

## Worksheets - Socialising (3): Social networking

## Kim's blog

[← Previous post](#)[Next post →](#)Posted Friday, 25<sup>th</sup> November by [Kim](#)**What I learned about social networking**

I used to think social networking was all about telling the world what you had for breakfast or explaining why you think world peace is such a good idea. But a strange thing happened to me last year, which completely changed my mind.

I've been going to conferences for years, and have always found it difficult to talk to strangers there – especially as everyone else already seems to know each other. But last year's conference was different: there were about twenty people who came up to chat to me, or who were delighted to see me when I approached them to introduce myself. And because I knew these twenty people, they introduced me to more people, so that by the end of the conference I felt that I knew about half the people there. I ended up having a great conference – much better than before. The strange thing was, I'd never met any of the people before ... at least, not face to face.

The difference, as I'm sure you've guessed by now, is that before last year's conference, I did a little bit of social networking in advance. Maybe half an hour a day for a month. Now, before you say that you don't have a spare half hour every day to chat to strangers, remember that this is not just about chatting. It's work. My small investment totally transformed the conference for me. And I've now got some great friends and business contacts. Do you know the old saying, "It's not what you know, it's who you know"? Well, in today's business world, the more people you know, and who know you, the better.

**3 comments**

[Andy](#) wrote: Great blog post – again. I think you're absolutely right about the importance of social networking. Which sites do you use?

[Kim](#) wrote: Thanks, Andy. I'm glad you liked it. And thanks for your great question. Have you read "[My top ten social networking tips for beginners](#)"? That post includes some of my favourite sites. Let me know how it goes.

[Dominik](#) wrote: What's the point of this blog? If you're a beginner in social networking, why on earth are you trying to tell us what to do?

### Top ten tips to get started in social networking.

1. Join some **discussion groups**. A good place to start is Yahoo! Groups (<http://groups.yahoo.com/>). Search for groups discussing topics you are interested in, set up an account and join. Some groups are terrible, some are deathly quiet, but some are fantastic. If you find a lively group, get involved by replying to other people's messages, even if it's just "Great idea – thanks".
2. Join **LinkedIn** (<http://www.linkedin.com/>) and use it to build your professional network. Invite lots of people to connect: most people will be happy to connect with you, if your profile shows that your work or experience is in some way similar to their own, even if they don't know you yet. LinkedIn is also full of amazing groups: join as many as you can, and get involved.
3. Join **Facebook** (<http://www.facebook.com/>), but be careful to keep your business contacts separate from your close friends. The last thing you want is for your ex-school friends and your cheeky cousins to get involved in conversations with your important business contacts. You also don't want to bore your friends and family with posts about work all the time. The safest approach is to have two accounts, one for work and one for fun.
4. Join **Twitter** (<http://www.twitter.com/>) and find some people to follow – start with one of your contacts who you know is well connected, and follow his/her followers. Build as large a network as you can – no-one minds being followed on Twitter, and you can always stop following someone who only posts spam. The easiest way to get involved in conversations is to re-tweet someone's link, perhaps with a short comment: "Great post" or "Really interesting".
5. Join the **blogosphere**. There's no one website for you to go to, but if you find one great blog, it's usually easy enough to find related blogs. Most bloggers have a 'blog roll' – a list of other blogs they recommend. Find a few that you like and post some comments. You'll be amazed how easy it is to start conversations. If you're feeling brave, you can start your own blog. Don't worry that you have nothing interesting to say – just find a topic that you find interesting and that you want to learn about. You can simply blog about what you've learned. But if someone makes the effort to comment on your blog post, make sure you always respond.

