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Building, Maintaining Business Relationships through Connections

Relationship marketing expert teaches clients how cultivating relationships is good for business

By Bonnie Stevens, QCBN

It probably happened around Valentine's Day in first grade for many of us – we became more aware of the people in our world – our family and our classroom – and we were prompted to send them a nice card, a valentine. For Relationship Marketing Specialist Janice Porter, every day is Valentine's Day. She has made a business out of showing busy professionals how to build and grow a network efficiently by cultivating and nurturing relationships, which has translated into more business success for her clients.

Porter offers this story as an example of the lucrative power of staying connected. "This friend of mine bought and sold three houses in 15 years as his business and his family grew," she said. "This happened all within the same area of Wisconsin. Each time he used a different realtor because the others never stayed in touch!"

Not surprisingly, many of her clients are real estate agents. Two of the tools she commonly uses are: an app called SendOutCards and the social media business platform LinkedIn.

SENDING CARDS IN SECONDS

Porter understands how often great intentions like thank-you notes or messages of congratulations don't always make it from our hearts to our associates. She also points out that often emails don't get opened, while greeting cards that arrive in the mail do. She calls SendOutCards a game-changer for those who simply can't find the time to shop for a card, buy the stamp, write a note and get the envelopes into a mailbox. She says SendOutCards makes it easy for busy people to act on their promptings.

SendOutCards is a web-based greeting card and gifting company, operating out of Salt Lake City, Utah. "You can go online, choose a greeting card or create a custom card, add a gift

if you like, and press send," she explained. "The company prints, stuffs, addresses, stamps and sends the card to anywhere in the world."

The business was founded by Kody Bateman in 2005. As Porter shares his story, Kody, his wife and their baby were moving from Salt Lake City to New York for his new career and their new life. "When they were leaving and saying good-bye to their family, Kody had what he calls 'a prompting' to hug his brother good-bye. He didn't. He just waved. Three months later, his mom called him in the middle of the night. His brother had been killed in an electrical accident. Ever since then Kody decided two things: 1) He would honor his brother in some way, and 2) He would always act on his promptings and find a vehicle for other people to do that as well."

As a result, Kody created SendOutCards. The company offers different packages, depending on the business size and need for this kind of support. The first level costs \$30 a month. It includes 20 cards, which customers can customize with photos, graphics, text and color and the company sends them out – this includes postage. With stamps now at 68 cents and greeting cards at several dollars apiece, the math shows that \$30 for 20 cards and stamps may make good business sense for some. A catalogue of cards is available from which to choose. There's also a selection of gift options, including gourmet brownies, office tools and coffee mugs.

"I've seen people leave a business meeting, choose a card, create a message, add a photo and send the card from their phone in less than a minute," said Porter. "It really can be that fast and it's done."

Porter says she will help those interested send a card for free, if they'd like to try the app. She also offers a 10-card challenge for \$20, which includes postage to anywhere in the world.

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GETTING THE MOST OUT OF LINKEDIN

Porter also is a LinkedIn trainer. She says businesspeople don't always put the platform to its best use.

"Some people get their profile filled out, but they just let it sit and they say, 'I never get any business from it.' It's just like anything else. You have to use it," she said. "What I think is most neglected is the mailbox. It's a big ground for networking. There are more than a billion people now on LinkedIn. If you're not networking through your connectors' connections, if you are not looking for introductions to people, which is a huge piece that's overlooked, then you're not using it wisely."

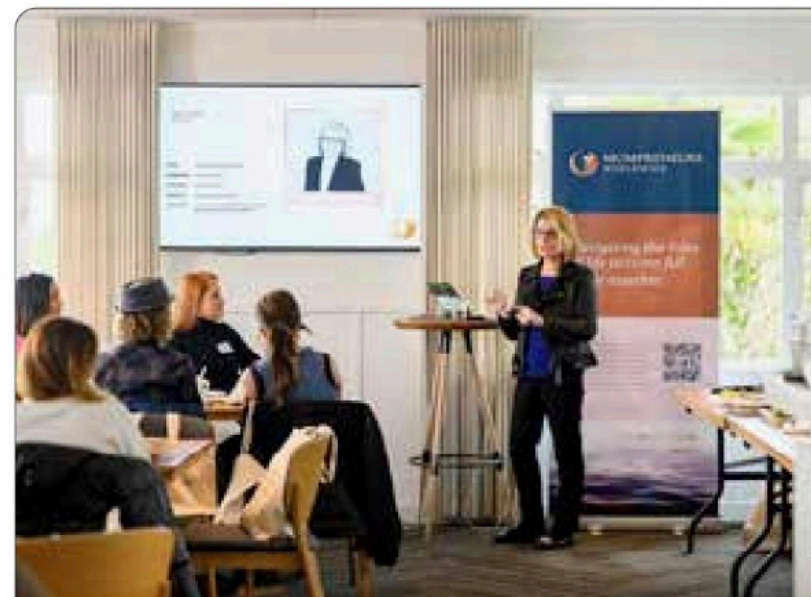
Porter teaches her clients to have a "magnetic" profile that is content rich. "You need to make it educational, a little bit entertaining and meaty to show you as an authority in your field. It's not so much about you in a resume format, but who you serve, how you serve them and what you bring to the table." **QCBN**

Porter also has a podcast called "Relationships Rule." As we should expect, Janice Porter & Associates can be found on LinkedIn. For more information, visit JanicePorter.com or www.sendoutcards.com/janiceporter.

Hear more from Janice Porter on Zonie Living at StarWorldwideNetworks.com.



Janice Porter teaches authors, consultants and entrepreneurs how to have an effective global presence on LinkedIn and how to maintain relationships through SendOutCards. "Receiving a card is fun for your associates and good for you," she says. *Courtesy photo*



SendOutCards is a web-based greeting card and gifting company designed to help people act on their intentions. *Courtesy photos*



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