



Transcript

Episode 019

“The one with Ivan Misner
(Founder of BNI)”

ilovemarketing.com

Joe: Hello, this is Joe Polish, president of Piranha Marketing and founder of the Genius Network Interview Series. And you're about to hear one of my Genius Network interviews. And I just want to thank you for taking the time to listen to this and I hope you find it very useful.

If you want to find out more information about some of the interviews and resources that can help you in your business, you can go to www.JoePolish.com, and we have a Joe Polish Recommends section, with all kinds of resources and vendors and services and products that we recommend that could help you in your business. And also, for more useful interviews and a whole list of other people that I've interviewed, you can go to www.GeniusNetwork.com.

Thanks, and enjoy the interview.

Hello, this is Joe Polish, and today I'm going to have a very special interview. It's going to be a dual-purpose. This is going to be a Genius Network interview, for those of you at GeniusNetwork.com, and I Love Marketing, with me and who's my very special guest on I Love Marketing? Would that be Dean Jackson?

Dean: That's me, Dean Jackson.

Joe: Hi, Dean. It's your birthday today.

Dean: It is.

Joe: I appreciate you working on your birthday.

Dean: It's a very special day. I don't do that for very many people, we have a very special guest today.

Joe: Yes, we do, and his name is Mr. Ivan Misner. Let me give you some background on who Ivan is, and then I'll ask if he's out there, and then we'll start asking him questions that will help all of our listeners make more money, build their businesses, and increase their network.

Who is our special guest? His name is Dr. Ivan Misner. He is the founder and chairman of BNI, the world's largest business networking organization. It was founded in

1985, and the organization now has 5,000 chapters throughout every populated continent of the world. Last year alone, BNI generated 6.5-million referrals, resulting in \$2.8-billion worth of business for its members. Pretty cool.

Dr. Ivan Misner is a New York Times best-selling author, who has written 12 books, including *Networking Like A Pro*. He's a monthly columnist for Entrepreneur.com, and he is the senior partner for The Referral Institute, a referral training company with trainers around the world.

In addition, he has taught business management and social capital courses at several universities throughout the United States. He's called the "Father of Modern Networking" by CNN, and a "Networking Guru" by *Entrepreneur* magazine.

Dr. Misner is considered to be one of the world's leading experts on business networking, and has been a keynote speaker for major corporations and associations throughout the world. He's been featured in the *LA Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, as well as numerous TV and radio shows including CNN, CNBC, and the BBC in London.

Dr. Misner is on the Board of Trustees for the University of Laverne, and he is also the founder of the BNI Misner Charitable Foundation, and was recently named Humanitarian of the Year by a Southern California newspaper.

He's married and lives with his wife, Elizabeth, and their 3 children in Claremont, California. In his spare time, he is also an amateur magician and a black belt in karate. Ivan, nice to have you on the line with us for Genius Network and I Love Marketing. Did I say everything correctly in that bio?

Ivan: You got it all right. I think you did the CNN Father of Modern Networking. I'm just glad they're not calling me the Grandfather of Modern Networking.

Joe: Then it gets a little scary, once you get to that. I wonder how long it'll take for that?

Ivan: I'm not looking forward to that one.

Joe: So, you're an amateur magician, huh?

Ivan: Yes, the operative word being “amateur.” I am a member of the Magic Castle in Los Angeles, the Academy of Magical Arts. I am a full magician member, which you actually have to try out for, you have to audition for. I’ve got to tell you, I’d rather stand up in front of an audience of 2,000 people and do a one-hour talk than to do another 10-minute audition to professional magicians. That was scary.

Joe: I can imagine. I guess if people don’t like your magic, you’re a black belt, you can beat them up.

Ivan: That was my B plan.

Joe: First off, you created BNI, which a lot of my Piranha members are members of, and utilize literally every day. There’s all kinds of businesses being transacted all over the world as a result of setting up a system for people to do face-to-face connecting, marketing, selling, etc. That’s what we’re going to talk with you about. The first question, before I get into asking you about your secret to being a successful networker, is what got you to start this in the first place? Why’d you build this business?

Ivan: I’d like to tell you I had this vision of this international organization with groups all around the world, and we now have close to 6,000 groups in almost 50 countries, but the truth is I needed some referrals for my consultant practice. I was a management consultant. I put together some people I trusted, they trusted me, and I hoped that they’d be willing to refer me, and I was willing to refer them.

We met, and it was just one group, we passed referrals to each other. Someone came to me and said, “I can’t join.” From the very beginning, we took only one person per profession, and her profession was represented. She said, “I can’t join. Would you help me open up a second group?” I’m like, “Eh, I don’t really do that. I’m a business consultant.” She said, “Well, this is sort of consulting. You’re helping me with my business.” So I was like, “Okay, fine. I’ll do a second one.” And we opened a second group.

About 20, 24 people came to the first meeting of the second group; 2 couldn’t join, because of conflicts, and both of them said, “Wow, this is great. I can get a ton of

business out of this. Would you help me open up my own group?” I said, “Okay, I can do 3 or 4 of these.” And I opened up a couple more.

We had 3 people come who couldn’t join – 2 in one, and one in the other. All 3 of them said, “Hey, this is great! I can get a ton of business out of this.” And it just ended up snowballing. We opened up 20 groups the first year, by accident. It was really at that point that the light bulb came on, and I realized I had struck a chord with the business community. That chord is that we don’t teach this in colleges and universities anywhere in the world. We don’t teach business networking, and referral marketing, and emotional intelligence. We don’t teach those kinds of things. People were looking for an opportunity to be able to really develop their networking skills and to find a place to do it. That’s what BNI became, in a large way.

Literally, we have almost 6,000 meetings every single week of the year, all around the world.

Dean: What I really was impressed by, even when Joe was doing your introduction, that you actually measure the referrals it generates. You knew that yours generated 6.5-million referrals.

Ivan: Yes.