6. The real key to social networking is to **integrate** the different elements (and all the other great social networking tools that are available). Connect with the people who seem to be at the centre of social networks, tweet about the blog posts you like and read the blogs that are recommended by your contacts.
7. Be **systematic** – make sure you always thank people who are nice to you, even if all they're doing is following you on Twitter. If you're really well organised, you can write a short message to each and every one of your contacts at least once a year. It can be just a quick one-line message, asking what they're doing, but your contacts will feel great that you've remembered them and made a little effort to keep your connection alive.
8. Never, ever, get **angry** in public. You'll probably see all sorts of posts, tweets and messages that irritate you, but resist the temptation to be negative. Remember that your messages can be seen by hundreds or even thousands of potentially useful contacts, so a single angry message can do a huge amount of damage. If you really are angry, turn your computer off and go for a walk – just make sure you don't post something that you'll regret later.
9. Don't use social networking only as a **sales** channel: if you are only trying to sell to the people in your network, rather than trying to engage with them, they will soon get bored with you. But if you show a genuine interest in what they're doing, and if you make an effort to be friendly and positive, you'll find your next international conference much, much easier, as all your online contacts will be delighted to meet you face to face at last.
10. Finally, just as you use your online contacts to help you meet people face to face, you can bring your **face-to-face contacts** into your social network. Every time you meet a new person, try to get a business card – or at least their name or email address, so that you can find them later online. When you then invite them to join your network on LinkedIn, Facebook or Twitter, include a short message to show that you enjoyed meeting them and that you'd like to stay in touch.

**Phrases for social networking**

- Thanks for the follow.
- Thanks for the mention.
- Thanks for the RT.

- Great post!
- Great link!

- Just posted on my blog: [What I learned about social networking](#).
- Just read a great blog post: [Top ten tips to get started in social networking](#).

**Invitation to connect**

Hi Marta. It was great to meet you at the conference last week. I hope we can stay in touch.

All the best  
Kim

- Hi Luis. How's it going? What's new?
- Hi Olga. Not bad. Busy as usual. What about you?
- Also really busy. We've just launched a new service for university graduates, so I've been working hard on that. (You can see the site [here](#)). Now we just need to find some graduates to sell it to ...
- Looks interesting. I might be able to help you there.
- Really? Any help would be more than welcome. Tell me more.

Hi Dominik

Sorry to hear you're not a fan of my blog.

The blog is really for me to share the things I'm learning. The idea is that other beginners might not be ready for all the things that expert social networkers are doing, so this blog can be a gentle introduction for them. If you have some more advanced or up-to-date advice, I'd love for you to write a guest post for me? What do you think?

Kim

- Great post. Really interesting. I especially liked your comment about ...
- I'm not sure I agree with you that ...
- I had a similar experience myself when I was ...
- Wow! I'd never thought of that! But I'm definitely going to use these ideas ...
- It's an interesting point, but you might want to read [this post](#) on my blog, which comes to rather different conclusions.

**Social networking game**

1. Write a short blog post about your experiences of social networking: what you've used, what you've learned, and what you'd recommend. If you have never tried social networking, you could explain why. If you have had a bad experience, you could describe that. Be quick – you've only got five minutes. But make sure other people will be able to read your handwriting.
2. Make sure you've included a name for your blog (e.g. Kim's Blog) and a title for the blog post (e.g. What I learned through social networking). Display your blog post somewhere in the classroom, for example on a wall or a desk.
3. Go around and read other people's blog posts. Add a short comment at the bottom. Try to be positive, but at the same time try to bring in some new ideas if you can. Make sure you include your name.
4. There is also a separate sheet of paper, called **The Social Network**, which represents sites like Twitter and Facebook. Use this sheet of paper to recommend the blog posts you have read. Remember to include the name of the blog and its location (e.g. on the wall by the door).
5. Monitor your own blog, so you can respond to other people's comments, as well as the Social Network site, to thank people for their recommendations, and other blogs you have commented on.

**Blog post**

Name of blog: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of post: \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments**

Comment by: \_\_\_\_\_

Comment by: \_\_\_\_\_

Comment by: \_\_\_\_\_

**The Social Network**

Comment by: \_\_\_\_\_

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