



The Social Media Scene Is Not Far Off From Traditional Networking

If you have been on the receiving end of someone wanting to connect with you on social media just because they wanted to get introduced to someone you were connected with, you might have a jaded sense of the social online networking scene.

Unfortunately, if you use this as an excuse not to integrate social media into your business, you'll be the one losing out on opportunities to grow your relationships and your business. First, forgive those who tried (and continue to try) outdated techniques on you to buy their product the first time they meet you.

Second, if social media marketing seems like a stretch for you, shift your mindset. Rather than looking at the differences between face-to-face and online networking, apply some of the same in-person relationship-building techniques that have been successful for years:

Extend Your Hand

Inviting someone to connect with you online is like extending your hand to someone you just met in person. On one occasion, I "extended my hand" inviting someone to my LinkedIn network who also had many of the same connections. Unfortunately, instead of accepting it, I received a reply that he didn't connect with anyone he didn't know personally.

In response, I simply explained that I use the social networks to expand my network and get to know others particularly if we know some of the same people. Weeks later, I received a request to connect from this same person. Later, he revealed that his mindset was the result of something he learned very early on when social online networks were first coming on the scene.

By keeping an open mind to the evolution of social media, he grew his network exponentially within weeks and thanked me for sharing with him my process for social online networking. So the next time someone you don't know says hello by connecting with you, rethink your mindset. Ask yourself: Am I pulling my hand away or extending my hand of friendship in return?

Cultivate the Relationship

After you connect with someone in person, what's the next question you might ask them? Perhaps you would ask, "What do you do for a living?" It's really no different with social online networking. If you've

already read their profile, perhaps you can then ask, “Who is your ideal client?” I often ask the latter question to those I’ve just met both in person and online. It’s a good open-ended question to get to know more about them and their business. Much like developing any strong relationship, it is not about what you’re going to receive, rather how you can help the other person.

When you observe the process of connecting, social media can be a valuable tool to expand your services and expand your network. Rather than looking at the differences, look at the similarities and apply tried-and-true strategies. Before you know it, social media will feel like an old friend rather than leaving you feeling like an outdated dinosaur.

Do you have a social media strategy that has worked for you? If so, share it on my blog!

Lisa Mininni is the best-selling author of *Me, Myself, and Why? The Secrets to Navigating Change* and President of Excellerate Associates, home of the sought-after Entrepreneurial Edge System, which shows business owners how to automatically bring in pre-qualified prospects and turn them into invested clients. For her brand new eBook, *Get More Clients Now! 3 Steps to More Money, More Clients and A Business You Love*, visit <http://www.freebusinessplanformat.com>