

## Episode 59: Using LinkedIn to Build Your Consulting Business—with Dana Lindahl

Deborah Zahn: Hi, I want to welcome you to this episode of the Craft of Consulting podcast. My guest today is Dana Lindahl and he is the founder of Legendary Leadgen, which is a company that helps agencies and consultants generate leads through various types of marketing. We are going to dive deep into LinkedIn and how you can use it to generate business. And I'm telling you, I had no idea how LinkedIn actually worked and what I should and shouldn't be doing until I had this conversation. So lots of really wonderful information about what you should be doing to get business through LinkedIn. Let's get started.

Hi, I want to welcome my guest today, Dana Lindahl. Dana, welcome to the show.

Dana Lindahl: Hey, Deborah. I'm glad to be here. Thanks for having me.

Deborah Zahn: Absolutely. So let's start off. Tell my listeners who you are and what you do.

Dana Lindahl: So I'm the founder of a company called Legendary Leadgen. We've been operating since 2014. Helping primarily B2B service companies, marketing agencies, and digital consultants to find new customers in their target market and set sales appointments that they can make new sales.

Deborah Zahn: Wonderful. And I know that one of your specialties is using LinkedIn both to stand out and to generate leads. And so we're going to dig into that in this conversation. But let's start off for any sort of new consultants who don't know what this mean. What is lead generation? And secondary question is: What's the goal in using LinkedIn for that?

Dana Lindahl: Sure. So lead generation at its basic concept is just generating conversations with new and interesting prospects. Everyone defines what a lead is a little bit differently. But generally it's someone who is a good fit to actually purchase your services and is showing some form of interest in being able to purchase your services or wanting to purchase your services. And we use LinkedIn as a way to simply get in touch with these people because it's a large business network. It's the epicenter of B2B communication right now on the internet. And there's a whole lot of advantages for using it as a social media network for business, especially compared to a lot of the other ones, especially Instagram, for example, which just tends to be a lot flakier in terms of business traffic.

Deborah Zahn: That's great. And how does it compare to Facebook? Because I know a lot of new consultants are trying to figure out, "Well, what social media should I use and do I have to use all of them?" So how does it compare to some of the other platforms? You mentioned Instagram, what about Facebook?

Dana Lindahl: Yeah. So the biggest difference is in intent, I would say. Most people when they go to Facebook, they're just scrolling mindlessly and just looking around and

clicking at whatever tickles their fancy at the time. But they're not necessarily there to learn anything new or to meet new people. Oftentimes, people are using Facebook primarily just to follow along with the lives of people that they already know. With Instagram, people are going there to see cool pictures and not necessarily people they know, but find inspiration and things that they're interested in. Whereas LinkedIn as a platform is a platform primarily of professionals. One of the things that I love about it is that there's not much politics going on on LinkedIn. So you can have a lot of great connections who might not agree with anything that you'd have to say on Facebook, but you can get right down to business on LinkedIn.

Deborah Zahn: That's great. And in terms of amount of content or type of content, what's special and different about LinkedIn?

Dana Lindahl: So LinkedIn is actually a content deficient platform. This is interesting compared to the big other players like Facebook and Instagram, which just have so many people posting so many things, so many times per day, that there's just an overwhelm of content on there. LinkedIn is less than 1% of the active user base or the current user base that's actually active. So this opportunity that exists on LinkedIn right now for reach and things like that is not going to last forever. We're in a golden period right here of being able to use the platform so well. And the reason is when you go to another social media platform, they're generally showing you things from your connections or your friends as Facebook would put it, your friends and maybe something from friends of friends, but it pretty much stops there.

Whereas LinkedIn because they don't have as much content to actually show you from their users directly, they prioritize a larger reach for what they show to people. So when you scroll through your own newsfeed on LinkedIn, you're not just going to see updates from your connections, but you're going to see updates from your connections' connections and your connections' connections' connections as well. This might not seem like a positive to you as you're scrolling through your own newsfeed, but it is if you're posting content and it has much wider reach. But the difference also is that people come to it with a different intent. They want to learn, they want to network. So they're more open to finding out about things from people that they don't know, as long as it's relevant to them and their business and appears helpful.

Deborah Zahn: That's great. And so given that it's a content deficient environment, if you're a consultant, what type of content should you be putting on LinkedIn?

Dana Lindahl: So I think I'll actually start by answering the opposite question, which is what type of content should you not.

