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FINDING THE "MOST CONNECTED" PEOPLE

CAN PAY BIG DIVIDENDS

Recently I had the privilege of meeting with some of my friends in the Development Department at my alma mater—Marquette University. They have a fantastic concept for connecting with alumni. They host events called Marquette Circles, which take place all over the country.

Their question for me was: How can we use LinkedIn to reach out to the well-connected MU alums in a city where we would like to begin having Circles events?

My response: Simple. Just use the Advanced People Search function. Type "Marquette University" in the School field and change the "Sort by" (on the bottom of the Advanced Search page) to "Connections" from the default of "Relevance." The resulting search list will start with the person who has the most connections and continue in descending order.

Let me share some thoughts and a few other applications that may hit closer to your sweet spot. Let's start with the basic idea or strategy of trying to find and possibly connect with those who are well connected. I know you may find it hard to believe, but well-connected people existed before LinkedIn! These individuals know lots of people in the region, industry, groups, or any other mass of people they are involved with. Let's face it—they just like to meet people. It's their nature. The other bit of good news about these folks is they typically like to help the people they know. Thus, these will undoubtedly be some of your most productive and helpful relationships.

One of the basic principles of LinkedIn is the more first-level connections you have, the larger your extended network (1st, 2nd and 3rd degree) and the more people you can find when doing an Advanced People Search. The other principle that goes hand in hand with this is the more well-connected people you have in your first-level network, the more extended connections (2nd and 3rd degree) you get.

Here is a thought-starter list of some of the criteria you might want to consider including in your search and the steps to find those most-connected people. Be sure to enter the information included in the parentheses and change the "Sort by" to "Connections."

1. The most connected people in your region of the country (Use Location field)

2. The most connected people in your region of the country in your industry (Use Location field and Industries pull-down)

3. The most connected people in your region of the country who are in a specific client industry (Use Location field and Industries pull-down)

4. The most connected people in your region who are alumni of the schools you attended and work in your industry (Use Location field and School field)

5. The most connected people at a company you are targeting for whatever reason (Use Company field)

6. The most connected people at a company in a region (Use Company field and Location field)

7. The most connected people in a region of the country who have critical keywords, such as certifications, organization names, religious affiliations, political affiliations, hobbies, etc. (Use Keywords field and Location field)

Good luck coming up with your list of the most-connected people in your world. I hope finding and connecting with them will pay big relationship dividends.