

## I'm Still Not ALL a'Twitter

I wrote a column a couple of years ago titled "I'm NOT All a'Twitter." In it, I mentioned that I'd been asked a few times to put together a seminar on Social Media Networking, but I'd declined. My rationale was that printing salespeople were already wasting too much of their time, and anything that added more potential for time-wasting was a bad thing.

Does Social Media Networking also have benefit potential? Absolutely! But it's important to focus on the *Networking* part rather than the *Social* part. My concern, then and now, is that salespeople would end up doing 20 minutes of *socializing* for every minute of real sales-building activity.

### Projectors and Receivers

When I was asked to do a keynote on Social Media Networking midway through last year, I was tempted to decline again, but the organizer of the event talked me into it. "I want my people to hear the warning about wasting time," she said, "but I also want them to hear your ideas on how to use these media, especially the part about *projectors* and *receivers*." That had come from a conversation we'd had previously, when I'd mentioned that everyone seems to be focusing on their own Social Media presence, and not getting enough value from everyone else's.

Here's what that means. When you're posting on Facebook, or Tweeting, or even posting to a LinkedIn Group, you are *projecting*. You're saying *this is my news*, or *my content*, or *my opinion*. If you think about it, what you're doing is much more related to *advertising* than to *networking*.

Is it bad to advertise? Of course not! But if that's all you're doing with these media, you're missing out on most of the value they provide. You're also contributing to the sensory overload that ultimately limits all advertising. Think about *that* for a moment. The first wave of companies who advertised in newspapers really had something going for them, but the power of their ads was diluted as more and more advertisers got on board. The early adopters of Direct Mail really had something going for them too, but the sheer volume of advertising sent through the mail created the perception of *junk mail*. I have 400 or so Facebook friends—almost all of them printers!—and I get more than 200 posts most days. It's not easy to stand out in that crowd!

### Knowledge Is Power

Now let's look at the other side of the Social Media opportunity. As a *receiver*, you have the opportunity to benefit from what other people project. That can be as basic as using LinkedIn to identify contacts at companies you're interested in. My LinkedIn profile identifies me as the president of David Fellman & Associates. Therefore, if you search on "David Fellman Associates," LinkedIn leads you to my profile. If I had a Director of Marketing or an HR Manager, they might also have *projected* their profiles on LinkedIn, which would come up when you searched on the company name.

Once you've identified a contact on LinkedIn—or Facebook for that matter—you can look through that person's own connections to see if you might have friends or colleagues in common. You can also look through profiles and posts for common interests. As an example, if you learned that a prospect was also a fan of the same football team you root for, you'd have something to talk about that might serve as a door-opener.

Here's some advice, though. You should always be looking for the most *eclectic* interest you share with a prospect, not the most common. You might never be more than just one of a group of salespeople a buyer talks football with. On the other hand, you might be the only one who shares an interest in impressionist painting.

What's that you say, you don't have any interest in impressionist painting? Fair enough, but is there anything preventing you from learning something about a topic like that, to create a door-opener that would not otherwise have existed? As a *receiver*, you can gain all sorts of knowledge about the people you're hoping to sell to. What you do with that knowledge can make all the difference!