Deborah Zahn: That was my next question.

Dana Lindahl:

So I see this quite a lot where someone goes to a new social media platform and they want to promote their business and they go about it by doing exactly that. The problem is your promotional posts about your business or banners or just talking about a new service offering that you've launched, this is not really what gets engagement from your audience. They might see it, they might notice it, and they might even contact you about it, but they're not going to show it to many people, or the algorithm is not going to show it to many people outside of your audience because your audience directly is not really... There's no need for them to engage with it, there's no need for them to like it, there's no need for them to comment, there's no real discussion going on.

So I would say for anyone that's going out to try to start any sort of social media networking campaign, or just initiative on LinkedIn or anywhere else that probably the worst thing you can do is not terrible. But if you just go out and start posting promotional images or even just sharing a little bit of information about, "Here's what my business does, contact us if you need this help or what we do," it's not really going to go anywhere. And even worse than that, it's going to discourage you from continuing to post things to the platform, which could be a benefit to you.

So to answer your actual question, the types of things that I suggest people post are a mix of just helpful content, helpful posts, things that can teach their audience how to do something that's difficult and complex, bonus points for if you can make that thing difficult and complex sounding enough to show them how to do it exactly. And then make them realize, "Well, I don't want to do this myself. I should just hire this person to come and do it for me." The second is I'm a really big fan of putting out thought-leader-style content onto the platform, things that can be slightly tied back to your business. So I'm in regeneration. So I like to talk about sales and I don't often talk about generating leads. But I talk about changes to LinkedIn as a platform in my newsfeed.

And those are all things that are going to generate interest from people who have a tangential interest in what we do so that I can be establishing myself as somebody who knows this industry well and the people that don't know it as well as I do. The ones who know it as well as I do will see me as an expert in my field and without having to reach out to them and say, "Hey, would you like to get on the phone so I could pitch you some of my services and hope that you buy them?" They can actually reach out to me and say, "Hey, I've been following you for a little while and I really agree with your approach. I think it's good. Can we have a chat? I'd love to learn more about how I can hire you."

Deborah Zahn:

That's great. And I know there are some folks on my feed who post a lot, or sometimes they do the type of version you're talking about, where it's just real salesy and less value-oriented. So how do you do it in such a way that folks don't see too much, they don't see too little, it's just right, and they're not going to tune you out?

Dana Lindahl: Good question. So I generally recommend not posting on LinkedIn more than once a day. That can be hard for the types of people who just use social media all day long as a way to put everything they think out there. I'd recommend being a bit more reserved about things like that on LinkedIn specifically. I don't think it's bad that you post promotional content full stop. There's definitely times where it makes sense. I like to post every podcast that I appear on whenever I do a summit, which I'm going to be doing in a couple of weeks. I like to post about that so people can get that information. But there has to be a balance. If it's just all promotional things like that, it's not going to resonate with your audience. Whereas if you can mix it up with helpful things and advice and things that position you as an authority, that actually drives more interest to the promotional things that you are posting. This is because, one, you're not doing it all the time, and two, they have other context for what you do besides what you're promoting.

Deborah Zahn: And I know that also, again, one of things that new consultants in particular can get easily overwhelmed by, "Oh my gosh, and now I have to produce all this content," but there's different strategies you can use to add value that isn't just everything coming from you. What would you suggest that folks do?

Dana Lindahl: So one thing that I sometimes recommend people to do if they really don't have any content to share is you can sometimes generate interest in your own products and services by using other people's content, as long as you agree with it. And ideally, if it's not a competitor of yours. It's going to be very difficult to win new business by sending them to your competitor's content. That being said, I really recommend at a bare minimum, just having two pieces of cornerstone content that you can have, which for most consultants, if their issue is not having enough clients right now, in theory, they should have time to create that content. Otherwise, they wouldn't be able to handle the new clients that they do bring on.

So I recommend having two just evergreen pieces of content that you can call on at any point. I like to use these when doing outreach to new people because I do outreach in a way that's not salesy. I don't reach out to people and say, "Hey, here's my Calendly. Let's get on the phone if you'd like to buy our lead generation services." I reach out to people and share articles that I've written, things that are going to help them directly, say, "Hey, wrote this article. I think it would be helpful for you. Let me know if you have any questions about it." It's things like that that are going to establish me as a type of person that's out there wanting to help others, rather than the type of person who is in their inbox, just trying to get them on the phone to pitch them.

