

MJD Bonus Virtual Networking during a Pandemic Transcript

Welcome to the Virtual Networking Checklist Webinar.

As the pandemic altered the way everyone was working and probably will impact it for the next couple of years, we're learning quickly how to adapt and up our game in the virtual world. And we wanted to share with you our Top Ten List of ways to ensure your virtual networking maximizes your reach to businesses (so that when they're ready to hire, you'll be the first one they call to source candidates).

Don't forget to download the list from our website

We are going to go through this in rapid fashion. So, pause this replay any time you need to take notes to help ensure you're understanding how to use each item listed.

I'm Deb Russell and I want to introduce my partner, Cyndi O'Bannon. I live in Massachusetts and she lives in Washington state. Cyndi and I met virtually 7 years ago working on an employer driven disability hiring project and finally met in-person CLICK a year or so later. When I say employer driven, I mean that the employer was in charge of what and why things happened on that project. We didn't represent people with disabilities, we weren't paid by the state or anyone like that. We were paid by the owners of the company. And our jobs were to help them learn how to employ people with disabilities. I was working on the project remotely providing strategy, advice and support since I had just spent 7 years at Walgreens creating disability inclusive hiring success for them. Cyndi was the person embedded at the company and constantly traveled to all of their worksites to facilitate their hiring in different locations. For the past 7 years, we've worked on this project and along the way the company has asked us to try disability inclusion in different facets of their very diverse portfolio of companies. Through this project and while helping other companies, we often noticed that the barriers to hiring people with disabilities were not the people with disabilities, BUT the barriers we noticed were the job developers, agencies, and generally the system that were creating the barriers these hiring managers experienced. So, finally, about 9 months ago, we started creating an online course to help job developers, their supervisors, VR counselors, and, honestly, anyone else who wanted to help people with disabilities get jobs but were inadvertently getting in the way and therefore finding it challenging to convince companies to hire their clients. The course is called Modern Job Development and I'll talk about it and some of our free resources like this webinar briefly at the end.

This webinar includes some of the content from Modern Job Development, as we found that many job developers needed help pivoting their approach to networking with businesses into a virtual format. As I said, this is our top ten tips for networking during a pandemic!

As with everything we do, we need to start by defining our goals and timeline. If you have no idea where you want to go, it's difficult to get there.

Your goals can be big or small, but you should try to think about specific areas where you want to make progress. For instance, are you trying to gain new contacts? Or revitalize older ones, like maybe some leads that went cold? Or perhaps you want to strengthen existing relationships.

Can you think of a goal you would want to have to improve your networking in the next couple of weeks? Are you trying to connect with more manufacturers? Or maybe you've noticed that cleaning and sanitation have a huge need that will only mushroom as more businesses restart. Or delivery. Pause the video now and write down, your goals for networking to increase your network.

Now that you have your goals, you want to have a timeline to go with them. Right now, everything seems like it's hurry up and wait with all of the uncertainty. So, timelines may feel challenging,

But it doesn't mean you can't set goals like – By the end of next month, I'm going to research and reach out to 50 different manufacturers within a 40 mile radius and collect all of the info I can. Then research to see who I know that knows them and ensure I connect with them via LinkedIn. We will talk more about LinkedIn in a couple of slides.

OK, you know your goals and timelines, so now you can plan a strategy. How do you want to accomplish the goals? Don't forget both passive and active methods. Remember, one example of a passive strategy is to post on social media.

If you are unsure about strategy you can use one of the methods we discuss in our course, which is to reverse engineer it all. Start with what success will look like and then break it down in reverse. If you want to have 20 new contacts in hospitality by the end of the month, how many will you have to have by the 14th and how will you get them? will you batch your work or do it all in one a day?

Start to put all the pieces of the strategy together, which we will drill down into next. But keep in mind that each piece is intentional and designed to complement the others to help you achieve the full picture of great networking, full of leads at various stages of prospecting. I know that I'm interested in connecting with more post-secondary schools right now and recruiters for distribution centers. We really encourage our students to be intentional about their networking and cover dozens of ways to access more businesses. We'll talk about the "how" of the strategy next.

Once you have your goals, timelines and strategy, it's time to get into details. After you make those contacts, how will you maintain and grow the relationship? How will you follow up? How often? and using which mechanisms? What's your primary and secondary purpose with each step in your nurture sequence?

You may be thinking, what's a nurture sequence? It's a communication plan that allows you to help build the know like and trust factor we need in relationships. During that time between when you make first contact, you want to remind who you are, and that you are valuable and offer something valuable, like awesome employees. The pause created by this pandemic is an ideal time to create nurture sequences! And a key technique in modern job development. To effectively build these relationships

This is what one can look like for e mails. I snagged this graphic from a google search. It's designed for real estate, but nurturing is nurturing, no matter your industry. Your nurture sequence can include snail mail, dropping off packets, video chats, e mail and more. Right now, we are a little restricted in some of those, but you can create the sequence and start using the virtual aspects now and evolve into closer contact methods when we are safe to do so.

