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Lesson 15

Building a network of 100,000

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Discussion Transcript

Developing a Network of 100,000

August 8, 2001 - 1:30 p.m. EDT

Thomas Leonard, Session Leader

TJL: Hi, welcome - who's here? (participants check in). Welcome to you all; due to the echo problems, we'll stay on this call for a few minutes, and will then transfer to another bridge. Today, we're talking about developing a network of 100,000 or more. As you know from looking at the website, I've put the names of a couple of these large networks up for you to look at. You may have questions about this or things to contribute from your own experiences.

One of the benefits of having a large network is that you can find ways to provide benefits to the members of the network beyond the one-to-one call; for example, affiliate programs, message boards, and others. For affiliate programs, the buying rate is pretty high. One thing you're going to find as you develop a large network, you'll find ways to make the money happen. If you're not, you're not being very creative. The point is to keep the front doors open as wide as possible, and once you've gotten them in the door, show them things you have to offer. You'll find believers when you have a common interest. For example, Ivillage is growing quickly because they've got a common interest, and large networks are becoming almost their own type of family and have people forming close relationships with other people they'll almost never meet. There's no need to have to meet unless you want to. We're just starting as a civilization on this path, and I think you'll see this as more and more large networks emerge.

(participants move to a new bridge line due to continuing echo problems; new bridge has problems as well).

TJL: There's no guarantee people will bond in a network, but they may if they have a common bond or interest. Besides demographics, there are 'psychographics' that describe common interests, or other traits or characteristics that have yet to be articulated. For example, until ADD became recognized as a 'thing', people with this disorder felt they were crazy and 'the only one' feeling this way until this disorder was defined; once it was defined people almost felt 'healed' because they knew it had a name, and wasn't just them. In addition to women, people with ADD, and others, you may find niche markets within a certain segment; for example, women who are single parents.

When you have someone who's a member of 'Single Parents of America Club' for example, you don't necessarily have to sell them things that strictly relate to that, especially if they support you and trust you; there's kind of a bond that develops.

Another extension of this whole market segment is going to be in 'situations' - these are things such as job transition, upcoming divorce, financial comeback, creative thinkers, new business owners, etc. as we all get better at identifying these situations, traits, and personalities, there are going to be more and more networks that can be started to target these groups. Other networks that can be started are existing situations that haven't been marketed in any way other than providing resources, etc.

That's the extent of my opinions on this. I'm going to open it up for questions on the topic, or have ideas on how to build a network of 100,000.

Carol: I have one question. Do you think it's better to create a comprehensive portal - i.e., your entrepreneur thing - where you've got various subsets of that, or do you think it's better to create separate entities for each particular topic?

TJL: Great question; I think you should try both. It's harder to reach small subsets of people scattered throughout the universe, but if you start with a large portal and are able to identify these subsets of people in your 'existing' network, then you can branch off from there. I'd make sure you're not just trying to serve the marketplace, but that there's something in there that excites you, even if it's only a small subset of the larger portal. It might be easier to get press and referrals for the larger portal. That's a long answer, I know, but I hope it's helpful.

Carol: Yes, thank you.

TJL: It would take from 1-10 years to set this up, so you're going to have to be in love with some segment of that marketplace to go for the long-term. For example, if you look at Coachville, we have the largest network now, but the thing that gets me up in the morning is that I, with the help of 5,000 members can help improve coaching worldwide. Everything else is great, but that's something I feel I can do.

XXX: How do you insure that you get the feedback from the members? So much of the development is the feedback.

TJL: Personally, I believe strongly in the whole R&D concept - I've tried a number of things over the past 20 years, and nothing comes anywhere close to the power of the R&D team. When I broadcast something to that team - currently 700 people - I'll get a response from anywhere from 5 to 40 percent of them. Also, remember that even if they don't respond, they're reading the broadcast and coming on board with the idea. The R&D team members seem to be excited, for the most part, about getting early notice for things you're planning to do. Creative people, if they don't have enough stuff to work on, create mischief, so give them plenty of things to do. Who else?

Gwyneth:

I'd like to take issue that men are a subset anyway, but there are so

many people who are looking for websites out there - is it possible to set up almost a link within the coaching community looking for something positive, like coaching with strength, or coaching with edge, etc. - is it possible to set up that sort of topic? I have no skill sets that I can identify.

TJL: Could you make a list of the 25 things that you can do for people? If you're part of the Full Practice program, you can build off that list, rather than have a specialty of any kind.

Gwyneth:
Then you just weave these in then?

TJL: There's a weird thing going on with those whole niche thing, and I think if you have that list of 25 things, you've got a menu of things to offer people, rather than just "I'm just a entrepreneur coach".... It'll be highly specific, but will make it easier for people to search on you.

Rod: You've inspired me to do a test on e-courses for my website - it's on being an ideal parent - and incorporated things from your course, and will hopefully draw more people to my website and network.

TJL: That's a way to go deeper with 1 of your 25. I must say that I think the whole 'course by email' topic has a pretty good future, and if you're a client who feels they've gotten something to show for themselves in a particular area after 10 lessons from you, then you've earned their respect, and will have possibly gained a new coaching client, since they've essentially 'screened' you through the course.

Thank you all for calling.

Improvements?

What would you like to see added, expanded or clarified about this Full Practice Step? Please email your suggestions/requests to julie@coachville.com. Every suggestion is carefully read but please understand that we cannot reply to individual emails or provide tech support.

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