It establishes a higher level of trust between yourself and the prospect. It also allows that person to understand more about the way you work, your philosophy behind things, and what your system is for producing results. And that creates a better quality client too because they come to you already understanding how it is that you work. And they don't usually try to reinvent the wheel based on what they're trying to do. Whereas any consultant, any service

provider, knows, they've all had that client and definitely not singular who comes in and says, "Yeah, I love the work that you guys do and I think it's great. But I want you to do it complete differently for me because I'm just so special." And with this, you have a good opportunity to get people into your worldview before you start working with them, make them a fan of yours before you start working with them. And that just helps to make the working relationship so much easier. And it allows you as a consultant to actually be treated as the expert in the relationship because that's what they came to you for.

Deborah Zahn: That's right. It's a good fit test. It's a great fit test. So you're actually talking about a few things that I think are really important that I just want to call out. So one is putting out valuable content, but not just posting. So you're taking it to the next Jedi level of how you directly engage with. Is that through messaging to get directly to people and say, "I think based on what you've been posting or doing, this would be helpful to you"?

Dana Lindahl: Yeah. So the average style of a LinkedIn campaign that you see all the time is revolved around connecting with someone. Sending them a connection request. Waiting for them to connect. And then immediately hitting them with a pitch to their inbox and usually they ignore it. That's the old way of doing things. What we're trying to do here with our connection requests and the campaigns that we run directly to people is, one, we're just trying to get good and helpful content out there into the hands of people who need it and can use it and benefit from it. Two, is we're trying to grow our network with targeted people who would be good potential clients for us. Not that we're going to necessarily pitch them on becoming a client, but we want our content that we're going to post not directly, but to the newsfeed and in the form of status updates. We want that to have a much wider reach.

So by expanding your network with one single 1st-degree connection, which is someone who has accepted your connection request, you've added anywhere from 100 to 30,000 people to your 2nd degree network. They have a limit of 30,000 1st degrees. And 1st degrees are... To put it in Facebook terms, those are your friends. 2nd degrees are mutual friends, and then 3rd degrees are people that you just have no connection to whatsoever. So if you connect with someone who has a large network, all of a sudden your content that you're posting publicly to the newsfeed is now showing to their network as well. And people who are targeted as good clients of yourself are likely to have more people like themselves as connections so that you can reach those people as well, simply by sending a connection request to somebody and saying, "Hey, I'd like to share this content with you. I have something that I feel would help you." It's turning the whole thing on its head. And it's certainly a longer form of marketing.

There are still people that are having success with reaching out and directly being salesy and just asking for a call. All the stars really need to align for that to work out. The person needs to be aware that they have a problem. They need to have a budget for solving that problem. And they need to be in search of

someone who can help them solve that problem. And then someone comes along and says, "Hey, here I am. Would you like a call?" And the person agrees to it. They make a sale. And just reinforces the idea in that marketer's mind that this is what I should be doing to get in touch with people. Whereas if they take a longer approach to things, they often bring on better clients who stick around longer. Sales process a little bit easier. It takes a little bit longer for it to come to fruition. The difficult thing is for people who just want to make sales right now, they might be tempted to go and pitch that person in their inbox instead of sending something along like you have to help them.

Deborah Zahn: What I love about the approach that you're talking about is that it really promotes the notion that relationships are primary, which is what I always tell new consultants. Which is when you're building your network or even working within the network you have, it's really about relationships. And what do you do in relationships? You help people. And that's going to be the basis of building a robust business. So I love that approach. Is there anything else in LinkedIn? So I know that there's some folks that spend a lot of time and attention getting people to give them recommendations or engaging with other people's content. And I don't know enough about how LinkedIn works in its algorithm to know. Does that help you in terms of ultimately being able to build your network or amplify your message?

Dana Lindahl: Definitely. I think that going around and commenting on other people's content, as long as you have something of value to share. And when I say value, I don't mean, "Here's a free guide to exactly what this post is about," I just mean providing an opinion, maybe even disagreeing with the main post, if you feel strongly about it. I think that's the easiest way to start getting some engagement and traffic to your profile because you don't have to rely on yourself to come up with content, to create, which is often the biggest difficulty for most people. Even if they're good at writing and just simply coming up with a topic to write about, sitting down and writing about it is difficult. Whereas scrolling your newsfeed and trying to comment on things that you agree or disagree with is actually pretty easy. And you get your name out there as well.

