

Foundations—a Pedestal Group Publication

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FOUNDATIONS

The Pedestal Group

Reviewing Your Network

Special points of interest:

- *Life long learning*
 - *On line information*
 - *Should you get computer optimization?*
 - *Recording calls for Free*
 - *Giving to Get*
- AND MORE!

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When was the last time you thought about your network? Your network is truly one of your most important assets as a business owner but one most people spend little to no time reviewing. We recommend stopping once a year and making sure your network can help you in all the ways it should. And now, just before holiday party season, is a great time to do this.

Rob Cross and Robert Thomas recently wrote about effective networking in their article, “Managing Yourself: A Smarter Way to Network”. They listed six types of people that should appear in your network:

1. People who offer new information, expertise, people who can share best practices, and who inspire innovation.
2. Power people—mentors, influencers, and people who can provide support.
3. People who will push and challenge you.
4. Friends—people who can help when you are having a bad day or with whom you can be you.

5. Validators—people who validate your work including those that remind you of the broader context.
6. People who hold you accountable for life outside of work to have a work / life balance.
7. Not found in the article, but we would add Problem Solvers. Who can you call when you run into the out-of-the-ordinary problem and need someone to go to for a solution?

As you think about your network, think about each of these categories and if you had a situation, who could you call to receive that kind of support? Then go through your contacts and business cards. Where do each of the remaining people fit? By looking at the people in this way, you identify your core network (those you placed in a category without needing their name in front of you) and those that are more a “second tier” but still important.

The next step of managing your network is looking at those people that didn't easily fall into the seven categories mentioned above. For these



people, it is important to determine where, if anywhere, they fit in your network. If they don't, then it is important to not give that individual time in your schedule. “Just a cup of coffee” is costing you an hour or two of your billable time. Is that person worth \$100-\$500 an hour? Make a list of these individuals so you don't forget when to say “no”.

Now that you know who is in your network and where they fit, you can look at where you need to add new contacts. It is much easier to meet the right people in the right setting so knowing the kind of person you need is critical.

Your information offer people can usually be found in industry groups, trade organizations or other places professionals

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Becoming a Life Long Learner

Peter Bregman, in a recent article called, “The Best Way to Use the Last Five Minutes of Your Day” suggests that the way to become a life long learner is to stop at the end of each day and ask yourself how the day went. By reviewing your work on a regular basis, you can learn



from your mis-

Thank you voice mails can make a difference

takes and be sure to duplicate that which brought you the most success.

He suggests you ask yourself the following three questions:

How did the day go? What success did I experience? What challenges did I endure?

What did I learn today? About myself? About others? What do I plan to do — differently or the same — tomorrow?

Who did I interact with? Anyone I

need to update? Thank? Ask a question? Share feedback?

Here at The Pedestal Group we love the last question the most because it takes so little time at the end of the day to leave someone a “thank you” voice mail, but can really start their day off in a great way when they pick it up in the morning.

Overall, reviewing your day or even a week can allow you to keep tabs on things that might otherwise fall through the cracks.

What They Know About You

LINKEDIN IS A MUST FOR ALL SALES PEOPLE

Jeffrey Gitomer has a great article this week on what your clients do when you call. While you are working hard to

make connections and learn everything you can about them, they are doing the same thing about you. Have you Googled yourself lately?

Gitomer points out your customers

are going to look you up on all the various social media outlets available to them. I would change that to the various media outlets they LIKE. Everyone has their favorites—some people LOVE Facebook while others think it is a colossal waste of time. Some people live and die by LinkedIn but won't touch Twitter. Etc. Regardless of how you feel about any of these tools, as a sales person, you have an obligation to be found SOMEWHERE.

LinkedIn is a no-brainer. The informa-

tion requested isn't about your relationships or children and no one cares what you had for lunch. People should be able to find you on LinkedIn.

After that, it is up to you. The more places people can find you, the more easily they can trust you because they can feel like they “know” you. Be sure to use the tools you choose to list on so there is more than just a profile and if you aren't sure how, ASK. There are hundreds of great websites available as well as social media trainers (like The Pedestal Group!) happy to help!

Computer “Optimization” - Worth the cash?

At many computer retailers, you can buy a service called “Optimization” that is suppose to make sure your computer runs fast and efficiently.

A number of our clients have asked about this service and in researching, we found a Consumer Reports investigation that shed light on it.

When a computer ships from the factory, there are a number of programs loaded that are extra and often trail

versions. Most of the optimization services remove the shortcuts from the desktop of these applications. These programs are easy to remove and harmless to leave on your computer.

Also, in most cases optimization included loading Windows updates. One client of TPG recently had 78 updates to load on his brand new computer. This can take time and require some

babysitting. If that time is important to you, you can pay for the optimization service although in testing multiple Best Buy locations, Consumer Reports found inconsistencies in how many updates were complete.

