

# FORWARD PROGRESS

## Growing your business beyond the Vision

### Social Injection- How Social Networks Generate Business Leads

By Dean DeLisle

It's no secret that Social Networks are the "IN" thing for 2009 for lead generation. It's beyond the buzz and now has become common place for many professionals seeking new business.

First of all, Social Networks do not generate "Leads" – people do! That is what makes it social. This means that once it is setup, they have to be worked. It's just like a Chamber, Club or any other Network group. Once you learn how to work that group and you have a system to keep working it, then you can be very successful and generate more leads than you ever thought possible. And, best of all, it is low cost, effective and even fun!

There are a few steps that you have to follow to make your experience more than just a toe in the water:

**Social Selection** – It's like dating! Someone that is right for you can be found if you go to places where you know other people similar to yourself or to places where you just want to hang out. So the great thing is that there are some very specific characteristics about most Social Networks that determine their relevance to your business or connection need. There are three main categories when it comes to generation leads. The first is for "Reputation and Identity" such as LinkedIN, Pasa, Facebook, Personal Site or Blog. The second is for "News and Opportunity" such as ezinearticles, Article99, Articles43 and FastPitch. The third is for "Communication and Nurturing" like Reunion, Xing and Twitter. The point is knowing your Blog so you know how to work it.

**Profile Creation** – This is ever so critical. Your personal profile will be how people find you. It must be complete and very much in line with the leads or connections you want to attract. The web, Social Networks, Blogs and Search Engines all work together from this point forward. If you are an expert in a certain market, then it is critical that your "Profiles" and "Personal Website" say you are an expert in that certain market. This creates the significant relevancy so that when people are searching, you are found. It is also important to note that Social accounts should be for individuals that link back to the relevant organizations. Many companies miss this and create a company profile; they already have one – a website! Social Networks should be for people that connect you to the recommended organization, thus creating a much wider reach. Imagine the key employees in a company all saying good things about that organization. People are going to want to check out that main company site!

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**Profile Maintenance** – Once your profiles are created, make sure you have a routine to maintain your information. This is the key to ongoing search and relevancy and is a hidden secret that many miss in the Social World. In most networks they have a section which allows you to keep your personal network posted on what you are doing. By keeping yourself socially fresh by frequent profile updates and simply updating your current business doings can drive business activity if done correctly. This can start casually and then develop into an art, as the pro's can attest, this works!

**Blogging** – If you can type an email, you can Blog. A Blog is simply the start of a conversation, almost like the old chat rooms, just a little more like a living and breathing animal. If done right it will keep growing and spawn new Blogs. It is important to also keep these relevant to your mission and your message. There are tricks to Blogs that can assist with accelerated lead generation both directly in the Social Network and indirectly through the Search Engines. It is best to start simple or get assistance until you are ready to create a system to regularly visit like your email. It can be as easy as starting with a relevant question to your target market, then responding just a couple of times a week. The more frequent you respond, the better the results, just like any method of relevant communication.

**Video and Power Point** – A picture is worth a thousand words, and a video is worth a million! Video and Power Point Presentations can be used to take your text based messages and bring them to life. With the explosion of YouTube and other video sites, it's no secret that Video is the next primary wave of communication, so why not bring your Social Network together with Video? Web Cams and production platforms are cheaper now than they have ever been; you can even produce eCommercials for a few hundred dollars and post them on multiple sites for your specific call to action. After, you can plug in "tags" for your video, prompted on most any video friendly site, which are relevant terms and phrases that your primary target might use to find you.

**Event Notifications** – If you do any type of events, whether they are in person or online, it can be proudly promoted in most any professional Social Network that has a communication vehicle. In fact, most of the current registration sites have a direct link to most of the appropriate networking sites for easy promotion. This allows your Social Network to find your event and pass it to those who might be interested.

**Article Submissions** – There is nothing like personal PR on the internet. Again, another low cost form of credibility promotion if you know the style of writing and the sites to submit to. This typically accomplished by writing an article which is educative and informational, however not with any emphasis on directly selling a product or service. If you are new to doing this, it might take some effort at first, however once mastered, is a hidden goldmine for leads. Once your article is written, most of the business Social Networks allow a direct link for article submissions. Some Social sites are purely designed for Business Communication and News Updates as mentioned in the beginning of this article.

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**One Degree of Separation** – Most all Social Networks allow you to add your friends. They also take your list from any common email provider or database format so you can load your current network into the one you're joining. It's like the ultimate network party! It's no secret that most any successful business person knows how to work their network; however nothing does this like a Social Network site! Once you load your list to a Social Network, it then searches for people that they know, then you are allowed to view those connections and ask for a referral based on people that you want to meet. One degree of separation from your next big deal!

**Search Engine Optimization** – If done as told above, most of the Search Engines will do this work for you. If you have a regular system for updating your Social Sites, Blogs and also maintain a steady pattern of relevancy, then you will be found. It is also recommended that if you are using an SEO provider that you shift some dollars to include your new listings in a cross-over search plan. This will create some nice acceleration for your web presence.

**Weave the Acceleration Web** – Now I'm sure you saw this part coming. How can you use Social Networks to accelerate your lead generation? It's simple – choose multiple sites, use the recommendations above, and apply them to all the sites you committed to. The effect will be exponential; companies are doing this every day!

Imagine your top five executives, each belong to five Social Network sites, each creating one Blog a week, each posting a presentation per month. Now add this to your current SEO Plan. What would you get? A reach into a whole new circle of references while creating the lowest cost per lead currently available on the market today.

So instead of putting your toe in the water, what are you waiting for? Jump in!

Dean DeLisle is founder and CEO of Forward Progress, Inc, a company that is focused on Coaching companies on Lead Acceleration Plans and supporting tools for their clients.

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