But the other part of what I didn't mention here is the main goal of what we're trying to do is drive targeted traffic to a profile, to an optimized profile. We almost think of a LinkedIn profile as a landing page. And the more traffic that we can drive to that landing page, the more you're going to receive incoming inquiries. It's a simple matter of conversion percentage. So if we can get to 3% of the people who visit a profile page to be interested in what this person does and send them connection requests, reach out on their own behalf to find out how they could be helped, that's a win. And it's easy to do this simply by doing all of the other things, engaging with people, putting your thoughts out there, connecting with new people to grow your network. It may sound complicated, but it's just how the platform is designed to work.

Deborah Zahn: Well, and the small percentage should not dissuade anybody from doing it because it's a numbers game. So the larger networks and other people's

networks that LinkedIn very graciously gives you access to means that a 1%, 2%, or 3% conversion rate could actually be what you need to build your client base.

Dana Lindahl: Sure. And I don't mean to bash the conversion rate. I think that 1%, 2%, 3% is pretty good because we're aiming to have 1,000 profile visits ideally in a month. Sometimes people, once they get started, they'll see that over a period of three months. If you go into your sales navigator, you won't have access to this if you don't have sales navigator, which we require all of our clients to have. But if you do have sales navigator, you can see who viewed your profile and you can also see how many times your profile was viewed for the past 90 days. So as a base time, we want that to be around 1,000 and anywhere that we can increase it from there is excellent. And if we're getting 1% to 3% of people who visit the profile being interested in some way and trying to get in touch, we view that as a huge way.

Deborah Zahn: Now, how much does the content... I think I know the answer to this, but how much does the content on your profile, which essentially is your landing page, how much does that matter? The way you write it. The recommendations. Things like that?

Dana Lindahl: A lot. I definitely recommend approaching it from a copywriter's perspective. Most people make the mistake on LinkedIn by still using it in the old-school way that everybody used to use it, which is to find a job. And that's still a very valid section of LinkedIn's business model is recruiting and people looking for jobs and getting in touch with other people. But it's really not the way that you want to write your profile anymore. And I'll even go farther than that to say, "If you are on LinkedIn looking for a job, I still wouldn't put it out there having written your profile in the old way that people used to." I still recommend that people sell themselves in their profile if they're there looking for a job. So it's extremely important.

We always start with the photos. We want to make sure that everyone has a decent photo professional, or at least fit into their industry. If you run an eCommerce store, selling things to millennials, you might want to be able to be goofy in your profile photo. Same with the cover photo, we'd like to see our clients if they have it, pictures of themselves in a public speaking position. If they've ever done a conference or a keynote and they have pictures of it, that's incredible. That establishes authority immediately. If they don't, no problem. Use that space to actually have a little bit of a slightly promotional graphic. Not click here to sign up now, but just what you do and the reason why it's valuable. Beyond that, we recommend them to have a robust about section where the first line is the most important. And the thing that we always have our clients focus on doing is writing this from their own client's perspective, focused on the result.

So a lot of people, especially as they're learning to actually market their business and bring in clients that aren't from referral from other clients, which that's the situation for most consultants, they're bringing on referrals and they

realize that these referrals don't come when they want them and there's no predictability to it whatsoever. So they go out and try to market their business and they talk about all the things that they're good at. They talk about their capabilities, which is actually a word that I really dislike in the agency and service business face, it's kind of a rant. But I want to hear what your excellent at, not what you're capable of.

So I really dislike when people use capabilities in the service capacity. But people tend to focus their profile on a tactical message. We do SEO. We do copywriting. We do email marketing. That doesn't resonate with people who are looking to buy those services. They want to hear what they receive from having worked with you. So an example of this is we rank our clients' pages to number one. We increase revenue by at least 35% using email marketing. It's more about the results. And it's written from the customer's perspective because your customer is reading this and going, "Oh, OK. This is what I need. This person is speaking my language," not "OK. Well, here's a laundry list of things that they do. Cool, everybody does those things."

LinkedIn also has a really good, and it's fairly new feature, called the featured section. And it's a really good place to highlight your best content. And it's also one of the best places to reliably take people off of the platform. If you're posting your own content to the newsfeed and you're using URLs to an external site, LinkedIn in most cases is going to suppress the reach of those posts because they don't want people actually leaving the site. They're incentivized to keep their traffic internal and onsite. So if you are going to be posting those things into your newsfeed, you won't get much success. But if you post them in the featured section of your profile, they won't suppress this at all. And they'll put it front and center with whatever image you choose. So if people visit my profile, I have one front and center, it's called how to stand out from all the noise on LinkedIn. And the picture is a bunch of zebras and one of them is rainbow colored. It's impossible to scroll past it.