Dean: And it’s very interesting, because most business owners who really even get referrals don’t really take a measurable approach to it. It’s just something that happens almost serendipitously. And here you are, taking something that you measure and really track what’s happening.

Ivan: I think it’s important to do that. The first few years, we did not. It was right around 1992 or so that we started measuring, and that was as a result of the completion of my doctoral dissertation, which was published in ’93. We knew how many referrals were passed, because we keep track of that. It’s the value that is problematic, determining the value.

We started doing that as a result of my doctoral dissertation back in the early 90’s, where we could measure the value of a referral and, from that, if we know how many

referrals were passed, determine what the value of the referrals are. As it was mentioned, we did \$2.8-billion worth of business for our members.

Just so you guys know, \$2.8-billion is the same as the gross domestic product for the country of Liechtenstein. It's a small country. It's like Liechtenstein, and then BNI. I'm looking for a bigger country next year. But I think it's pretty cool that a business organization could actually get together every week and pass as much business as a small nation in the world. It still blows me away.

Joe: That is cool. That's why I like really talking to and meeting and bringing to all of our listeners what we call industry transformers, which is a Dan Sullivan term – one of my good friends and founder of Strategic Coach. You certainly are the top guy in the world for transforming the network industry.

What's funny, with Genius Network, which is my marketing term for a lot of different things that I do, I tend to think of networking as how do you network, not just like a normal network, but how do you network at a genius level, where you actually go out and meet the very best, most influential, most important people, so you're a genius networker, and while you're genius networking, you can actually create what I call a Genius Network.

We actually created Genius Network around bringing the very best minds and the very best thinkers to our listeners, so they can learn from that. That's, hence, the reason to interview you on the subject of networking.

So, a couple things. How would you even define networking? And maybe how would you define marketing? There's 2 questions here, but I'd love to get your take on what is networking to Ivan Misner, and what is marketing to you?

Ivan: Networking is the opportunity to connect and share information, knowledge, resources, referrals with other people. So, it's about making connections with other individuals to either enhance your business or enhance the community, and increase your knowledge. So, there are a lot of different ways that you can apply networking. I tend to focus mostly

on networking as a way of referral development. That's my area of expertise. It's helping people build their business through referral. So, I do that element of it.

But there's knowledge networking, there's networking to share information, there's corporate networking in terms of sharing contacts and resources within an organization. But, mine's mostly the market that you're working with primarily, and that's people who are out to where the rubber meets the road, and you need to generate business.

Joe: Yeah. It's entrepreneurs out there making it happen. So, as it relates to marketing, how would you define marketing?

Ivan: I'm not really an expert in marketing. You're probably more the expert than I am. My expertise is in networking, so I think you probably have a better definition for it than I do.

Joe: I probably have a better definition than our pal Dean, here, too.

Dean: You're being very modest when you say that, though, because there's certainly a lot of marketing principles that you apply to networking. Everything that I know about it, you take a very scientific approach to networking. Not just that it's something that you put yourself out there and hope that it happens, you have very specific strategies that you endorse and use. Everything's measurable.

In the purest sense, you're really using networking as a marketing tool.

Ivan: No question about that. There's certainly elements of traditional marketing that we teach to help people in their networking efforts, beginning with personal branding. You really have to differentiate yourself from your competition in order to network effectively. That's a marketing strategy. Building your personal brand, building your expertise, standing out from your competition in a number of ways. How you do that and how you build that are part of your overall networking strategy.

I think networking is a lake under the overall arching marketing strategy that a company should have. I think networking should be part of a marketing plan.

Dean: Absolutely.

Ivan: And it's not, in most cases. Most business people think that networking is a little bit word-of-mouth, and is a little bit like the weather. It's fairly important, but not much you can do about it. That's just not true. There's a lot you can do about building your business through networking, and marketing your business through business networking. You need incorporate a strategy. You need to have a strategy to do that.

Dean: Through By Referral Only, we focused a lot on the referral process. One of the things that we found was that there were 3 different types of referrals. Most people focus on the first 2, which are passive referrals and reactive referrals, meaning somebody shows up and says, "Hey Ivan, my friend Joe told me that you could help me sell my house, and here I am, ready to go." Or, Joe calls you and says, "Hey, Ivan, my friend Dean is going to be selling his house. You should give him a call," which is a reactive referral, meaning you now have to do something.

But what most people don't focus on, and where the big opportunity is, is in this 3rd type of referral called an orchestrated referral, where you go out and you orchestrate a scenario where you ask for and get a very specific type of referral.

Most people look at their referral generating activities as something that they are not in control of. But, we are taught people focus on orchestrating those referrals, setting up situations where the person that you are in conversation with or in communication with can refer somebody that's right in their wheel house, right in somebody that they have a high likelihood of coming in contact with.

I know you endorse a lot of those strategies and approaches.

Ivan: Absolutely. That third category is where we kind of live, is in orchestrating referrals. There are multiple levels of a referral. A referral can start with, "Hey, I've got a name and number of somebody that wants you to contact them. They're expecting your call." To me, that's a low-level referral. That might be high-level for some people, but that's a low-level referral when I give you a name and a phone number, and I tell you, "This person is expecting your call." That's the lowest level of referral.

The highest level of referral is me bringing that person to your office to sign a contract, because I've already told them how good you are, and they're ready to buy. There are many, many levels in between that first and that last level, but all of which are that third category that you're talking about, where you're orchestrating.

People will sometimes say to me, "Why would anyone do that?" That's an easy answer. They do that for you because you're doing that for them, and they're doing that for you. It's this whole philosophy of giver's gain that we talk about in BNI, that if I give you business, you'll give me business. It's actually predicated on the social capital theory of the Law of Reciprocity.

The Law of Reciprocity is a theory in social capital that basically says that the sum of a whole is greater than the individual parts; that people who work together to help one another are going to be more successful.

When Dr. Wayne Baker, who wrote the book *Success Through Social Capital*, he talks about the Law of Reciprocity. If it's done in a transactional way, it doesn't work. The Law of Reciprocity has to be relational, not transactional.