The services also activated anti-virus and anti-spyware programs loaded on the computers. At this time TPG is recommending either AVG or Trend-Micro which have both proven to be

Audio Recording of Calls

There are many situations where people need the ability to record a phone call. According to Dave Johnson at [BNet](#), TheInterviewer is the way to accomplish this task (<http://theinterviewr.com/>).

Unlike other services, TheInterviewer is free and at the conclusion of the interview you can easily download the audio to your computer as an MP3 file.

In addition, he goes on to tout the features available in TheInterviewer including the ability to store docu-

ments needed for the call. When you schedule the call, you upload any materials you want to reference when the time comes and you are all set. If you choose to review the recording on line, those materials are available at the same time.

The downside, according to BNet, is the site currently doesn't initiate calls itself so at the scheduled time it is necessary to log in and launch the call. Once launched, the site contacts you and the other party and you are off and running.

Future features will include the ability to start a call automatically, as well as an iPhone app that will allow you to be mobile while conducting your interviews.



Overall this site fills an interesting niche and would allow you to record phone calls easily and without adding additional costs to your phone system. Give it a try!

Giving to Get

When was the last time you gave someone a referral? I'm sure you've been looking for one. The point is, sometimes the best way to help someone keep you top of mind is to give them a referral. If they feel they "owe" you a favor, they will be more likely to pay attention.

For instance, an executive recruiter places a candidate in a new position. He knows that candidate is expected to determine a new software package to use in the next 90 days. It just so

happens there's a great software company that works in the industry. Obviously those sales people know a great deal about the companies they work with and are a great source of referrals for the executive search consultant. If he makes an introduction for the candidate and vendor, he's now helped everyone achieve their goals.

Another option is if there is a business you would like to call on but don't have an in, look for a way to bring them business. If you can find a cus-

tommer, sales will definitely speak with you and then you have an easy introduction to the right people. But keep in mind your name and reputation are tied to your referral so it has to be solid. You have to be willing to put your name on this person's attitude and how they will deal with your potential client. This will also not be an instant connection. Allow the referral to happen at least as a meeting before asking for an introduction. If the sales person is happy, he'll give you a great recommendation!

Optimization (con't)

solid programs that catch problems but don't get in the way. It is important your anti-virus software is turned on and scanning on a regular basis (at least weekly).

Also, Microsoft Defender is a terrific, free spyware remover and should be activated on all computers. In some cases Best Buy had activated this on the test machines but on others it was not done.

A great tool often used by optimizers is a command typed into the search box in your Start menu. The command MSCONFIG launches a program that has a tab called Startup. Here, you can see all the programs that start up with Windows when you boot up your computer. You can Google any of these programs to find out exactly what they are and what they do. Often sites will tell you which programs you can safely turn off as

well.

Optimization service may save you some time, but in reality if it is not done well, it can cause problems. Using a trusted technology partner is better than a big box store as the time spent and attention to detail will be better. If you choose to do it yourself, you can spend a couple hours and save yourself the money while knowing it was done well.

The Pedestal Group

4809 Lexington Ridge
Medina OH 44256

330-952-1121

kathy@thepedestalgrou.com

www.thepedestalgrou.com

Twitter: K_Breitenbucher



The Pedestal Group

The Pedestal Group was founded to answer a need we saw in small businesses to have a source for help. That could be how to find and integrate the right technology, how to better hire and manage people, how to set goals and create a strategic plan, or really attack and own your marketplace.

Our team has worked in a variety of industries including staffing, recruiting and executive search, retail, technology, healthcare software / IT, higher education and franchising and the consistent theme we have found it is very hard to see the forest for the trees. In small business, that is compounded by the number of resources available.

Our approach is unique in that we don't just say it is all about the customer, it really is. The Pedestal Group puts our customers on a pedestal – right where they belong. That isn't to say the customer is always right because that is an adversarial relationship – in our case, we always come to agreement. We are always in a partnership with our clients but also remember who's the most important – YOU.

The Pedestal Group - Putting our clients where they belong.

Network Review—continued from page 1

of the same profession gather. Attending these will help you find individuals you connect with and can share ideas and information.

Power people are going to travel in high level groups like Vestige, SCORE, TECA, or other executive group. In many industries there are groups of people offering to be mentors or you can reach out to business leaders in your community.

People who will push and challenge you have to be in an environment where everyone feels secure and comfortable that their questions won't be taken wrong. You may need to hire a coach to fill this function or find peo-

ple in your network you could groom into this role.

Friends should be the easiest of the groups to fill and for good reason. It is important to have those around you to count on when you need a laugh, to vent, or just generally step away from work.

Your validators are often going to be causes and non-profits you find important. They will help you keep perspective on how your work fits into the greater good.

People who hold you accountable to have a work/life balance tend to be close family and friends. Be sure these people are part of your network and

truly understand what you do for a living.

Finally, problem solvers are often vendors and partners who know many people and can connect you to someone when something needs to get done. You will find these people at networking events as it is important for them to build their networks all the time.

Your network is a business asset and should be managed as such. Review your network and how people help you in order to make sure you have what you need when you need it.