Deborah Zahn: I saw that, and I loved it.

Dana Lindahl: Yeah. And it's very difficult to make your way past it without going, "Wow, what is that?" And I take people directly off of LinkedIn to my onsite. And this is a great way, another tactic altogether, but it's a great way to retarget people in the future because anyone who lands on your website from LinkedIn is obviously interested in what you do and you can show them some ads, quite cheaply. I'd recommend for most people not to use the LinkedIn ads platform. It is extremely expensive, but it's a good way to get people off of LinkedIn and onto your website so that you can retarget them later on Facebook.

Deborah Zahn: So if you're a consultant and you have your own website and obviously you have things there that are of value and you'd like people to be on that and LinkedIn is incentivized to keep people on their platform, how does that work in terms of your strategies to give people a fuller experience of you?

Dana Lindahl: So there's a few ways that you can do it. One is to repurpose all of your content for LinkedIn articles. So if you have a robust blog on your website, you can go and just turn those into articles directly on the LinkedIn platform. And you can use different sorts of calls to action. You can say head over to our website to even see the full article. I don't always recommend doing that, but you can make calls to action at the end. Click this link to sign up for our newsletter because you're not going to have the ability to have popups on your LinkedIn article. So that's one way you can do it. In general, there's no SEO penalty for duplicate content doing this, as long as the original blog post was indexed by Google before you post it to LinkedIn. Google is basically going to look at which one was posted first, and that's the original source.

Difference is LinkedIn they index, or their pages are indexed several times a day. Most of us, maybe once a day. So you don't want to go and post something to your website and then immediately post it to LinkedIn. LinkedIn is likely to get indexed first, and they're going to get the credit. You want to make sure that people are searching for these terms, that they land on your website first, rather than LinkedIn. But if they're already on LinkedIn, then you're going to have a better conversion of traffic by keeping them on LinkedIn because LinkedIn will try to suppress any effort to take them off the platform.

Deborah Zahn: Interesting. I see these are all the things that... Who would know this? Except obviously an expert like yourself, that there's really strategies behind the sequencing of things. And I would imagine timing, too. Is there a timing thing folks need to consider about content?

Dana Lindahl: Yes, definitely. And I want to add a caveat to all this, that these are just my opinions. None of this is posted or published publicly by LinkedIn. Just like SEO algorithms and things like that, they'll never tell you exactly what's going on. So it's down to people like myself and other people who run an agency similar to myself to interpret how these rules are applied and how they're constantly changing.

Deborah Zahn: That's right, by seeing what happens when you do different things.

Dana Lindahl: Yeah. Luckily, we have access to so many different accounts that we're running for our clients. So we get to test this data and see how it's all working in real time. But to your question of timing, it's definitely important for post reach and getting your message out there. Basically, LinkedIn, when you post something, the first hour is vital to whether it's going to take off or not. So the way that algorithm works, and I've confirmed this, not directly from them, but it's pretty well-confirmed at this point, is that it shows it to a subsection of your 1st degree audience. If those people don't engage with it whatsoever, it basically sees the content is not worthy of being shown to anybody else. Because if your 1st degree audience is not connecting with it, if they're not engaging with it, then why should they show it to people who don't even know who you are. So that's crucial.

Likes are good, comments are better, comment threads are what we really want. So actually starting discussion between people. You can boost this a little bit artificially yourself. Let's say you post a link to your LinkedIn article. You want to keep people on the platform. You posted a LinkedIn article. You can then go and comment three to five, six, seven times with excerpts from the article, quotes, "And here's a point from the article." Just post the quote. And then maybe below it, "I think this because X, Y, or Z." And do that a few times. You can get 10 comments just from doing that and your comments won't be as well rewarded, but it's starting conversation for the people to respond back to. Whole first hour is what is going to determine the success of your posts. If people are engaging with it, if they're liking it, if they're commenting on it, then they're going to show that to a wider reach of people.