I love his example. Transactional, he calls it coin-operated networking. That's transactional. I'm going to put the coin in, give me the candy. I'm going to help you, now give me something. If you do networking that way, it doesn't work.

It's got to be, "I'm here to help you. I'll do my best to help you, and you do your best to help me. If we do it together as a group – that's BNI with this group of people – I may give you a referral, you may give someone else a referral, that person may give another person a referral, and then that third or fourth person will give me a referral. What goes around comes around. That's what the kind of networking that I try to teach is all about, is people working together to achieve more.

Joe: Totally. Even before I knew what to even call some of the ways of approaching people and getting what it is I wanted in life, I kind of figured out early on that you're not entitled to anything until you can create value for someone else first. If it happens without that, you can just consider yourself lucky.

But for the most part, life gives to the giver and takes from the taker. If your whole approach with people is, “I just want this, I just want that,” and you don’t instill reciprocity, true, genuine, real reciprocity, then long-term, you’re just going to be viewed as an annoying individual versus someone that people really like working with and really want to go and help and assist and connect and all of the things that you’ve set up BNI to represent.

Ivan: You’re absolutely right, and you bring up a great point. I think oftentimes, people view networking sort of as a face-to-face cold-calling opportunity, and they try to do business. And that’s not the way to do it.

I’ll give you an example of what I’m talking about.

I was speaking in Europe over the summer, and there were about 500 people in the audience. I said, “How many of you are here today hoping that you might be able to sell something? Raise your hand.” Every person in the room raised their hand. I said, “Great.”

This was a networking event, so I expected everybody to raise their hand.

I said, “Great. Now, how many of you are here today hoping to buy something? Raise your hand.” Not one person raised their hand. Not one.

And that, gentlemen, is the networking disconnect. Everybody shows at a networking event wanting to sell something, and nobody is there wanting to buy something.

So, if you’re doing networking as a face-to-face cold-calling opportunity, you’re doing it for the wrong reason. Networking is about building relationships. Networking is more about farming than it is about hunting. It’s about cultivating relationships with other people. So, if you go to these events to try to make connections that you can start to build a relationship with, to help them, and they’ll reciprocate, that’s doing it the right way.

Joe: That's great. Dean, just based on what Ivan just said, you've got to tell the story of the mouse with the cheese, versus the... You know what I'm talking about. I think Ivan would like it.

We just did one of my Genius Network mastermind groups, Ivan, which is the highest level mastermind group in the world for direct response marketers. We had Dr. Daniel Amen in the room – he's the brain doctor – we had David Bach, we have a lot of high-level people. There's like 20 of some of the top people.

So, Dean was explaining this whole approach, which is completely what you just said. Dean, if you could maybe tell that story.

Dean: Yeah. The funny thing is, when you take this outward approach, you think about things from other people's perspective, and I always use the example that you realize that when you're talking about prospects, but it's just anybody in this situation, if you think about them like a mouse, like somebody who either doesn't like to be approached or is kind of afraid, they're imprinted with 2 basic thoughts. The 2 basic thoughts are "Get cheese, avoid cats." That's the 2 driving motivators of any mouse.

It's the same thing with anybody, really. We're motivated by avoiding pain and getting pleasure.

So, when you really take the approach of focusing only on the cheese, whatever that cheese is for the person that you're talking to, by just being a source for good things, it's so much more attractive. As soon as you start showing your whiskers, you immediately tip people off that you're a cat, and they immediately go into that retreat mode. It's something that happens so behind the scenes that it's not even on a conscious level. It's just the way that we operate.

You clearly pointed that out when you're saying to people that what they're hoping is that they're going to sell something today. They're thinking about themselves. They're ready to get that cheese.

Ivan: The cat analogy is a great analogy. One of my partners in the referral institute, which is a training company that I co-own, her name is Dawn Lyons. And when she does a

presentation, she talks about meeting people. And she literally uses the cat analogy, and she has this hysterical video of a cat pouncing. She does this conversation like, “Hi, it’s nice to meet you! Oh, it’s great to meet you.” And she’s doing this conversation where 2 people are meeting each other at a networking event. “So, tell me what you do.” “Well, I do this.” And then she shows this cat pouncing video, where the cat just goes boom, and Dawn says, “Oh, I’d like to do business with you. Can we do business?”

It’s a great analogy. It’s absolutely accurate. By the way, I call that premature solicitation.

Dean: Premature solicitation. That’s great.

Joe: Premature solicitation. I love that. That is so true, and so many people do that, and they’re not aware of it. Or, if they are, they’re hopefully more aware of it now if there’s any of those premature solicitators listening.

Ivan, it sounds kind of cliché, but what is the secret to success of networking? What does one do? And I will say that knowing that we’ve got a limited amount of time, and you’ve written a couple of fantastic books. Well, you’ve written 12 books, but *Networking Like A Pro*, I think everyone should get a copy of it. *The 29% Solution* is another one of your books. People should read these, because it’ll enhance everything we’re talking about now.

But, what are some of the secrets to success as a networker?

Ivan: Let me answer the question in slightly more general terms than just networking, because one of the books I wrote was *Masters of Success*. I think success really is the uncommon application of common knowledge. I’ll repeat that. Success is the uncommon application of common knowledge.

Here’s how I came to that.

I started asking businesspeople, people that were members of BNI, to a large extent, the average businessperson out there selling products and services. What they thought was key. “Give me a phrase that’s one of the keys to success.” The kinds of

things I would hear were things like, “You have to have a vision, you have to have passion, you have to have good people skills, you have to be able to deal with diversity. You need systems.” These are the kinds of things that I’ve heard from the average business.

So, when I was writing *Masters of Success*, I started asking people – some of the big names that were in there, like Erin Brockovich and Buzz Aldrin contributed to the book, I asked people like that what their secret to success was. You know what they said? “Goals, vision, system, people skills, diversity, passion.” The exact same list.

