

Session 7

Relationship building strategies

A campaign of adding value

Making contact with the right people is just the first step. Connecting is not enough – know they need to get to know you!

- Develop a messaging campaign (see session 4)

This means not just one 'hello' message, but after a couple of weeks following it up with a value-based message. This might be a 'read this blog and thought you might find it interesting' or a 'came across this webinar, might it be of interest to you?' (see session 4 for the detail of this.)

- Track and maintain contact over 3-6 months.
You're looking at one message every 3-6 weeks – not a deluge of material!
- Ask when it's convenient to have a phone or Skype chat.

Most contacts will acknowledge your value-based messages and will start to recognise and remember you. At this point asking them to meet is not a huge step. However, this is not a 'sales call'; it's a 'getting-to-know-each-other' call.

Moving the conversation offline

When you ask for an appointment for a phone chat suggest a time

Check they have a phone number listed on their profile and check with them that's the best number to contact them on

Call right on time – no excuses – you're aiming to build a reputation as reliable and switched on!

Offline meeting strategy

We all like talking about ourselves, but you'll give your reputation a real boost if you:

- Are genuinely interested in them
- Don't talk about what you do
- Ask them how business is going
- Ask them what is challenging them
- Find out what kind of client **they'd** be interested in meeting

If you say you want a 10 minute chat – make it 10 minutes! There's nothing worse than scheduling something and then finding it's running way over your expected finish time – is there?

Starting a group

There are pros and cons to doing this. I would advise thinking very carefully before taking this step – also you should be experienced in being a group member too.

Cons:

- There are already millions of groups on LinkedIn – and many of these will be focused on your target market – why reinvent the wheel?
- It takes a lot of effort to start a group and build the membership and activity. Nobody wants to join a group that has 17 members and nothing going on. You will need to actively recruit members and give them a really good reason for joining.

Pros

- Being a group leader gives you credibility and establishes you as a thought-leader in your chosen niche. Even if it's not the area of your expertise, you become associated with the focus of the group.
e.g. If you're a printer that specialises in printing menus and hospitality material – you could start a group for restaurateurs and hoteliers – and become known as an expert in the hospitality trade.
- You can build a high profile and excellent reputation with a great number of people in the area you want to influence.

Being the owner/leader of a group does not give you carte blanche to use it as a blatant sales platform. Of course, the members will know what you do, but your focus needs to be to build that top notch reputation as an expert in THEIR industry.

That doesn't mean that you can't invite them to attend a webinar you're running or to any other event you think will be of interest to them – that's part of your responsibilities as group leader.

Before you take this step think carefully about the level of work you will have to do – or get someone to do on your behalf – to get the whole thing rolling. It's brilliant for your reputation, but will take some time and effort.

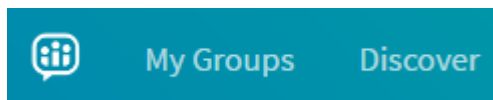
To start a group

Select Work on the main navigation bar and choose 'Groups'.

This will take you to the main groups page where you will see all the recent posts from groups you are already a member of.

This usually opens in a new browser window.

The navigation looks like this:



If you choose *My Groups* it lists all your current groups (with any you already run at the top).

On the left is a tab *Create group*.

This allows you to access the form to set up your group.

Opening the group is only the beginning – now you'll need a list of contacts you want to invite to join – and a really good reason for them to take action!

As a group owner you're allowed to email your members once a week – so start thinking about what you want that email to say.

Assignment

- Create a message campaign (structure in session 4)**
- Develop a monitoring system to keep track of your messages**
- Aim to have phone/Skype conversations**
- Add as much value as possible – be interested in THEM**
- Decide whether starting a group would add more value**