And sometimes people will post things on LinkedIn. It'll get one like, no comments, or maybe not even any likes, but they feel good for the fact that it got 3 or 400 views. And I don't want to crush anyone's motivation here, but 3 to 400 views on a LinkedIn post is basically zero. Not because it's so low, but due to the way that they count views, which is basically, if you just scroll past any posts at rapid speed, that counts as a view. So I can "view 10 posts in a second" if I'm just hitting the scroll wheel on my mouse and just rapid-pace going through everything. And obviously, I couldn't consume that content that quickly, but those do count as views. So when you see 3 to 400 views in one of your posts, it basically means that nobody saw it.

Deborah Zahn: All right. Now, you're going to tell me Santa Claus isn't real. That's depressing, but it's helpful to know that. It's interesting. One of the things that LinkedIn suggested I do because they give you tips in your inbox is to also tag somebody and also mention somebody else so that that apparently, I assume what they're trying to do is to bring people to your content for them to comment.

Dana Lindahl: Yeah. So I love to do this. I love to talk about my favorite books or podcasts that I like, and I can be tagging high-profile people. And I don't even need to know the person to be able to benefit from their audience. So other people will see that someone that they follow on LinkedIn is being tagged, and my post will show up there talking about it. Obviously, people who are followers of them are likely to agree with my opinions on their book as well. So that's a really good way of getting more reach out of not really having to make an actual connection with someone. You can leverage someone's reach just because they're famous and you agree with what they do.

Deborah Zahn: So earlier today, when I posted something, an article that was in the Harvard Business Review and said some things about it because I liked it very much and I tried to add some additional layer of value. So the smart thing to do would have been to tag the Harvard Business Review in it.

Dana Lindahl: Definitely. I would say tag the Harvard Business Review and post the link to the article in the comments, not in the main post.

Deborah Zahn: Yeah, in the comments?

Dana Lindahl: Yes. It's not great for user experience. I know this. Sometimes the comment with the link to the post is not the top comment when you show the full thread and that's difficult for getting people to the actual article. But if you're linking to it directly, LinkedIn, doesn't like that. They're going to not show it to people. So my workaround for this is any article externally that I want to post, I post as an image post. I go and I take a screenshot of what is likely to appear as the thumbnail image, if you were to link to that article. I post that as an image and I give my own caption. And I say that the link is in the first comments. And I post that link as soon as I post the post itself. And that's how people find it. And you'll find that your reach is 5 to 10 times larger. You have to test yourself to see. But oftentimes, a post that you'll originally only get 3 to 400 views on, you can get upwards of 2,000 just for posting it in a different way it doesn't take people off of the platform so deliberately.

I do think that they're going to change this somehow soon. It seems like a pretty easy algorithmic fix to adjust. But for as long as that's currently the case if you're trying to take people off of LinkedIn, then post that first link in the comments. And oftentimes, I get the rebuttal of, "Yeah, but what if people don't click through as much? It's harder for them to actually find the article if it's in the comment instead of in the post," which is absolutely true, but people aren't going to see it anyways if LinkedIn won't let them. So at a certain point, you just have to play by their rules if you want to play the game.

Deborah Zahn: That's right. And I think that's, to me, one of the key takeaways of this is that I think a lot of folks who just don't understand how social media platforms work and that they have algorithms and they're making choices based on their business needs, not yours, that you have to understand the platform you're operating within to be able to leverage it to the fullest for your needs. And that means, how do you do things in a certain way that you're going to rank higher or they'll give you more exposure? That's extraordinarily helpful to hear.

Dana Lindahl: Yeah. It's all about finding that balance between what resonates with humans and what's cool with the algorithm. There's just a certain balance that needs to be struck there. Oftentimes, people who approach it for the first time play towards one direction. Most of the time, they write it for the humans. And the algorithm stuff is a little bit more difficult to figure out. But if you can strike a balance between the two, then you'll have the best of both parts.

Deborah Zahn: Oh, that's wonderful advice. Now, let me ask you one other thing that's content specific. So now, we're in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis. And I know I've heard from a lot of consultants who typically freely post and now they're wondering, "Well, should I post what type of content should I put on given that everybody is currently in the midst of this crisis and you don't want to appear predatory or tone-deaf." What would you encourage folks to do now that we're in this particular time?

Dana Lindahl:

So, honestly, this pandemic has only reinforced what we've been seeing for the past eight months or so anyways, which is that the direct sales style stuff is not working as well as it was anymore. And there's a need for people who can put themselves out there as a thought leader and actually be willing to help others. So this is more important now during COVID. There's nobody who is going to be annoyed with your approach when your approach is, "Hey, I have something I'd like to help you with it. Here it is." And not even ask them to get in touch if they need help with it, leave that up to them. People know. Here's the thing. Everybody on LinkedIn knows anybody else who's offering a service there is more than willing to give them a call if they just ask for it.