This is really interesting. The average business person says this, and millionaires and really well-known people gave me the same list. At the time, I was still teaching at a state university in California, so I started asking my college students what they thought the secret to success is. You know what they said, besides beer?

Joe: What’s that?

Ivan: They said, “Goals, vision, system, passion, people skills.” They gave me the exact same list, with one exception: They said, “Luck.” Almost always, they said, “Luck.” Virtually no other groups of people that I spoke to said luck.

My answer to them was, “Sustained success, as it relates to luck, is the harder you work, the luckier you get.” That, they didn’t get. But everything else was exactly the same.

Here’s the question that I posed in the book *Masters Of Success*. “If we all know what it takes to be successful – the average businessperson, the really well-known person, the millionaire, the college student – then why is it that we’re not all as successful as we’d like to be?”

I think the answer to this is that success is the uncommon application of common knowledge.

If you go to somebody who you really admire and respect, and you say, “What’s your secret to success?” You’ll never hear a secret. I’ve asked this question for years.

I've never had someone say, "Well, it's X," and I go, "Oh, my God, nobody's ever told me that!"

We know what the secret to success is. It's that uncommon application of it.

Take networking. I didn't invent networking. It was around long before me. I just created a system and a mechanism to wrap around the concept, and I did it with a lot of passion. A very uncommon application to a very common idea. That, to me, is one of the key's to being successful at whatever you do, whether it's networking or something else.

Dean: Having a single-minded focus has played into that, too, because you've been fairly single-mindedly focus on that. Haven't you?

Ivan: I have. There's no question about that. It's ironic you say that, because I just did a podcast – I do podcasts for BNI – and somebody asked a number of the questions about my background before BNI, and I addressed that issue about single-minded focus in my podcast. I say, "I may be in a room full of people. I'm not always the smartest person in the room, I'm often not the most successful, but I am the most determined person in a room. I am like a dog with a bone. If there's something I want, I will gnaw at that until I get where I want to get, and that single-mindedness has served me well. It doesn't necessarily work for everyone, everybody has different skill sets. Mine is certainly single-mindedness."

Joe: Let me ask you an off-the-cuff question. It relates to networking, but it's more so about just behavior, because single-minded focus, in a lot of ways, is the behavior that has served you well, and will probably serve anyone well.

Being the creator of BNI, and probably having lots of people that want to access your time, how do you determine what to say yes to and what to say no to? How does Ivan Misner actually prioritize, if you want to call it that, or manage and juggle the numerous opportunities and individuals and people that come your way? Do you have any philosophies or thoughts about that, that you could share?

Ivan: I do. A lot of people connect with me that want to sell me stuff to do some face-to-face cold-calling, or they want to build a relationship. So, the first thing I look at is, “Is this person trying to cold-call me, or do they want to build a relationship?”

Then, the next thing I ask myself is, “Does this fit my mission?” And that’s a really important question.

If the connection that somebody wants to make is a connection that fits my life mission and my business mission – one or the other, or both – then I need to listen to what they have to say. If it’s in alignment with my organizational mission or my life mission, then I should pay attention to them, because it’s part of where I want to head.

If the answer to that question is no, then it’s an easy response: “This really isn’t the business I want. I appreciate it, and I think you’ll be successful at it. I wish you the best of luck, but it’s not what I want to do.”

If it fits my mission, then it becomes a little more complicated. Do I have the time? Does it fit? What can I do? What do they want?

But, that’s always the overriding question, “Does it fit my mission?” There’s many things that I turn down that are great ideas, because they don’t fit my mission. I’ll give you a really classic example.

I had a lot of people say to me, “Ivan, being BNI’s a great organization, but we need to learn how to sell better. We get all these referrals, and people don’t know how to close a sale. You get a referral, you still have to close the sale or close the referral. BNI would be a much better organization if we taught sales techniques.”

I wrote a book called *Givers Gain*, which is for members, and it’s got our mission in there. And basically, the mission says that BNI’s a word-of-mouth marketing organization that meets on a weekly basis, to help increase one another’s business through referrals.

And I say, “Where does sales training fit into that mission?” And they’ll go, “Well, it doesn’t.” And I say, “Well, one of the reasons why BNI is as successful as it is,

is we've been very myopic about our mission. We know what business we're in, and we stay in that business. And because of that, we have become the world's largest business networking organization. And I think if we start getting off-mission, that's where you really get sidetracked, is getting off-mission.

So, I'd rather refer people who do sales training, marketing training, the kinds of things that you do, Joe. I'd rather refer people to you, on marketing and sales and other areas, than to try to do it myself. If I stay on-mission, I stay successful.

Joe: I love it. I love it. That totally makes sense. That's one of the biggest underminers of success, is when people tried to go outside of their core.

So, Ivan, it's kind of funny, we ran into each other at the very cold Mohave desert, for the unveiling of the Virgin Galactic Space II. So, you're clearly a guy who actually really sets out to have a great personal life and really do cool stuff.

How does one properly balance their business and their personal life?

Ivan: I love this question. And I don't get asked that question very much anymore.

After I wrote the book *Masters Of Success*, I was asked that question a lot. So, I haven't been asked that a lot. And I really enjoy this one.

So, when I'm asked that question, especially in a big audience, I'll say to the audience, "Okay, so I have the secret to balance in your life." And I'll ask the audience, "Would you like to hear the secret?" And they're all like, "Yeah, of course!" I say, "Okay, lean in closely. Here's the secret to balance in your life: forget about it. You'll never have it."

Some people laugh. There's usually someone in the front of the audience who goes, "Oh, god! I thought I was really going to hear a secret."

So, I have good news. I say that for a little bit of fun, but I do have good news. I think if you're a business professional, if you own a business, it's almost impossible to have balance. Your life is way out of balance. But you can have harmony. And it's more than semantics. It is a way of life.

