

FILL INS

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www.pohlconsulting.com

Is It Working for You?

Boss: *Where's Sal?*

Colleague: *She's out networking!*

Boss: *What's the difference between Networking and Notworking?*

Colleague: *Duh, one letter--an "o" instead of an "e".*

Clever response, but we suggest that the real difference is the opportunities you may be generating.

In our Prospecting Workshops we are typically asked by at least one participant, "does anyone ever really develop business opportunities by attending Chamber, Rotary or other groups/clubs?" This question is typically followed by a confession that while eager to develop business opportunities by being involved in community organizations, the individual has had little or no luck in developing new business as the result of being involved. At this point there are a few nods from others in the session indicating that they may be experiencing similarly unsatisfying results.

First, let's clarify that we see a clear

distinction between "networking" and "prospecting". Often we find that the terms are used interchangeably. Networking is a marketing strategy. Your network is composed of a group of friends, family, former co-workers, customers and prospects. You've met these people and they know who you are (and hopefully what you do). If you picked up the phone to call them, they'd know who you are. Prospecting on the other hand is a sales activity. It is the process of finding potential customers for our products and services. Hopefully you are targeting your prospecting efforts toward those who have the potential to become customers. Not everyone is a prospect for our services.

Networking helps us to be seen, to be involved and to be visible within our communities.

Recently in a coaching workshop a coach-participant was engaged in a role play where a sales person was expressing frustration about not being able to develop business as the result of involvement in a community group. The coach-par-

ticipant shared some advice from her own experience. *There are a lot of organizations out there that you can join, but I'm going to tell you what my mentor once told me. You should pick an organization whose mission is something that you are passionate about.*

cont.

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Loyd Pohl, CEO, Pohl Consulting and Training, Inc.

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Volunteer to take on leadership roles in the organization and its activities. People can tell when you are honestly engaged and passionate. We look up to people who “step up” and are willing to take on leadership roles. This will help you stand out from those who are just there. In the long-run this will help you to be known as someone who can deal with the issues and challenges that are part of the world of business.

This is great advice! But what should one be doing to gain even more value from networking? If you approach a community event with the idea that you are going to talk to as many people as possible and tell them about yourself and what you have to offer, your success is doubtful. No one wants to be sold!

One of the paramount values of networking is the opportunities you have to demonstrate value to others. Accomplish this by listening and learning about others with whom you connect. What are their problems? What current challenges are keeping them awake at night? What are their dreams? Who do you know that can help them with their issues? Help those you meet get in touch with others you know who can help them. In this way you become known as a problem-solver and a connector. Who knows, the connections you create may just be what moves another’s business to the next level, solves an ongoing problem, connects his/her child with someone who will inspire and shape his/her career, find a new employee who is perfectly suited to an open-job, etc.

Please understand that you do NOT engage in this type of referral helping with the expectation of getting something in return. Trust me when I say that if you do, those who you help will pick up on your ulterior motives and run from you as quickly as they can. Your goal is pure. You know people who should know other people. Learn as much as you can about the people you meet. Listen to them. Really listen!

Your ability to help goes way beyond the financial world. Genuine networking is about creating and maintaining relationships. Through your actions with the people you connect to, your behavior will demonstrate:

- You care about them—they can trust that you are looking out for their best interest.
- You understand the problems/issues they are facing and you are willing to reach out and help them get to those who can help with their particular issues.
- Your ability to help solve their problems.

The feelings that result from these demonstrated actions are the bedrock of solid relationships. Remember the old adage—People do business with those they know and trust. They are, of course, the same characteristics one looks for in his/her financial advisor.

In the process of meeting and helping others get connected you will learn more and more about the individuals involved. You’ll be able to identify who, if any, have the need and capacity to become a prospect for your services. In the mean time, focus on networking as an opportunity to demonstrate your superior ability to connect others and build solid relationships.

A word of caution: Just because your primary goal isn’t prospecting doesn’t mean you should turn down a request for a meeting to discuss how you can be of help with the products/services you offer.

A failure is a man who has blundered, but is not able to cash in on the experience.

-Elbert Hubbard-

Guest Article

Making Social Media Work for Banks

by
A. Stewart Rose

President/CEO, Truebridge, Inc.

