

The Business Connector

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Beyond Know, Like & Trust

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The foundation of any productive network is a mutual knowing, liking and trusting of the people with whom we interact.

Once we have established these relationships we have set the stage where we can effectively provide to and obtain from our network opportunities, information, and even additional contacts.

A relationship of mutual knowing, liking and trusting, however, is only a solid foundation upon which a great networking relationship operates. The mere fact that these three elements exist does not guarantee that the network will be productive.

It is possible, after all, to be known, liked and trusted and still receive little from our networks. Consider the old friend we each have stumbled across from time to time. Whether from high school, college or some other time in our lives, this is someone we presumably know, like and trust.

Despite having the fundamental characteristics of a strong networking relationship, we still may not know how to provide them opportunities, information, support, energy or meaningful additional contacts.

Realizing this to be true, it is probable that parts of our network have the same problem with us – they know us, like us and trust us, but do not have any idea as to how to help us.

This underscores the point: We must move beyond know, like, and trust and add to the foundation we have

established to ensure a productive network.

The first addition to our foundation is educating our network to recognize when there are opportunities, information, and additional contacts that could benefit us.

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We must take it upon ourselves to educate our network to recognize opportunity for us. If we do not, our network might know what we do, but be unable to identify opportunities, information or additional contacts that could benefit us.

For example, if we are a realtor, our network probably knows that we buy and sell houses. Do they recognize, however, that it is a good opportunity for us when the last child of a couple leaves home? Not unless we educate them that “empty nesters” are potentially good clients because they generally look to downsize (i.e., sell the large family residence and purchase a smaller home).

This is just one example from one occupation. The fact of the matter is that we each have literally dozens of opportunities that our network can recognize for us.

Once we have educated our network to recognize opportunities that could benefit us, the second addition to the foundation is that we need to teach them to transition into a conversation with the prospect about the opportunity – call it a segue.

Returning to the example, once our network recognizes the opportunity that

empty nesters could provide a realtor, we need to teach them how to get the topic of real estate in the conversation. One means of doing this is posing a question: “Now that your kids are gone, what are you going to do with all this house?”

Although there are several possible responses to this question, one might be, “We’ll probably sell this and get something smaller.” This is a successful segue, as real estate has become part of the conversation.

Now that our network has recognized the opportunity and transitioned into a discussion about it, the third and final addition to our foundation is that we need to enable them to sell the prospect on us. For our network to do so, we need to enlighten them on all those wonderful things about us, our product or service, and our company.

Back to the example, our network has segued real estate into the conversation. Now they can share with the prospect all those benefits of working with us. “When you decide to sell, you should consider using Lisa Black as your Realtor. She has over 10 years experience and is one of the top agents for ABC Realtors, the largest real estate brokerage in town.”

In summary, being known, liked and trusted is only a solid foundation upon which we can build a productive network. To add to this solid foundation, we need to take those individuals that know, like and trust us and (1) educate them on how to recognize opportunity for us, (2) teach them to transition prospects into a conversation about the opportunity, and then (3) enable them to sell our benefits to these prospects.