I don't believe I live a balanced life. My life is way out of balance. I travel, I go all over the world. I'm gone for weeks at a time. I work long hours. But I do have harmony in my life.

First, let's look at balance. It's like the lady justice with the scales. People sit down and they think, "Well, I've got to spend X number of hours this week doing this and X number of hours doing that. I've got to spend time with the family, I've got to do this, I've got to do that. If it's not all in balance, I'm not in balance." Well, if you are an entrepreneur, your life tends to be out of balance.

So, you can create harmony. And the ways that you create harmony, or the ways I've created harmony for myself, are a few various, simple techniques.

First of all, I determine what are the important things in my life, and I want to make sure and spend the proper amount of focus and time on that. But it might not be all in the same week. So, I might travel a lot and then take a few days off, and take the kids up to the mountains. I've got a lake house. Take the family up to the lake house for a few days.

One of the core elements of harmony is 3 simple words: be here, now – 3 simple words, really hard to apply. Wherever you are, be there.

So, that means when you're at the office, don't be thinking about, "Oh, gee, I didn't spend enough time with my son last night," and start fretting about what you're not doing as a parent.

When you're at home, don't be thinking about the crap you have at the office. Be here. Be present. Be fully present. If you can do that, and there's other techniques that I've used, but if you can do that, you can create a life of harmony.

And you've got to get creative. You've got to get creative with your time management. For example, the first big book I wrote, it was my second book but it was the first book that was distributed nationally, and I think the first book sold about 20 copies. But this one's done much better. *World's Best-Known Marketing Secret*, it came

out in early 90's, I wrote that book from about 11:00 at night until about 6:00 or 7:00 in the morning. I, once a week, would do an all-nighter, and I wrote that book.

I'll tell you, the coolest thing, when that book was done, was the book was printed, it came out, and my eldest daughter looked at me and said, "You wrote a book? When did you write a book?" She had no idea I wrote a book. Why? Because I put the kids to bed, I'd put the wife to bed, and then I'd start writing, and I would do it once a week.

Now, can everybody do that? No. But what you do is you find creative ways in your life to manage your time more effectively, so that you can, in fact, have harmony. Harmony is different than balance, and that is what I strive for.

Joe: I love it. I love it. That's fantastic. Dean, you can jump in at any point in time. I'm just going to ask Ivan about how important networking really is, because obviously your whole business is really built around networking.

For me, if I think about my own life, the value in what I have is truly my relationships. There's that whole saying of, "Time is money," and I understand what that means. But really, I've never hit my alarm clock and had money pop out. Money, in my life, comes from relationships. It comes from all of my sphere of influence, it comes through what I call my Genius Network. So, I consider networking a critical sort of thing, and I just want to get your perspective on it, because the whole point of us delivering this message to our audience is we want them to be better networkers. So, I really want them to get what this means.

So, how important is networking for successful entrepreneurs?

Ivan: Well, clearly, I think it's important. But forget about what I think, for a second. I just did a survey, which is part of a book. I'll give you the title of the book in just a little while. But 12,000 people we surveyed, from all over the world. This is a book that's been 5 years in the making. And I'm going to share one piece out of that book. It comes out in January of next year.

But one piece I'm going to share with you, one of the questions we asked was, "Has networking played a role in your success?" 12,000 people, all over the world. Over 91% of the respondents said, "Yes, networking has played a role in my success." 91%! When have you ever seen 91% of any group of people agree to anything? That is a gigantic number. It's huge!

Only 6% said, "No," and roughly 3% didn't know. And those are probably college professors that did that.

Joe: Yeah, I would say definitely.

Dean: Tenured college professors.

Ivan: Tenured, that's right. They don't teach this stuff. So, we don't teach this in colleges and universities, yet 91% of 12,000 businesspeople who took this survey said networking has played a role in their success, it's important in their business.

So, yeah, I think it is very important. And I think the more we can learn techniques on how to do this effectively, the more successful we're going to be in business.

Joe: Dean, go ahead.

Dean: Well, what you're saying is that 90+% of people realize that it's an important part. But I wonder how many of those 90% actually take this orchestrated approach to actually revering it and putting some time into actually making it happen? Do you have a sense of how many business owners actually proactively take an approach to networking?

Ivan: Define proactive. A lot of people think they're proactive, and they may not be.

When we asked questions about, "Do you have a system to track your referrals? Do you have a system to track your money? Do you have a system to follow-up with people? We found that the majority of people did not. Close to 55%, 60% of the respondents had no system whatsoever to track the business that they're getting in, or the people that they meet.

So, from that sense, I'd say no. From the sense of do they actively do some elements of networking? Yes. Most people, most businesspeople belong to some kind of organization, like a chamber or a BNI group, or a service club. They're trying to get out there. But there's still a lot of people out there that are cave dwellers, businesspeople that are cave dwellers. They get up in the morning and they're in a large cave with a big-screen TV, and they go to this little cave with 4 wheels, called their car, they drive to this other cave called their office, they stay there all day long, get back into their little cave at the end of the day, drive back to their large cave with a big-screen TV, and they can't figure out why no one's referring them.

Well, networking is a contact sport. You've got to get out and get belly-to-belly with people. And there's still a lot of people who aren't doing that, because they haven't been taught to do that. They don't know how.

Joe: I love the whole portable cave sort of analogy. Cave on wheels. Do you consider yourself an introvert or extravert?

Ivan: Did you read my blog on this? Do you know the answer?

Joe: Actually, I did not read the blog on this. I swear.

Ivan: Okay. I had an epiphany about a year ago. So, I've always considered myself an extrovert. This is a true story. I put this on my blog about a year ago.

I was having dinner with my wife, and the kids were out at some high school thing. One daughter was away at college, and the other 2 were in high school. They were away, and it was just my wife and I. It was really nice, quiet. We're talking, and we're having this conversation, and I said to her, "Oh honey, you know me. I'm such an extravert." And she looks at me and she says, "Eh, not so much." And I'm like, "What do you mean, not so much? Of course, I'm an extrovert." She said, "Okay, if that's what you think." I'm like, "What do you mean, if that's what I think? I'm an extrovert. I'm a public speaker! I'm an author! I run the world's largest networking organization! I'm an extrovert!"