In the old days, a bank's personality was often times defined by the friendly office manager or teller who knew their customers personally. That is changing quickly, as more and more banks' personalities are defined by what their customers see online. This can be an opportunity for banks to shape their image in new ways! Social media can be a tool for financial guidance across a wide range of topics, initiating conversations with customers that put the bank in place for more effective cross selling. With the dynamic growth of social media, banks no longer have to wait for customers to visit their website to find the financial information they need; they can now push this information out to customers in ways that start dialogues.

Everyone is aware of the fast growing popularity of social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. Hundreds of banks have jumped in with the idea that they will get started and see where it goes, not wanting to be a latecomer to the party. But there is still confusion as to what banks should be saying to their customers. Other banks have stayed away, often times citing compliance issues. Consulting companies and social media agencies have sprung up overnight offering help to banks trying to figure it out. For the most part they have urged their clients to articulate a social media strategy as an extension of a sound marketing strategy. They tend to be a combination of defense and offense. *What they all have in common is developing friendly and constructive dialogues with the customer.*

Playing Defense--Turning negative into positive by listening/reacting

On the defensive side, there are banks that have decided

to let their customers speak openly, with the bank as a part of the conversation. Their feeling is that if customers have complaints, they might as well be in the loop and hear about them early so they can react. This approach to brand building can be very effective. A solved problem can build a stronger relationship than before the problem occurred. People want good service, and demonstrating a problem being fixed defines service in terms that customers can understand. The power of the message is not in the claim of providing good service but in the demonstration of providing good service.

Playing Offense--Building a friendly personality with interesting and engaging content

The social media posts fall into several categories. Here are some real life examples.

Community: Posting the presence of the bank at various community events. Communicating contests; community fund raiser for (fill in the blank); safety information; and photo contests.

Marketing: TV ad on YouTube; credit card offer; refinancing; bill pay promotion; checking promotion; SBA loan.

Fun/Whimsical: Who is wearing red today? Teller games; Trivia question; who will win play-off game; commuting time survey.

Helpful Information and Advice: Money and kids; buying a car; buying a house; saving for college; saving for retirement; wealth management.

The Danger of Outside Links

Execution of the last category, **Providing Helpful Information and Advice**, raises a cautionary flag.

cont.

While the type of information that banks are providing can be very helpful to customers, many banks are doing this by linking to outside sites and blogs. This can be dangerous. By doing this, the bank has lost control of the customer. Once a link is made, it can electronically stick to the customer. In an attempt to provide relevant content, the bank has introduced their customers to outside sources of information instead of becoming the source themselves. Many of these links are advertiser supported blogs and news services that put their customers only a click away from a competitor's ad. The bank has unwittingly pushed the customer out the door to surf the web for financial information and guidance that should be coming from the bank.

Is There a Better Way?

The use of social media has moved the need for branded, compliant, educational content from a "nice to have" to a "must have" for many banks. Content by itself, however, will not necessarily translate to sales. It is the delivery that makes the difference.

Educational content as a value added service can be delivered through social media as well as the bank website and branches in a way that builds the image of the bank as the place customers go to fulfill their financial needs. It can generate selling opportunities for all products and services, including deposits, loans, investments, insurance, and trust. Banks have a new "voice" to their customers, providing helpful information on hundreds of topics in a way that builds stronger relationships. Customers are drawn to their bank for financial answers on matters such as buying a house, saving for college and retirement, plan distributions, retirement income, estate matters, etc., and connected with the person that can help.

This article is an excerpt from a Truebridge Financial Marketing White Paper. If you'd like to receive a copy of the White Paper in its entirety, please [CLICK HERE](#).

Did You Know?

by
David Poch

Conforming to his lifetime quest for privacy, Steve Jobs' estate will probably pay no federal estate taxes or local probate costs on his legacy. Through the use of at least two irrevocable trusts, the estate, estimated at \$6.4 to \$10 billion, appears to have beat the tax scythe. Since privacy is the hallmark of these post mortem planning devices we will probably never know the details, but his 5.5 million shares of Apple and 13.8 million shares of Disney (via Pixar) will be resident in at least two California Trusts and his wife and four children (plus a daughter from a previous relationship) do not inherit directly, if at all. Rumors say there may be a foundation or charitable intent in the future or even a loan fund for promising technical entrepreneurs but Jobs' meticulous attention to detail may guarantee we'll never know for sure.

