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How to Succeed in Business Using LinkedIn

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Butow and Taylor’s *How to Succeed in Business Using LinkedIn*

Review by Jeffrey Barlow


Perhaps one of the best things that reviewers might say about a new book is that it made them realize that they had neglected an important resource to better employ the World Wide Web for that which it is best used, as a tool for building communities and connections. Butow and Taylor's *How to Succeed in Business with LinkedIn* is such a book.

While I have been aware of LinkedIn's existence, due to friends and colleagues asking me to join their networks from time to time, and once used it to track down a friend with whom I had no contact in almost thirty years, I have not appreciated the breadth and depth of its utility. Butow and Taylor show LinkedIn to be the very useful and sophisticated tool that it is. [1]

LinkedIn is a Web 2.0 social site clearly aimed at a niche audience, those interested in building connections with others who, like themselves, are largely interested in business ties. Butow and Taylor bring a great deal of experience and expertise to the work. Butow has written twelve books, many of them how-to guides to other Web 2.0 applications such as MySpace, others more technical guides to Interface design and file virtualization. [2] His wide experience may account for the book's clear crisp design with an abundance of screen shots and useful graphics leading the reader through step-by-step use of LinkedIn's many utilities.

Kathleen Taylor works as a corporate recruiter in the high tech field and is an expert at using social networking sites for such work. [3] She gives
an abundance of tips, not only on how to use the many tools contained within LinkedIn, but also pays great attention to the etiquette of making on-line contacts, perhaps saving the reader from making egregious personal errors which might decrease the utility of LinkedIn.

Following this guide, the novice user could quickly join, create an appropriate profile, then utilize a number of utilities to make connections with a wide variety of others in the same field, as well, of course, among the user's own friends and colleagues. Then the reader can fine-tune his or her interests to identify experts and to query them, to explore the many LinkedIn communities so as to bring oneself to the attention of a noted member of the profession, or to look for a job. As one becomes more successful, both as a member of the LinkedIn community and as a member of one's profession, the program has appropriate tools for building legitimacy and reputation.

I suspect that LinkedIn might lend itself to a wide range of community building functions--for example the use to which I put it in locating a lost friend--but the primary utility of this book will be for the business user. Almost all of the tools of LinkedIn are explored for their immediate business potential. This treatment of LinkedIn sometimes makes the application seem like a Darwinian electronic jungle where every creature in the ecosystem is seeking some evolutionary advantage. However, this is the obvious intention of the application and the authors are refreshingly direct about that purpose. And LinkedIn is clearly the most useful weapon in that particular jungle....

Endnotes

[1] See LinkedIn at: http://www.linkedin.com/


[3] It seems particularly appropriate to link here to her own LinkedIn page, found at: http://www.linkedin.com/in/kathytaylor See also her corporate website at: http://www.talentplanet.com/