

Building on their popular business parable, *21 Days to Success Through Networking*, authors Ron Sukenick and Ken Williams are back with a new adventure centered on the effective use of LinkedIn (Basic version). This excerpt offers a taste of the useful LinkedIn lessons and techniques presented in *21 Days to Success With LinkedIn* (CyberAge Books, November 2015).

21 Days to Success With LinkedIn

Ron Sukenick and Ken Williams

Prologue

Gnik tightened the seatbelt and glanced at his watch. 10:27 PM. He reread the text he'd composed:

Hey, Pam—it's me again. Gnik with a "G." Do you have some time to chat tomorrow morning? Regular time, regular place? Let me know.

Satisfied, he pressed the send button on his phone just as the pilot made the announcement to turn off all electronic devices. He complied, tucking his phone into the breast pocket of his sport coat. He looked absently at the safety instruction card as his mind replayed the talk he'd given a few short hours earlier.

"Business or pleasure?" The woman interrupting his thoughts looked the part of a seasoned traveler.

"A little of both, I guess," Gnik said. "I spent the weekend back home visiting friends and family, but I was also able to squeeze in a marketing presentation."

The woman produced a book of crossword puzzles and flipped to one she'd partially completed. She held the page open with her finger before turning back to Gnik. "You're interested in marketing?"

"I launched my own marketing firm just over a year ago."

Gnik was tired from a busy weekend, but he recognized this as an opportunity to make a new connection with a fellow traveler. The two exchanged names—she introduced herself as Whitney—and Gnik turned the conversation to his seatmate. "What about you, Whitney? What do you do?"

She put a pencil in her book and closed the pages around it. With a wry smile, she said, "You wouldn't believe me."

Gnik realized he was enjoying the banter. His smile was a challenge. "Try me."

She laughed. "I'm a stand-up comedian."

"*Really?* Tell me about that. I don't think I've ever met a stand-up comedian outside of a comedy club."

Whitney spoke for several minutes about her gigs, the people she'd met, and the challenges of her chosen career.

Gnik again thought of the presentation he'd given just a few hours earlier. The feedback he'd received included a suggestion to relax his speech. He shared this with Whitney, then added, "Maybe I can help with some of your marketing, and you can give me some tips on how to be more entertaining. Do you have a card?"

She looked through her purse but came up empty. "I must have packed them in my suitcase. Are you on LinkedIn? You can find me there."

Gnik's thoughts raced back to a conversation he'd had about LinkedIn with Garrett, who'd been part of his informal "planning group." Garrett had recommended the online service as part of Gnik's networking strategy. While Gnik had gone so far as to set up an account and connect with a few friends and business contacts, he'd yet to delve any deeper than that.

“I *am* on LinkedIn,” Gnik said to Whitney, “but I’m pretty new to it. How do I find you?”

“Simple. Just type my name in the search box on your homepage.” She made sure he wrote down her full name and email address, and they agreed to keep in touch.

As Whitney went back to work on her crossword puzzles, Gnik leaned back and considered his past LinkedIn strategy.

What strategy? he thought ruefully.

He made some notes on his to-do list. “Meet with Pam,” and, at the top of the list, “Reconnect with Garrett!”

Day 1: I’m on LinkedIn. Now What?

Gnik reviewed his calendar first thing in the morning. “Nothing so pressing that I can’t move it around,” he mused. Feeling an urgency to meet with Garrett, he scrolled through his mobile contacts until he found the number then pressed the phone icon. *I suppose I could have texted him*, he thought as the call went through, *but nothing beats the personal touch*.

Garrett answered on the third ring.

“Garrett? Good morning—it’s Gnik Rowten ... Gnik with a ‘G,’ remember?”

“Of course I remember you, Gnik. You were just starting your marketing business when we last met, if I recall correctly.”

“You’ve got a good memory,” Gnik said, smiling. “I know you must be busy, but I have a couple of questions if you can spare a few minutes.”

He could hear papers rustling, then Garrett said, “Actually, I have about 10 minutes right now, Gnik. What’s on your mind?”

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Gnik had a *lot* on his mind. “When we met, you talked about taking some of my networking interactions online and specifically recommended LinkedIn. After that conversation, I set up an account and connected with a few friends—mostly my college crew and a few business contacts here in the city. But something I heard yesterday got me thinking there must be opportunities to use LinkedIn in ways I hadn’t even considered. I’m looking for some direction and I thought of you right away—after all, you were the one who told me I can never have too many friends.”

Garrett chuckled. “Actually, Gnik, you have ‘friends’ on Facebook, but on LinkedIn, they’re ‘connections.’ There’s a lot to LinkedIn. In fact, there’s far too much to fit into the 10 minutes we have right now, so let me leave you with a few questions. Think about them, and we can schedule a time to talk in a couple of days.”

Gnik flinched. Garrett asked great, insightful questions, but they tended to make you think harder and deeper than you were prepared to do.

“Shoot.” Gnik’s outward confidence hid his apprehension.

“Let’s start with the basics. Don’t answer me right now, just jot the questions down and we’ll discuss them later. First, do you have an All-Star profile?”

Garrett paused while Gnik made a note of it. “Got it,” Gnik said.