"Whatever you say, honey." "What do you mean?"

So, she then starts to go on and talk about what an introvert is, because she'd been doing some stuff in her master's degree on introverts and extroverts. And she's naming all these things that represent an introvert, and one really hit home with me: introverts recharge their batteries by being alone. They don't want to go to a party, they don't want to go out, they want to go hide; go sit in a room, watch a TV show, read a book, be in their office, maybe with family.

Extroverts recharge their battery by getting out. That one really hit home with me. I couldn't argue that one, because that's totally me.

I'm now mad that she's calling me an introvert, and I leave the dinner table, and I go to my office at home, and I get on the internet and I Google some test to take whether you're an introvert or an extrovert. I hit the button, and it says, "Congratulations. You are an introvert. You are a situational extrovert that, under certain situations you come across as an extrovert, particularly when you're talking about topics that you're knowledgeable about. Otherwise, left to your own devices, you are an introvert."

So, I had to go back to my wife and say, "You're right. Go figure. I'm an introvert."

Dean: I'm an introvert, too. Most people wouldn't think that, but it's true. Did you do the Meyers-Briggs test?

Ivan: I have not done the Meyers-Briggs. I've done DISC's and behavior profiles like that, and the high D and high I, but that doesn't necessarily translate.

Joe: Yeah, and the reason I mention that is I know a lot of people, one of their red flags are, "Well, I just don't feel comfortable going out and talking to people." I'm a public speaker, also, and I just tell people when I was growing up, I was incredibly shy. I had enormous social anxiety and fear of going out and talking to people. But then I realized, early on, that that's how you get checks, is you actually have to go out and interact with people. If you're going to build a business, you need relationships.

I literally have rigged my life in order to make it fun. One of my whole things is ELF: do things that are easy, lucrative, and fun. I really only want to do business with

people that want to do business with me. I only want to align myself with people that want to align themselves with me, because it's just the way to make business enjoyable.

For a lot of people that are out there that consider themselves, "I can never get out and network," I think one of the greatest services that you created for entrepreneurs is that you developed a place where the meetings are held, where they're facilitated, and you've made it very easy for people to go that have a mission of building and growing their business and going out and meeting with people that have that same goal. I think that's a huge value creation. And if someone's listening that considers themselves extraordinarily shy, they don't like going to parties, I would encourage them to visit a BNI group and really see that you've set it up so this just works. It doesn't matter if you're an introvert or an extrovert, it just works.

Ivan: You really struck the heart of the issue, because that was my epiphany. I created an organization that fit my personality. The truth is 26 years ago, in 1985, I could have created any kind of group I wanted. I could have done a big party, a big mixer, got a lot of people together, but that made me uncomfortable.

What made me comfortable was a small group of people who I could get to know and trust. It was like, "Wow. I created BNI because of that introverted tendency that I have." One of the things I've learned is you can be good at networking whether you're an introvert or an extrovert. It's a different skill set. Extroverts are great at meeting people. They can walk up to anyone and introduce themselves and start a conversation. That is a skill. That's a benefit. The problem with extroverts is they can't shut up.

Joe: That is hysterical.

Ivan: They go on and on. A good networker has 2 ears and one mouth and uses them both proportionately.

An extrovert needs to learn the skill set of asking questions and being quiet. That's difficult for the extrovert. The introvert has a terrible time meeting people. That's their weakness. You have to develop the skill set.

There are things to do, by the way, to get out and meet people without just walking up and introducing yourself cold. They have to learn how to do that. They're great at the second part. They're good at listening. They're good at asking questions. Each has a strength and a weakness. And if you play on that strength and work on that weakness, whether you're an introvert or an extrovert, you can be good at networking. I've seen it. I've seen both do very well, using different skill sets.

Joe: That's awesome. That's awesome. You write about 3 fundamentals of networking. Can you talk about those?

Ivan: It's absolutely the foundation of everything I teach. Without this, nothing else you do in your networking efforts work. It's called the VCP process. It stands for visibility, credibility, profitability. It's a chronological process. You have to move from one to the next.

It starts with V, visibility, Visibility is where people know who you are and they know what you do. They get to know who you are, they get to know what you do. Credibility is where people know who you are, they know what you do, and they know you're good at it. Now, they may know you're good at it because they've heard other people talk about your products or services, they may have used your products or services. So, you have credibility with them.

Profitability is where people know who you are, they know what you do, they know you're good at it, and they're willing to pass you referrals on an ongoing, reciprocal basis.

This is a referral process, not a sales process. I'll ask people, "Where are you with your clients?" They'll generally say, "Profitability." My answer to them is, "Well, are the majority of your clients giving you referrals?" If the answer is no, then you're not at profitability with your clients, because it's a referral process, not a sales process. Who's giving you referrals? That's where your profitability is.

Where networking goes bad, where it goes wrong, is where people try to jump over the VCP process. We've all met them. We talked about that premature solicitation.

You meet someone at a networking event, they go, “Hi, my name’s Ivan. We should be doing business. It’d be great if you could refer someone to me.” They’re at a stage I haven’t mentioned yet. It comes before visibility. It’s called invisibility. If you met him a week later, you wouldn’t remember who they are. Sometimes, they keep coming at you and coming at you and coming at you, so they’re actually at irritability with you. It’s irritating, because they’re doing that face-to-face cold-calling thing, and they don’t understand that first you’ve got to be visible, then you’ve got to be credible, then you can get to profitability, and that takes time. It doesn’t happen overnight.

That’s where the networking disconnect comes in, is that they’re trying to sell, rather than trying to build a relationship.

