution photographs and store 100 of them in total, or you can take high-resolution photographs and store 40. In relationships, you may have only a few close buddies you see every day, yet you can stay in

touch with many distant friends if you e-mail them only once or twice a year. But there's a twist: You can actually maintain a much broader social network than the people you currently "know."

Three degrees of separation

Your allies, weak ties, and the other people you know right now are your first-degree connections. But your friends know people you don't know. These friends of friends are your second-degree connections. And those friends of friends have friends -- those are your third-degree connections.

Stanley Milgram's and Duncan Watts's "small world" research shows the planet Earth as one massive social network; every human being is connected to every other via no more than about six intermediaries. Academically the theory is correct, but when it comes to meeting people who can help you professionally, [three degrees of separation](#) is what matters. Three degrees is the magic number because when you're introduced to a second- or third-degree connection, at least one person personally knows the origin or target person. That's how trust is preserved.

Suppose you have 40 connections, and assume that each friend has 35 other friends in turn, and each of those friends of friends has 45 unique friends of his own. If you do the math ($40 \times 35 \times 45$), that's 63,000 people you can reach via an introduction. People's extended networks are frequently larger than they realize, which is why an early tagline at LinkedIn was "Your network is bigger than you think." So how do you actually reach those connections? Via an introduction from someone you know, who knows the person you want to reach.

I receive about 50 entrepreneur pitches by e-mail every day. I have never funded a company directly from a cold solicitation, and my guess is that I never will. When an entrepreneur comes referred by introduction, it's as if he has a passport at a national border -- he can walk right through, because someone I trust has already vetted that entrepreneur. Anytime you want to meet a new person in your extended network, you should ask for an introduction. You need to ask, directly and specifically, and you do need to present a compelling reason for why your connection should do it: "I'd love to meet Rebecca because she works in the technology industry." Not good enough. "I'm interested in talking to Rebecca because my company is looking to partner with companies just like hers." Better, as it appears to benefit both parties.

OkCupid, a free online dating site, analyzed more than 500,000 first messages between a man or a woman and a potential suitor. They found that those with the highest response rates included phrases like "You mention ..." or "I noticed that ..." In other words, phrases that showed that the person had carefully read the other's profile. People do this in online dating, but when it comes to professional correspondence, it doesn't happen. People send out appallingly unresearched and generic requests. If you spend 30 minutes researching a person's professional profile, your request will stand out. For example, "I noticed you spent a summer working at a German architecture firm. I once worked for an ad agency in Berlin and am thinking about returning -- perhaps we could swap notes about business opportunities?"

You can conceptualize and map your network all you want, but if you can't effectively request and broker introductions, it adds up to a lot of nothing. Take it seriously. If you are not receiving or making at least one introduction a month, you are probably not fully engaging your extended professional network.

The best network: Wide and (selectively) deep

Several years ago sociologist Brian Uzzi did a study of why certain Broadway musicals made between 1945 and 1989 were successful and others flopped. The explanation he arrived at had to do with the people behind the productions. For failed productions, one of two extremes was common. The first was a collaboration between creative artists and producers who tended to all know one another. When there were mostly strong ties, the production lacked the fresh, creative insights that come from diverse experience. The other type of failed production was one in which none of the artists had experience working together. When the group was made up of mostly weak ties, teamwork and group cohesion suffered.

In contrast, the social networks of the people behind successful productions had a healthy balance: There were some strong ties, some weak ties. There was some established trust, but also enough new blood in the system to generate new ideas. Think of your network of relationships in the same way: The best professional network is both narrow/deep (allies with whom you collaborate regularly) and wide/shallow (weak-tie acquaintances who offer fresh information and ideas).

Giving helpful help

The best way to strengthen a relationship is to do something for another person. But how? Here's a good example. When **Jack Dorsey** was co-founding **Square** -- the mobile-payments company -- he had loads of investor interest. **Digg and Milk founder Kevin Rose** had seen a prototype of the Square device and immediately realized the potential. When he asked Jack whether there was room for another person to join the initial funding round, Jack told him it was full. But Kevin still wanted to be helpful. He noticed that Square didn't have a demo on its website showing how the device worked. So he put together a high-definition video and then showed it to Jack. Impressed, Jack turned around and invited Kevin to invest in the Series A round of financing.

To be truly helpful, as Kevin was, you need to have a sense of your friend's values and priorities. What keeps him up at 2 a.m.? What are his talents? His challenges? Once you understand his needs, think about offering him a small gift. A small gift is something that's easy for you to give, unique to the relationship, and unusually helpful for the other person. Classic small gifts include relevant information, introductions, and advice. A really expensive big gift is actually counterproductive -- it can feel like a bribe. When deciding what to give, reflect on your unique experiences and capabilities. What might you have that the other person does not?

