

# **Letter from the Executive Director**



Last fall I attended a seminar about e-marketing for non-profit organizations. One of the discussion points was titled "The 'Social Media Conversation' Marketing Tsunami is Here." The expert presenter said that "a new marketing ecosystem has emerged and it revolves around member-based social media." He said that recently he re-ranked his list of e-marketing tools and put "social media" at the top of his list as a way to generate publicity.

Social Media has been defined as websites based on user participation and user-generated content. There are hundreds of websites that can be considered "social media," such as YouTube, Flickr, Twitter and many more. I personally am a great fan of the website LinkedIn ([www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)), it's the only one that I use. It's like the popular Myspace or Facebook websites, but on a professional level.

Each person on LinkedIn creates their professional profile, almost like a resume, and then builds their own network of connections by inviting others to be in their network. My list of connections is made up of current/prospective Chamber members, former colleagues/clients from my past jobs in Cleveland/Seattle/Chicago, high school/college classmates, family, friends and neighbors. Every time I get a new connection, I look at their list of connections and I usually find someone else I know! Every day I take a minute to glance at the LinkedIn home page and it shows me the new connections that my connections have made and often I find another familiar name, this is how my list continues to grow. Even though there are over 34 million users of the site, it makes the world seem very small.

I'd like to describe to you some examples of how LinkedIn can help you both personally and professionally.

## **To find a job**

I first started using LinkedIn when I was looking for a new job in Seattle. I read an article in the newspaper about a startup company for which I wanted to work. I did a search on that company name on LinkedIn and found that I'm a second degree link to the owner of the company, via my connection with a former co-worker of mine. Without LinkedIn, I never would have known that they knew each other. She put in a good word for me and I sent him InMail (email via LinkedIn), so that when I submitted my resume he was very receptive to it. He looked at my profile on LinkedIn and read several recommendations that my connections have written about me. He hired me.

## **To hire employees**

Chamber member Rusty Deane of OneLink is also an advocate for LinkedIn (despite the common "Link" in the names, these two companies are not related). He was looking to hire employees with a certain type of certification. He did a keyword search on that certification name and narrowed it by ZIP code, then he found several people with that certification who were linked to his connections. Not only did he find qualified people, he also got recommendations from his connections. He hired two of them.

## **To do sales research**

Rusty also told me that he uses LinkedIn extensively for sales research. Here is an example of how I use it in that way. If I find a prospective business that I'd like to call on to become a Chamber member or sponsor, I first go to LinkedIn and do a search on that company name. If I'm linked to someone at that company, I ask my connection to put in a good word for me before I call on the prospect. Having a connection to the prospect gives me a conversation-starter before I ask them to join the Chamber.

## **To win new business**

I recently had a meeting with a prospective member, we exchanged business cards and when I returned to the office I invited him to join my network on LinkedIn. He accepted my invitation and then a few weeks after that he joined the Chamber! I'm not saying that he joined because of LinkedIn, but it may have helped move the process along quicker. I have several connections who are prospective members and I hope that my presence on their list of connections will remind them about the Chamber and its networking benefits. I think that people who use LinkedIn to its fullest potential understand the value of networking to help grow their business.

## **To increase your visibility**

LinkedIn allows you to change settings in your profile that make it available for search engines to index. Since LinkedIn profiles receive a fairly high PageRank in Google, this is a good way to influence what people see when they search for you or your business.

## **To have fun**

On a personal level, I have enjoyed re-connecting with old colleagues, classmates, neighbors and friends. It's really interesting to see where people from my past have landed. When Rusty and I connected on LinkedIn, I looked at his list of connections and found that a high-school friend of mine, Tom Harkness, is a co-worker of Rusty's. It was great fun to connect with Tom after 25 years! It was also funny to find out that a friend I met in Seattle several years ago is connected to a guy from my kindergarten class in Lakewood, because they both work in marketing for the same national company. Very small world.

## **To support Chamber members**

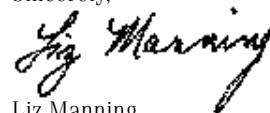
I recently created a "group" for the **Rocky River Chamber of Commerce on LinkedIn**. Groups on LinkedIn are communities of professionals based on common interest, affiliation, and goals. I encourage all chamber members who are on LinkedIn to join our group. If you use LinkedIn to do research on a potential customer, you may find that someone in the Chamber group is linked to that customer and can help you get a foot in the door. A main benefit of the Chamber is to help support each other in doing business and this is a great way to do that.

Cliff Obrock, a member of the Chamber's Board of Directors, is also a fan of LinkedIn and he said, "The reach, and speed and diversity of the internet and social networks like LinkedIn can be a terrific advantage!"

You never know how a connection can help your career. How else would you find out that your neighbor's sister-in-law might work with your prospective client or that a past colleague of yours might have a friend who works at a company where you'd like to work? Networking is the name of the game. And the best part? It's free!

Feel free to ask me any questions about how to make the most of LinkedIn. You can get LinkedIn with me at <http://www.linkedin.com/in/lizmanning> and be sure to request to join the Rocky River Chamber of Commerce group. If you've had success with LinkedIn, please let me know and I'll share your story in a future newsletter.

Sincerely,



Liz Manning