



ACTION IMPACT™

How today's trends impact your life and the actions you can take to profit from them.

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LinkedIn or Locked Out!

by Joel G. Block

I imagine being able to find out critical information about just about anyone—at any company—any time that you want it...

Well, it's not only possible, but I can do it right now and so can you. There is a great tool in the new Web 2.0 universe that has more power for putting people together in a business context than any that I've ever encountered before.

Four years ago, I was introduced to LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com) and I set up an account on this brand new social networking platform. I created links with 50 people who I already knew. But I wasn't very impressed because there were less than 30,000 people in the network and I couldn't "see" how it could help me at that time—so I forgot about it.

But, in the summer of 2006, after attending a trade show and needing to find a specific executive at a specific company, I was reminded that I should try LinkedIn as a place to find the person whom I was looking for. And, to my absolute shock, there were now 6 million people who were part of the network. And even though I had a small network of people, I was able to identify several people at the specific company that I was interested in.

I was intrigued and, therefore, committed to building a substantial

network. Over the past year and a half, I have succeeded in building a very large and respectable network, which is probably in the top 500 of all participants in the LinkedIn community. By the way, the entire LinkedIn network now tops 15 million members.

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I use the LinkedIn service several times a day, and I urge all speakers, authors and advisors to businesses to use this service because of the power that it has for helping you find and close deals. I will give you just a few examples of how I use it, but first let me explain what it is.

Based on the concept of "6 degrees of separation," we are all connected. LinkedIn goes 3 levels deep (i.e. 3 degrees of separation). I may know "you" but I don't know who you know, and I certainly don't know who your people know. The goal is to extend

LinkedIn invitations to people whom you know—and then they will be doing the same with their contacts. Each person is building a network and all of us are building a web that is interconnected and very powerful.

Just to give you a sense of the magnitude of this, my direct connections top 2,800 while the connections of my connections exceed 715,000. But the incredible number is that the connections that are three degrees away are in excess of 7.3 million—nearly half of all of the people in the entire LinkedIn universe. That gives me a lot of access—which I'll show you how to use in a minute.

Now some people feel "weird" about letting others know who they know, but you can hide your connections so that others can't see who you know. In reality, nobody really cares who you know. What they care about is building a network that is big enough to find anybody in the LinkedIn universe

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whom they are looking for. One of the site's rules is that you only have access to people who are within two connection layers of anyone whom you are directly connected to. Therefore, the bigger your personal network, the more access to the universe that you have.

Back to specifics. Last year, when I rediscovered the service, I did searches for people whom I wanted to connect with. For example, I typed the words "Speakers Bureau" and found several. I sent e-mails to some, and some I picked up the phone and called them directly. I called one bureau in the Midwest and got the LinkedIn contact on the phone. I introduced myself to him and we talked for a while. Sure enough, a variety of different business opportunities have come out of it. One is in the "hopper" ready to close right now.

As I continued to build my network, more opportunities came along. My personal attorney called me and said, "I know that you have a big network. Can you introduce me to somebody at Sprint whom my client needs to meet?" Sure enough, by going into my giant LinkedIn network, I was able to find several people who met the criteria that his client needed. He called one of them on the phone and this person directed him exactly to the right place in that Fortune 500 Company.

Another example: I was recently asked by a Speakers Bureau to hold a date for a conference on the east coast. They told me the name of the company and the date. I immediately had my staff start to build a file on that company so that we could become educated about their needs.

I immediately went to LinkedIn. I entered the name of this company, which is public but not large, and I found that my personal LinkedIn network has 97 people from that company who are directly related to me. And those 97 people included the CEO, the CFO, and the senior vice president of sales.

The Speakers Bureau was absolutely shocked to see what they called a "dossier" on this company and how much insight we had about it. Needless to say, they asked for a copy of the file that we had constructed.

"Make sure you get LinkedIn, so that you don't get locked out."

I could go on and on with one example after the next but what's really important here is that because these people are in my network, I have comfortable access to them. This includes information from their profiles, such as their resume including the schools they went to, the previous jobs they have held and the dates for most of these items. I can also get a sense about how old they are and what

their interests are if they choose to post that material.

When making a sale, information is power. More information leads to more commonality and commonality creates the bond that relationships are made of. And then sales begin to flow.

I encourage all fellow speakers, advisors and people who interact with businesses in any kind of a sales, marketing or advisory capacity to build their LinkedIn network. Any of the readers of this article may call me personally to talk about this service because I want you to get the dramatic benefits that I continue to get from it every day.

Make sure you get LinkedIn, so that you don't get locked out.

The fastest way for you to start building a large network on LinkedIn is to send an invitation to me after you have set up your profile. Go to www.linkedin.com and take action right away. You will immediately receive over 715,000 connections when you connect yourself to me. It's a great place to start, and once you've done that, if you have any further questions, you can either e-mail me at joel@growth-logic.com or call me by phone at (818) 597-2990. I'm happy to discuss this with you so that you can benefit from it in the same way that I do.

About Joel G. Block, President of Growth-Logic, Inc.

Often dubbed a "Growth Architect" by his clients, Joel Block advises companies on explosive growth strategies by driving revenue and sales. Well known in the capital markets, Joel is a successful entrepreneur, speaker and advisor. To bring Joel into your company, please visit www.joelblock.com or www.growth-logic.com. To discuss this issue or others, feel free to call Joel directly at (818) 597-2990.



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