Joe: Selling is rarely an event. It’s a process. There may be some situations where you’re in the middle of say a baseball or sporting event, you’re a very healthy eater, and you’re really hungry, and there’s no other option other than maybe hot dogs and cotton candy and popcorn. Sometimes you’ll pop and just go for one of those sort of things, and that might be, yeah, someone sold you something because of the circumstances. But rarely, in real life, does it operate that way.

I really believe people love to be sold. They hate to be pressured. Part of it is selling. The whole definition of selling, one of my favorites, is from my friend, Dan Sullivan, is getting people intellectually engaged in a future result that’s good for them, and getting them to emotionally commit to take action to achieve that result.

When you’re with someone that has a bigger future, whatever that is, they want some result, they want fun, enjoyment, a solution to a problem, whatever, as long as it’s good for them to develop and nurture that sort of relationship is hugely profitable.

Like you mentioned, you’re in the relationship business, not the transaction business, and getting people to understand that and develop and grow their list of people that they’re aligned with there.

I guess that leads to another question I have for you. For someone that's listening to us that hasn't really thought of themselves as doing orchestrated referrals or networking, how does one start growing their list of people and relationships?

Ivan: As I mentioned earlier, networking is more about farming than it is about hunting. It's about cultivating relationships. I think one of the first things I try to teach people – and this is really counterintuitive – is diversity is key in building a powerful personal network.

What tends to happen is people will go, "Okay, who's my target market? My target market is big corporations. So, I need to hang with CEO's and vice presidents of major corporations." They're hiding from you. They don't want to meet you, because they know you're going to try to sell to them.

They're constantly looking to try and hang with those people, and to sometimes try to meet people who hang with those people. Although there's nothing wrong with that alone, that's where people try to live.

The truth is, the more diverse your network is, the more powerful it is. Diversity is key. What you want to do is surround yourself with people who are different than you, who have different backgrounds than you, who come from a different socioeconomic background as you.

Diversity in the normal sense– race, religion, color, sex – but also types of profession. What happens, I see this certainly in networking groups like BNI, they want just a business group. "I don't want a chiropractor in my network. They're not going to have the kind of contacts I have. Heaven forbid, I don't want a cosmetics person in my network."

You know what's really funny, is one of the largest referrals given in the United States a few years ago came from a Mary Kay consultant, who was at the house of a woman, doing a facial. It's a long story. To make it short, she was at the house of a woman doing a facial, and the guy walks by – the husband – and he's got a sheet of paper, and he's, "Bad word, bad word, bad word," as he walks by. The lady says, "Honey, what's wrong?" He says, "Oh, I've got to fire this graphic designer tomorrow. They're

doing a horrible job.” The Mary Kay consultant says, “Gee, I know a great graphic designer. If you’d like, I’ll be glad to have them contact you.” Gets his card. He said, “Yes, please! I have nobody to take this project over.”

Gets his card, goes to the BNI meeting the next day, gives his card there. She says, “I have no idea what this guy does, I’m not sure what the referral is, but I know he’s highly-motivated. He’s firing your competition today.”

Calls the guy, turns out he’s a movie producer. His card didn’t say that. Just a plain card. He’s a movie producer. The job was for a movie. It was all of the marketing work, the graphic design work, for the PR and marketing for the movie. The graphic designer did such a great job, he got the next movie as well. It ended up being a substantial 6-figure referral that came from a Mary Kay consultant. You never know whose homes these women are in.

Networks are, by nature, clumpy. That’s the technical term. They’re cluster-like. We tend to hang with people like ourselves. So, if we’re hanging with people like ourselves, guess what? Our network is all people we know.

If you have a diverse network, you have people who are connectors who will connect you with different clumps, with different clusters of people. The first thing I tell people: You want to grow your list? Diversity is key. Only one thing should be consistent: and that is to find quality people in many different areas. Quality is the only thing that needs to be consistent.

Joe: That’s great. That’s fantastic. The question of who do you know versus what you know, I would love to ask you, what matters more? You hear it all the time. It’s not who you know, it’s what you know. Or it’s not what you know, it’s who you know. What’s your take on that?

Ivan: I don’t think it’s what you know or who you know. I think it’s how well you know each other that really counts. It’s not just your list. I’ve had people who had this great contact list, all of these people. That’s really nice, very impressive, but could you pick up the phone, make a telephone call, would they answer your call? And if you asked for a favor,

would they be willing to do it? That's where it really counts. That's where the rubber meets the road.

It's not just who you know. Clearly, it's not just what you know. Knowledge alone is not enough. That contact, that emotional intelligence is very important. It is who you know, but it's how well you know them that's the key. Could you pick up the phone and ask for a favor, ask for some help? And, would they do it? That's where you're at profitability. You're way past visibility. You're past credibility.

Profitability doesn't mean just making money, it may mean needing help with something. When you're at profitability with people, then it's working for you.

Which, by the way, is one of the things I recommend people do. Sit down with your database, and ask yourself, "Where am I with this person? Maybe I'm at pre-visibility. If I call them up, they wouldn't even recognize my name. Am I at visibility, am I at credibility, or am I at profitability?" You communicate differently with people that you're at different levels with.

If I sent out an announcement that I'm doing a presentation somewhere, and I send it to people that I'm barely at visibility with, they call that spam. But if I send out an announcement – we're doing this interview – I'm going to put this out on my social media, I'm going to put this out at BNI, these are people who follow me. These are people that I'm at least at credibility with, and mostly at profitability with. So, they're not going to consider that spam. They're going to go, "Oh, okay, cool. Ivan's done an interview. I'd like to hear it."

But if you send that to people that are total strangers, they're going to go, "Delete. Give me that address, I'm going to put this in my spam filter." It's how well you know them again.

Joe: I have a friend named Richard who made this simple statement once. He said, "The number one question running through people's minds is, "Who can I trust?" I thought about that a lot, and that's the number one question going through consumers minds, through everyone's minds, is "Who can I trust?" Your job as the entrepreneur, as the

marketer, as the networker, is to establish rapport, so that they not only trust you, but they're comfortable with you."