Perhaps your clients would be interested in how you can do this for them!



What Can We Learn From Santa About Leadership?

Leadership Secrets of Santa, Eric Harvey and David Cottrell, reminds us about the core principles and practices of successful leadership. The "secrets" are useful year-round. Here for your viewing enjoyment is a short excerpt. We think it is highly suitable for a discussion starter in a supervisor's meeting. Take 2.5 minutes from your busy schedule and refresh your leadership focus.

[CLICK HERE](#) to view.

Staff Article
***The Art of
Upward Influencing***
by
Frank Stratman

Who is responsible for clear communication? The boss? The subordinate? The corporation?

We have run into this management problem more and more frequently and at nearly every level of the organizational chart. We see: assistants who are confused about their role, their responsibilities, their supervisor's perception of their abilities and their career paths in the organization; supervisors becoming unhappy with a lack of management direction and feedback; middle managers taking on more responsibility than one human being can handle because they "think" it's what is expected; senior managers "hoping" that the things they are doing is what top management wants them to do.

Most managers subscribe to the "open door" philosophy. Yet employees often fear walking through that door as it may be perceived as a sign of weakness/inadequacy or, worse yet, that they are "imposing" because the manager's past behavior indicates that the "open door" isn't really open. In regards to private meetings, it would make for a nice needlepoint that says "Where the boss closes the door, the employee jumps out the window."

So we have what amounts to a "no-win" situation. People are hoping/wishing/second-guessing, inevitably reaching some wrong conclusions and then basing decisions on those conclusions. What are the odds that those decisions will be the right ones? Minimal, at best. These are the kind of uninformed decisions that lead to true bumbles. Let's also not overlook all the energy that is expended on worrying about a "I hope this is right" decision at the expense of more productive endeavors.

Time to get back to our original point: Whose responsibility is it? Shouldn't our bosses perceive that we need their help? Shouldn't they realize that we need that specialized direction? Shouldn't they set those career paths for us? Shouldn't they want to tell us what a fine job we're doing? Well, yes, they probably *should*. But the reality is that they *don't* and it's *your* job performance, job satisfaction and career path that's on the line, not *theirs*. So build a bridge and get over it!

Statistics tell us that only 2% of firings at the managerial level are due to technical incompetence; 90% are the result of failing to get along with others (especially the boss). The same percentages hold true for reasons why people leave an employer – only 10% are really for more money, while 90% leave for a clearer sense of direction and career path.

Fostering a compatible relationship with the boss does not mean political maneuvering or apple polishing. It means seeking opportunities to forge a relationship based on clear, specific, candid and frequent two-way communication. This may or may not lead to a genuine friendship and enjoyment of each other.

Here are some proactive things you can do to improve the situation:

- Stop criticizing your boss and idealizing your own performance. Such a mental mindset will be more obvious than you realize.
- View your relationship as a partnership that involves the sharing of information. Neither one of you is a mind-reader. Don't decide for yourself, ask the boss what his/her goals and priorities are – and what you can do to help achieve them.
- Figure out how the boss likes to get informa-

What's New?

by
Loyd Pohl

-tion. Written or oral? Hard copy or e-mail? Brief or lengthy? Fully supported or bottom-line only? (This will help *a lot* in creating more productive communication between the two of you).

- Establish a specific, regular time and place when you and your boss can discuss your mutual feelings in an undisturbed, focused, non-hurried atmosphere. This is not the time to discuss only the detailed crises on your accounts or the most recent legislation affecting the industry. It is the time to update each other on the progress you've made toward your goals, to reprioritize if needed and to make sure you're both still on the same track. It is also a time to have conversations regarding long range or personal plans which may affect either's work, or career (retirement timeline anyone?).

This may be a new behavior pattern for both of you – and it's very easy to fall back into old habits. If your scheduled meeting must be canceled, get another specific time scheduled. New habits need constant attention!

The basis of all strong human relationships is communication – clear, candid and two-way. If you take the responsibility for ensuring your half of this process, you can forever skip the hoping/wishing/second-guessing as both you and your boss will know where the other stands.

We have been conducting an unusually high number of Vendor RFP's. We usually seem to have one going most of the time, but right now we have 6 in progress – and more in the pipeline. We'd like to think it is our great sales skills that have created this business but we do have to give some credit to the regulators who are focusing a lot of attention on vendor management. One of the main reasons people use us for this service is that it is simply easier and faster than starting from scratch.

