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among professionals and why does it seem to be everywhere these days?

I don't have all the answers, but the more you read about the integration of networking and social media, the more often LinkedIn pops up. It's the subject of Forbes and Fortune articles, and within accounting, many authors regularly tackle the ins and outs of LinkedIn as it applies to this profession.

Just recently, Hugh Duffy of Build Your Firm wrote an article, "How Small Firms Can Get the Most Out of LinkedIn," specifically targeted to local firms trying to make sense of networking and the challenges faced by not only meeting others, but establishing meaningful relationships to exchange referrals.

I think that's where LinkedIn becomes truly valuable. I often laugh when someone tells me they have more than 1,000 LinkedIn connections. Really? OK, but how many of those 1,000 or so connections do they really know?

I've had more than one instance where I've tried to use LinkedIn to reach someone else's contact, or to network one person to another person's contacts – only to be faced with a non-response or a flat refusal. This tells me that my connections probably don't know their connections very well or somehow do not understand the value of LinkedIn.

Can we please stop making useless connections just for the sake of hitting a quota? Honestly, if someone asked me to make that kind of connection for them, I would be more than happy to do so. Why? I KNOW all of my connections; they aren't just random connections I've made at networking events.

OK ... OK, I know I'm ranting, but I think you get the point. LinkedIn is a great tool to make connections; now let's start using it a bit more wisely to achieve results.

And, of course, you can find me on LinkedIn.

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