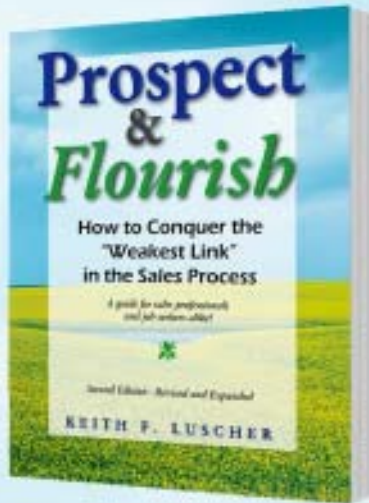


Don't Send an Email... Throw A Snowball Instead!

by Keith F. Luscher
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I have good news! Yes, there is no question our economy is going through a major adjustment. Business is slowing in many industries, and unemployment continues to rise. As business professionals are forced to reach out and prospect for new accounts and displaced professionals are forced to prospect for new jobs, this cloud has one very bright silver lining: *We are coming closer together.*

At the risk of sounding corny, we are all literally “joining hands” to carry each other through. And the tools of online social networking are helping to make this happen.

I believe this “increased connectedness” is genuine—not superficial as some people might observe. Indeed, online networks are just another form of communication. They allow us to stay in touch with each other as actively or as passively as we wish...*but we still stay in touch!*

This isn't just good news...it's GREAT news! Business has *always* been fueled by personal relationships. But with the explosion of online networking, such as LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook just to name a few, business is transcending to an even higher level...*business is becoming more human.*

Because people vary so widely in their individual personalities and communication styles, so too is the flexibility of how we may connect. A few weeks ago, I introduced you to a fellow professional who has, among countless others, embraced Twitter as a means to create business relationships and stay connected (“Prospecting: How Tweet it Is!”).

Last week, I was having lunch with my friend Steve Baldzicki—President and Founder of Big Fish Networking—a ten-year old organization that is devoted to helping people in business come together and form new relationships. As Steve was telling me about some of the exciting developments on the horizon with Big Fish Networking, he also shared with me his insights on the value Facebook plays in helping him stay in touch with others.

“I like Facebook because it's fun,” Steve points out. “It's great for staying connected with people—and it doesn't make any difference how that relationship started. It brings down the walls, and it's more laid back. If I haven't connected with someone in a while, where else can I throw a snowball at them? They throw it back, and next thing you know, we have a dialog going. I mean, how cool is that?” (*Editor's note:* a “snowball” on Facebook is just one way to “poke” an online friend to get their attention.)

Fun and cool. Is this the future face of business in America, and indeed the world? In many ways, I hope so. In times where so many of us are feeling heavy burdens, perhaps this latest evolution is God's way of reminding us how inter-dependent upon each other we truly are.

And that perhaps we might also do well to lighten up.