“Next, how are you going to use LinkedIn? As a way to stay in touch with business contacts? To find a job? Or are you trying to find clients and customers?”

“Okay, I need to think about that.”

“And one more question for now: Who is your coach?”

“Coach?”

Garrett hesitated, then said, “I’m going to leave it at that for now. You can interpret the questions however you want. Let’s talk in a few days.”

How are you going to use LinkedIn? For you, is it going to be a way to stay in touch with business contacts, are you looking for a job, or are you trying to find clients and customers?

After they hung up, Gnik considered the questions as he peeled a banana at his kitchen table. He suspected they had multiple levels of meaning. When he turned on his laptop and looked at his LinkedIn profile for the first time in months, he felt an immediate twinge of embarrassment. As a marketing expert, he knew it should effectively represent his personal and

Gnik Rowten

Marketing Consultant at Self-Employed
Indianapolis, Indiana | Marketing and Advertising

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connections

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https://www.linkedin.com/pub/gnik-rowten/104/aa6/45b

Background

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Summary

Dynamic marketing communications professional. Recognized for creating a clear strategy for leveraging resources to produce the maximum number of insights possible. Integrating contextual analytics to business processes. Centralizing deep analysis expertise for use across the organizational axis but mandating each department and business line takes responsibility for their own reporting needs.

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Experience

Marketing Consultant
Self-Employed

2014 – Present (1 year) | Indianapolis, Indiana Area

Develop and implement strategic marketing and business plans

professional brand. What he was looking at came up well short in that department.

“I have to enhance this profile to reflect who I am and what I have to offer.”

He’d almost said it out loud. The thought bounced around his head as he picked up his smartphone and checked for new text messages. If Pam was available for a meeting, he would need to leave soon to get to the coffee shop at the regular time. There was a text from her, which read:

Welcome back, Gnik! I’d love to hear about your trip and the conference. Regular time and place works for me. See you then!

Gnik quickly packed his new tablet device, a notebook and pen, and a few other items before hurrying out the door and down the street to the coffee shop. He arrived a few minutes before the appointed time, claimed the table in the corner where he and Pam typically met, and ordered his usual. Turning on the tablet, he opened his LinkedIn profile page again and stared at it, uncertain where to start.

“Hey, Gnik!” Pam’s enthusiasm was always contagious. “What’s going on?”

“I had to see you, Pam,” he said as she ordered coffee. The two spent a few minutes catching up before she asked, “How was your presentation?”

“It went okay, but it’s what happened *after* the conference that I want to talk about.”

He recounted his conversation with Whitney on the plane, and how he’d decided to focus on LinkedIn to strengthen his business. He handed his tablet to Pam, then confessed, “I’m looking at my profile with new eyes, and I have to admit it’s a little embarrassing.”

She scrolled down the page to view the layout. “It does look a little bland,” she said with a wink. “What are you going to do about it?”

“I don’t even know where to start.”

She let him stew in his thoughts for a moment. “Gnik, what *is* LinkedIn?” she asked finally, handing his tablet back.

He scoffed at the question. “It’s a professional networking platform, of course.”

“That’s not what I mean,” she pressed him. “What is LinkedIn to *you*?”

He leaned back in his chair and looked up at the ceiling, not at all sure what she was driving at.

“It’s not a trick question, Gnik. I mean, consider that laptop I always see you with. If I were to ask what it is, you could tell me it’s a computer, or you could say it’s a tool for helping you develop and implement marketing strategies, or you might even call it a miniature movie theater. So, what’s LinkedIn? And don’t give me a technical definition—I want to know what *you* think it is and what you’re going to use it for.”

He leaned forward and laughed. “I have no idea!”

“Not true,” she insisted. “After all, you did say you wanted to focus on it to increase your business. Just think for a minute ... what is LinkedIn to *you*?”

He pondered the question, then offered, “It’s a way for people who may or may not know me to gain access to me, my services, and my network.”

Pam smiled. “Very thoughtful answer. I suggest you keep that in mind as you build your profile.”

Gnik realized the significance of what they’d just shared. “Thanks, Pam,” he said with sincerity. “You always give me such great insights.”

She shook off the compliment. “It was all you, Gnik.”

They finished their coffee and she gave him a hug before heading to the door.

“Keep in touch—I want to see how this works out for you,” she said.

“Absolutely. Let’s talk again soon.”

Gnik’s Aha!



Day 1: It takes more than just signing up for LinkedIn to be “linked in.” I will need to learn LinkedIn and use it effectively if I expect it to pay dividends.

About the Authors

Ron Sukenick is one of America’s leading authorities on networking and business relationship strategies. He is the president and founder of The Relationship Strategies Institute, a global training and business development company that provides the business community with strategies for developing and effectively utilizing deeper professional relationships.

Ken Williams is coauthor with Ron Sukenick of the Amazon bestselling business book *21 Days to Success Through Networking*, and author of *Irregardless* and *Marriage Advice to My Daughter*. He is an insightful speaker who specializes in teaching, coaching, and training business teams.

*Excerpted from the forthcoming book, 21 Days to Success With LinkedIn.
For more information visit <http://books.infotoday.com>.*