

Social Networks: Virtual Organize It, Stupid!

by Pierre Coupet

No doubt you've heard of the tongue-in-cheek expressions, "*Keep it simple, stupid!*" and "*It's the economy, stupid!*" However, in today's day and age, the appropriate mantra for those who belong to social networks should be, "*Virtual organize it, stupid!*" Let me tell you why:



Great Investment of Time & Effort

You spend a great deal of time joining social networks, reviewing the background of other interesting individuals, and inviting them to become a contact and part of your personal network. In certain cases, you go through the additional effort of setting up and administering your own group, write comments and articles and, in some cases, prepare and send out a periodic newsletter. In no time at all, you reach a major milestone, having developed a network of hundreds to thousands of contacts. You are very excited and proud of your achievements and, in some cases, send out a major announcement to everyone in your network trumpeting the good news regarding the surge in your group's membership total and how great it is.

The Big Question

And then you ask yourself the big question, "**Where do I go from here?**" You feel like you've reached a dead end and, if you're like most, you try to engage your contacts; ask them to actively participate and contribute content, etc. And, if you are an exception to the rule, you schedule some local, face-to-face, paid or free networking or business events. At the end of the day, after all has been said and done, all you're left with, at best, from your social networking efforts are mediocre or meager results relative to the astounding amount of available opportunities that the virtual environment-internet-Web 2.0 has to offer--that is, of course, assuming you're one of the extraordinary social networkers out there; and, if you are like most others, all you're left with are downright disappointing results. And, unfortunately, that's where it all ends.

The Bigger Question

Which brings us to the bigger question, "**Whatever happened to the promise of the Web and Web 2.0?**" Never before in the history of mankind have we been so interconnected. We are no longer limited by time, distance, geography, human and capital resources, and collaboration tools. The sky is the limit. We are only limited by our efforts and imagination; the extent of our willingness to break down the natural walls of resistance to change; and our willingness to explore new thoughts and concepts before they are widely accepted. And yet,

the most that we attempt to make out of the tools and resources that have been made available to us is to try to set up *local face-to-face* meetings.

The Ultimate Question

Which now leaves us with the ultimate question, "**So what is the missing link?**" However, that being said, this one question opens up a Pandora box of related questions such as: What else can we do, or should be doing, in order to take advantage of the almost limitless amount of opportunities that are available to us in this wonderful and absolutely amazing era? Are there any currently available solutions? Are there any emerging schools of thought on that subject?

The Ultimate Answer: Virtual Organize It!

Well, the ultimate answer lies within the virtual organization management discipline. Virtual organization management provides you with a series of best-next practices, policies and procedures for operating--and thriving--in a virtual environment and for managing a virtual organization. Virtual organization management is highly flexible, being that you can virtual organize at any of the following levels of an organizational structure: (1) an individual level, (2) a team level, (3) a group level, (4) a department level, (5) a division level, (6) a social network level and, last but not least, (7) an organization-wide level. With respect to an organization, it can be either of the following: (i) any free standing organization, (ii) a joint venture, (iii) an association, (iv) a consortium or (v) a partnership.

Although social networks provide you with *one wing* -- which is: the tools you need to effortlessly interconnect on a global scale -- what is sorely needed is the *other wing* -- which is: virtual organization management -- that you must have in order to fly and soar high up above in this sky of limitless opportunities. So what are you waiting for? **Virtual Organize It!**

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