So you don't generally need to ask people to get on the call. Anyone who is interested will show you, "Hey, let's go to the call. I'm interested in your services." So I recommend that people follow this style, especially during COVID. I personally ran a month long free group coaching session to help struggling, not necessarily struggling, but just anybody, any business owner, any entrepreneur to learn our system and be able to utilize it. I also have a vested interest in people using a system like mine. By the way, anyone steal my system and create a company around it, I would actually love that. I feel like the other styles of campaigns that are so endemic on LinkedIn right now are ruining, including the platform and making it a less desirable place to be. I believe that the style of campaign that not even really a campaign at this point is actually helping people.

It's not asking for anything. It's getting help out there to people who need it. It's being helpful to others. And people who find that helpful will raise their hand and reward you for that. So have added during the time of COVID you may not get sales right now if your industry is not buying. But the people who are in your industry, when they are buying again, they're going to remember the types of marketers who engage them in this sort of way, as opposed to the types of people who just were tone-deaf and plowed through anyways and, "Hey, hope you're doing well on these unprecedented times. Here's my Calendly. Let's talk about my services."

Deborah Zahn:

Yeah. I think I've gotten those. But I do think you're right. I think it is the generosity, the empathy and the caring. And if that's who you are and that's who you are on LinkedIn, even if you don't get immediate business, you're going to stand out as the person who was that way and then couple that with demonstrations of your actual value and expertise even better. That's a great approach. I love that. So let me ask you one last question I ask all my guests. Because obviously we are all in the midst of this crisis and all dealing with it best we can. So having balance in your life it always matters, but I think it matters even more now. So how do you bring balance to your life?

Dana Lindahl:

So, for me, it's always about having a separation of work and leisure, so to speak. I generally do not like to work from home. I think, in general, working from home and living at home is generally unhealthy for the average person. I'm not able to do a whole lot about that right now because we're all stuck at home.

So I make sure that I have a second bedroom in my house that's totally dedicated to work. And I never tried to bring work into the living room, into the kitchen, or anything like that. But in general, in normal times, I tend to find some creative solutions for things. I do a lot of calls for my business, so I can't work in traditional coworking space. It's just very difficult. I'll spend half a day hunched up into the Skype booth and not being comfortable. So I'll either rent a private office at a coworking space, which can be fairly expensive. Sometimes I'll even just rent up private room on Airbnb from someone who works during the day and is not even there.

So I basically have in a whole apartment to myself. There, they love it because I'm not even there when they're there, I'm just there during the daytime. And having that separation and distinction of work and my leisure time that I can spend with my family is huge. Whereas as busy entrepreneurs, people who are constantly connected to the internet, it's easy to be on the couch at 9:00 PM, watching Netflix and something pops up and you just have to deal with it because you're at home. This is where you work from. Whereas if you kind of disconnect and say, "Here's the place where I work. Here's the place where I live." And you can keep that separation, which is what everybody does, even in the worst normal office job. Everybody who works in normal office job is generally able to disconnect at the end of the day. It becomes harder for the types of people who work from home, which is a lot of consultants. So that's my biggest thing that keeps balance for me and my creative ways of going about solving it.

Deborah Zahn: That's wonderful. Well, thank you so much for bringing light to where there is LinkedIn darkness. I feel like it's not what I thought. And so I think the strategies that you very generously shared today are so helpful for folks. And for folks who need assistance, I will have a link to you in the show notes and they can reach out and find more or see the really cool stuff that you do put on LinkedIn. And again, the zebra thing, the visual just jumped off a page for me. So that's one of my other lessons when I looked at your profile is engage people in every way you can.

Dana Lindahl: Yeah, definitely. I'm actually not creative with graphic design or anything like that. So I just got lucky finding a nice image to apply to my article. But, yeah, that's all just another form of marketing as well.

Deborah Zahn: Wonderful. Well, thanks so much, Dana.

Dana Lindahl: Thank you.

Deborah Zahn: Thanks so much for listening to this episode of the Craft of Consulting Podcast. I want to ask you to do three things. If you enjoyed this episode or any of my other podcasts, hit subscribe. I've got a lot of other great guests and content coming up, and I don't want you to miss anything.

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