Twas the planning season and it has been actually fun facilitating and participating in Strategic Planning sessions this year. Why? Because most of the organizations we have been working with really think there is a future – and are planning accordingly. Planning the last few years has been about survival not about thinking beyond the next year.

Investing in staff development is – we hope – a leading indicator of industry confidence. We have been doing more sales, service and management training this fall than we have for a long time and our pipeline for 2012 is better than it has been for four years.

We have started working with a start up trust department. Yes, you heard right a start up Trust department. Talk about confidence in the future.

Building on the success of last year's Retail Roundtable, this is becoming a "can't miss event" for heads of Retail Banking. This year's group included a number of returnees from last year and we welcomed a number of new participants. They tell us that the end of September is ideal timing for planning for the next fiscal year. Here's what participants told us about this year's Retail Round Table:



- *Everyone was involved and each question/idea was answered. I'm motivated to implement new ideas with my team. I have enjoyed the entire conference.*
- *Discussions about scorecards and compensation, best practice sharing and gaining new product/service ideas were most valuable to me.*
- *Everyone was generous with their ideas. I am returning to work with renewed energy.*

In Preparation for 2012 Staff Development Are You Considering the Following:

Do You as a Sales Coach.....

- Successfully build the skills of your sales staff so they are continually improving?
- Understand what motivates each sales person and what he/she needs from you?
- Conduct every sales meeting so that your staff is better prepared and motivated to meet current challenges --- knowing more than they knew before the meeting?
- Use joint-calling as a learning opportunity?
- Have someone who coaches you in your selling skills and your coaching skills?

Highly successful sales coaches can say "Yes" to these questions. Sales Organization Leadership Development is a two-day workshop designed to enable you to say "Yes" to these questions and many more.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information

Does Your Sales Staff....

- Create the kind of relationships with clients/customers that make them advocates for your business?
- Employ a discovery process that ensures that they can position themselves as the quarterback of the client's financial world?
- Consist of seasoned veterans whose relationship sales skills have lost their edge or whose motivation varies with the change of seasons?
- Consist of less tenured players who would benefit greatly from learning and practicing a more structured approach to relationship sales?
- Get all that they need from you in developing their relationship sales skills?

Our *Relationship Sales Workshop* delivers both the skills and process training that Relationship Sales Managers/Trust Officers/Private Bankers/Commercial Lenders need to excel.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information.

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To view a sample report (small or large trust departments) please contact: Loyd Pohl at elpohl@pohlconsulting.com

The Last Word

with LOYD POHL

One of the questions I hear a lot is “What’s going on “out there” in the industry?” Sometimes it is a “soft-ball question” that I can turn to my favor – other times I answer it rather broadly.

The answer the last few months has been that I see the community banking industry being separated between the “haves and have-nots”. Just like the USA itself, the “middle class” is disappearing.

The “have-nots”: We know there are still a number of banks struggling to survive but there seems to be a bigger number that may be past “survival mode” but are so damaged psychologically or financially that they can’t envision investing in a future that is so uncertain.

The “haves”: There are a lot of strong banks out there who are buying, building and focusing their organizations on the future. These are the ones on the right column on the FDIC list on Friday night. These are the ones orchestrating lift outs of teams from other organizations.

Fortunately for us at RHF&A, we can serve both:

For the “have-nots” we do vendor RFPs to help them cut costs, search to replace defecting team members and risk management projects responding to regulatory requirements.

For the “haves” we are doing lift out orchestration, acquisition due diligence and valuations, search for expansion positions, sales training for lenders who are refocusing on renewed client and prospects calling.

From an industry perspective, we see a lot of the

“have-nots” disappearing. Most of them will merge (be acquired). Some may experience continued financial deterioration that may cause them not to survive.

This consolidation will eventually create a stronger industry populated by organizations that are committed to the future and committed to serving the people in their communities – the way we all used too....


Chief Executive Officer

From all of us at

***Pohl Consulting
and Training, Inc.,***

***Robert H. Franke
& Associates***

&

TRUSTCOMPARE[®]...

**May the Peace and Joy
of the Holiday Season
be with you during the
New Year**