OK, now lets talk social media as a virtual networking tool. It has its plusses and minuses! And everyone has varying opinions about its place in business, but you just need to be mindful of how you use it. For instance, we have a job developers private Facebook discussion group and it is incredibly popular and growing each week. When networking via social media you want to be transparent about why you are connecting with them. When you request a connection, be specific about why you want to connect and what you can offer them.

So, Facebook, twitter and Instagram were originally conceptualized as personal usage, but quickly their executives realized the monetary opportunities to position them as business tools as well. However, LinkedIn remains the grand poobah of all social media for business. And if you are not active on LinkedIn. Get on it asap. We are hosting a series of free workshops in July to help everyone improve their usage on LinkedIn. We know it can feel intimidating to some and you want to be sure to use it within the guidelines of your employer. But it's probably your number one tool for networking right now, so if you need help be sure to contact us about the workshops.

Your social media strategy should build your know like and trust factor, by offering high value content, that frames your value proposition. It also should be used to access people you cannot get through any other prospecting tools. Remember, LinkedIn is your greatest social media tool. If you do not have at least 1,000 connections, you haven't even come close to what you can access. If you live and work in a large metropolitan area, your goal should be at least 10,000 connections. Our July workshops will include a challenge to increase connections exponentially.

Because you want to be intentional with your networking and relationship development efforts, you also need support tools. Unless you happen to have your own private assistant, you'll want to leverage technology to give you graphic design

capabilities, a mechanism to track all of the contacts you are making with plan your next steps AKA customer relations management tool. You'll need a solid email platform like mailchimp, constant contact or convertkit and video conferencing, like zoom or skype. At a minimum, you want a webpage on your agency's site. But we believe that it's much more effective for you to have your own separate digital identity. If nothing else, a LinkedIn company page can help which will be included in the LinkedIn Workshops

Now, with all of those supports, you also need the digital tools to support our networking efforts and for this, we use canva. Canva is our own personal digital graphics design firm. There may be other resources like canva but we've never needed to research them. With Canva you can create an Ebusiness card, and a very professional email signature. In addition, you can use it to a format very professional avatar or profile pic. LinkedIn has some great resources for suggesting how to have that picture taken... no selfies please!!

Next, we advise all of our students to have fabulous content to provide value to your prospects across all of your networking tactics, as well as to demonstrate your expertise and services. In our course, we walk students through an entire toolbox that provides them with plenty of material to use

Things like scripts for your first cold call and follow up calls. One pagers explaining what you do and why it's awesome; a killer social profile and pocket stories which are like elevator pitches for success stories, you need introductions, and the script to create introduction requests; thank you notes and finally it's helpful to have a script for connection requests for linkedin In fact, last month, soe webinar attendees connected with us and showed us some killer introductions and some sent emails as well as messages if they were already connected to us, They have set the bar pretty high. We look forward to seeking what you can do. So be sure to connect with us on LinkedIn and hop over to our facebook group where some members were sharing scripts.

Now lets chat about video for a minute. Because this has always been my big hang up. I have always had huge issues about being on video, and so I never did it. I mean I can speak in front of thousands in an arena but video seemed intimidating... But in April, I hosted my first Facebook live and had to take myself through a crash course in how to do that! It actually went rather well. And now hop on zoom meetings with no hesitancy.

For video, you want to take into consideration things like lighting, and how people will not just see you and your background but hear you and of course you want to be able to hear clearly as well. And hope that the rest of the group can't hear your kids, dog or spouse in addition to hearing you

The next thing that will be sure to up your networking game is to be ready with resources, information and connections to serve your prospects. and demonstrate the value of a relationship with you. Businesses need good employees; you have a bushel of great candidates! make sure that employers know who and what you are, and how to get ahold of you and then offer a lot of value that isn't just candidates but stuff like information, tools, resources and connections. Be dynamic and not just a one trick pony. Businesses appreciate that you have something to give in addition to just candidates.

the final thing to consider on your checklist of virtual networking is your listening skills... when networking and nurturing, you want to stay curious, ask more questions, get clarity and be sure you are listening more than you are talking!! So this webinar is not a great example of that, but then again, offering a webinar isn't a strong relationship building mechanism, its just an introduction or prospecting tool. When you are networking with others, asking question and listening is much more important than talking. When you hop on a virtual coffee date, set a timer and see if you can aim for two thirds of the time be the other person talking, with you staying curios and gaining clarity

OK, that's our top ten tips for virtual networking. If you want more information about Modern Job Development, or our mini course check out our school on Thinkific. Take a screen shot of this address and then type it into your browser. Thanks for taking the time to learn more about virtual networking as a job development tool. Stay tuned for info about the July LinkedIn workshops!