Set up an "interesting people" fund

Relationships are living, breathing things. Feed, nurture, and care about them; they grow. Neglect them; they die. You might be nodding your head at the importance of staying in touch. But behavioral change isn't easy. That's why Steve Garrity budgeted and precommitted real time and money to it.

Garrity studied computer science at Stanford and interned at startups over the summers. After graduating from a master's program in 2005, he was convinced that he wanted to start a tech company of his own in Silicon Valley. But he had spent his entire adult life in the Bay Area and

was worried that he would be tied down to one location for many more years. So he took a job as an engineer at Microsoft (**MSFT**) to work on its mobile-search technology.

Garrity had one big worry: What would happen to his network of Silicon Valley entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, and friends? He knew he would someday move back to start a company. He did not want his local network to become stale. So he set aside time and money in advance to keep his network up-to-date.

The state of Washington doesn't tax personal (or corporate) income, so Garrity figured he was saving a meaningful amount of money by living there. Upon moving to Seattle, he declared that \$7,000 of his savings would be "California money." Anytime someone interesting in the Valley invited him to lunch, dinner, or coffee, Garrity would fly to San Francisco to do the meeting. One of his old Stanford professors called him, not realizing he had left town, and invited him over to meet some interesting students. The following evening, he arrived at the professor's house, suitcase in hand. Because he had allocated money, he didn't have to worry about the cost of flights or the stress of decision-making.

Over his 3 1/2 years at Microsoft, Garrity visited the Bay Area at least once a month. After returning to California in 2009, he started a company, **Hearsay Labs**, with a friend whose couch had served as his bed during his regular pilgrimages to the Bay Area from Seattle. It shows the power of what we call Iwe: Your capabilities and potential get magnified exponentially by an active, up-to-date network.

Reid's rules

In the next day: Look at your calendar for the past six months and identify the five people you spend the most time with -- are you happy with their influence on you?

In the next week: Introduce two people who do not know each other but ought to. Then think about a challenge you face and ask for an introduction to a connection in your network who could help.

Imagine you got laid off from your job today. Who are the 10 people you'd e-mail for advice? Don't wait -- invest in those relationships now.

In the next month: Identify a weaker tie with whom you'd like to build an alliance. Help him by giving him a small gift -- forward an article or job posting.

Create an "interesting people fund" to which you automatically funnel a certain percentage of your paycheck. Use it to pay for coffees and the occasional plane ticket to meet new people and shore up existing relationships.

--Reid Hoffman is a partner at Greylock and founder and executive chairman at LinkedIn. Ben Casnocha is an award-winning entrepreneur and author.

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What is Networking?

Networking is a life skill, not just something we do when we want something.

Great networkers:

- ♥ Give without expectation.
- ♥ Do things for others – not to get something back.
- ♥ Have an abundance mentality – they look for opportunities, rather than focusing on the negatives.
- ♥ Believe in making the pie bigger for everyone. They cross network with peers and regularly give away information and make connections. They build the community as well as their own careers.
- ♥ Believe in the universal law of reciprocity, they know that what you give out comes back tenfold.

Remember great networkers work at their networks for a minimum of fifteen minutes per day. Whether it's a phone call, text message, tele-coffee, email, thank you card, small gift or a "good morning" greeting to a stranger, a kind word to a fellow worker or neighbour, it's all part of networking.

*♥ Great Networkers Make
Heart to Heart Connections ♥*

*Your time is divided between
Career Building + Career Generating,
Income Building + Income Generating.*

Networking is a Career + Income Building Activity.

Three P's of Attending Networking Events

Networking is a life skill, not just something you do when you want something. Unfortunately, most people consider networking something they only do at business or social networking events. The people who achieve the best results at networking events are those who understand the three 'P's' of networking.

Preparation The more prepared you are the better your results will be:

1. On receipt of the invitation - decide why you are going
2. Book and pre-pay ASAP
3. Decide on the logistics
4. Plan to arrive early and leave late
5. Prepare a couple of questions that you feel comfortable asking and answering
6. On the day of the event do your homework
7. Before you leave for the event put yourself in a positive mindset without the use of drugs or alcohol
8. Remind yourself what you want to achieve from attending

Proactive Attendance Act like the host and not the guest.

1. If you are nervous when you enter the event, focus on your posture and your breathing
2. Where possible identify the key players in the room
3. Remember the entrances. Aim for quality conversations, not quantity

Post Event Follow Up Only 10% of people follow up post event. Are you in the 90% or the 10%?

1. Decide who you will follow up and what is appropriate
2. On the back of the business cards, write the date, place and something you remember about the person. The wow.
3. Plan your next networking event ASAP

Self-Networking Tracker

Name:

Month:

How I plan to network for the month of:

1.

2.

3.

How I did network for the month of:

1.

2.

3.

Key people I met:

1.

2.

3.

How I plan to network next month:

1.

2.

3.

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