

Social Building Blocks for Your Career

LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and the list goes on. Social media is growing at remarkable speed. Many clients, colleagues and friends are using social media in different ways but many more still haven't begun to explore it because they just don't know where to start. If that's the case for you, you're in luck as I'm going to take the next three weeks and three articles to help you begin. Social media is here to stay and if you want to stay current in your career, remain connected with peers, leverage the opportunity for quick access to effective resources, boost your credibility and even be sought out for different opportunities, using social media is a must!

Like anything in life, the use of social media in your career has to be about leveraging to maximize the ROI of your time and effort. It is incredibly easy to fall into the trap of spending hours on end focused on developing an online presence, learning new ways to create a stronger network and all too soon expending significant effort to grow what amounts to a bigger list of names. If you have spent any amount of time in the online world, you have heard 'the magic is in the biggest list' and, to some extent, this is true. What you rarely hear is that having a big list of names won't do anything by itself. Just like in the real world, social networks need substance and a true connection to translate into the results you want, so in that sense, biggest is not always best. We will delve into that more in upcoming articles but in this article we will focus on the basics of social media and begin with identifying the three most utilized social media venues. They are:

LinkedIn - the social media of choice for business professionals worldwide and a fantastic resource when used effectively.

Facebook - has a similar concept to LinkedIn but was developed for personal communication with the opportunity to post photos and play games. However, Facebook has developed a business angle similar to LinkedIn and it is becoming popular.

Twitter was developed for quick, regular communication to stay in touch.

With LinkedIn having the most relevant business applications, we will begin here.

LinkedIn's tagline – *Relationship Matters* encourages individuals to extend their networks exponentially by sharing, inquiring and selling – whether it's your skills and knowledge, products or services, information or quick tips. Members are people from your community and across the globe in various industries and they may be looking for the information that you possess and are willing to share or have information that could be valuable to you. As mentioned, above, the quality of your network you create is most important. This may sound like a very self-serving practice, but the reality is that the network will need effort to nurture and maintain just as any traditional relationship does. The investment of time and effort must help accomplish your goals. Building a substantial and effective career network takes time. LinkedIn is a good place to spend some of that time in working to build a reputation in the virtual world.

The best way to begin is to go to www.linkedin.com and start exploring the different aspects of it. In our next article we will guide you in building a personal, solid LinkedIn page that will be the foundation for your online presence. Following that article, we will review how to build relationships that matter.

Stay tuned to learn a great deal!

Lotte