I do a lot of stuff with foundational work, and I do lots of stuff with Make-A-Wish, I'm Richard Branson's largest fundraiser for Virgin Unite, and networking is critical in the causes and the fundraising in the nonprofit world, absolutely, just as much as it is in the entrepreneurial world. I'm constantly surprised at how many people come at me with, "Oh, can you have Richard Branson look at this?" I know him personally. I've been to Necker Island 3 times. I have his cell phone. I talk to Richard on a regular basis. People come to me constantly trying to get that contact, but they never do anything for me. It's like they just want something.

Like you just said, if I was to say, "Where am I at with this person?" People that are visible, credible, and profitable, they call me up and say, "Yeah, I've got something I think would really benefit Richard's foundation," or whatever, I would really, if it made sense, I would make that connection. But so many people want connections, but they don't have the right setup in order to make it a natural sort of occurrence.

Ivan: That happens so often. My whole thing on premature solicitation came about because of that exact kind of dialog. Somebody came up to me and said, "Hey, I understand you know Richard Branson. Would you mind? I've got this product that's really great, that will help his company in merchant services. Would you mind making an introduction?"

And I'm sitting here thinking, "I don't even know this guy." I'd never met this guy before. If I saw him a few weeks from now, I wouldn't remember who he was and what business he had, and he wants me to make a connection with somebody who I'm really at visibility with – I'm probably not even at credibility. I'm close to credibility with him. And he wants me to sell this product from a guy who I don't know, to somebody who's important in a contact that I have, that I haven't really built a relationship with? There's a snowball's chance in hell that I'm going to do that. That's what went through my head.

Do you want to hear what I said? "Hi, my name is Ivan. I didn't catch yours." And that just threw him. He's like, "Oh, I'm whatever. I'm John." That was sort of a

little water in the face. It's like, I don't even know who you are and you want me to introduce you to Richard Branson? That's going to happen.

Joe: What amazes me is how many times per day throughout the world that stuff happens, and people are oblivious to it. That's hysterical. Can I ask, Ivan, for our I Love Marketing listeners who are used to doing about an hour, do you have a few more minutes? Because I'd like to ask you a few more questions.

Ivan: Absolutely. My pleasure.

Joe: Dean, since I tend to dominate these things, would you like to ask Ivan a question?

Dean: I was going to ask how – and we can do this towards the end of the call – but I was certainly going to ask what's the best way for all of our listeners to get started with a BNI group?

Ivan: We have BNI groups all over the world. I would go to BNI.com and look for chapters, but what you'll get is the regional director, and connect with the regional director locally and ask for a chapter in your area that has an opening.

Even better yet, if you know somebody who's a member, just ask them if you can go visit the chapter. You've got to see what it's all about, you've got to experience it. We're all about business and building relationships.

Go to BNI.com and you can get information on where a chapter is near you – 50 countries, every state in the United States, all over the world.

Joe: Awesome. Awesome.

Ivan: Thanks for asking.

Joe: And we'll say it again towards the end.

Now, let's talk about social media networks. Obviously, in the last few years, social networking, social media, what does all of these mean as it relates to networking, and what's your perspective on the importance of social media networks?

Ivan: I love social media. A lot of people are surprised about that. They think I'd be opposed to it because I run the world's largest face-to-face network. But to me, it's not either/or. It's both/and. It's one of the ways that you build visibility. Social media is great for visibility, pretty good for credibility.

When you have a relationship, it's also good for profitability because it's a way to stay in touch with people. I'm all for social media.

Let me tell you a story that's in *Networking Like A Pro*.

I was doing an interview in Stockholm, and the Stockholm newspaper, the big paper there, sent some guy to interview me, and it took an hour and a half for him to get me. He was a 20-something kid. Young man. This isn't a joke. He spent the first 5 minutes berating me for running a face-to-face network, because he said it was the buggy-whip business of the networking industry, and it was going to go away because nobody's doing face-to-face now. It's all online.

So, I sit there and listen to this kid talk about it, and I said to him, "Okay, so why are you here?" And he said, "What do you mean why am I here?" I said, "Why are you here?" "Because I have to do this interview. My boss said I had to do this interview." I said, "I get that. You don't want to do the interview. That makes sense. But why are you here? Why did you drive here? It took you an hour and a half to get here, so it'll take you that or longer to get back." He looks at me without skipping a beat, and he said, "Because a face-to-face interview is always better."

That's a true story. I looked at him and shrugged my shoulders, and he went, "Oh, I get it." Having a telephone conversation is better than an email, and having a face-to-face conversation is better than either. There's something about seeing somebody talking to somebody, shaking their hands, having that conversation that's very powerful, but it's not either/or. I think it's both/and.

If you want to build a powerful personal network, you have to get engaged in social media. I'm walking the talk with that.

BNI, one of the things that I talk about in the future of networking is the integration of face-to-face. I've written some articles on this. The integration of face-to-face networking with online networking. I think that's really important. But, online networks that integrate face-to-face are going to be more successful, and face-to-face networks that integrate online are going to be more successful.

BNI, in the middle of this recession, has done the biggest single largest project in the history of the company called BNI Connect. What we're doing is creating an online network exclusively for BNI members, so that when you join a local BNI group in a small city, you immediately become part of a global network with the same philosophy of doing business. We even trademarked the phrase "Local business, global network." The idea is that you'd be a local business and have a global network in a walled garden community, where you can connect with people all around the world who have a similar philosophy of doing business.

So, both/and.

Joe: I like it, that's fantastic. The thing with social networking and stuff, I love the term I heard years ago, when it related to how when people were visiting a website, they'd say, "How many hits did you get?"

I love the definition of hits, which is "How Idiots Track Success." Having a bunch of people go and visit your thing or click your friend on Facebook could have absolutely zero relevance to converting that into a useful, profitable, valuable relationship. It's about going deep with people and the quality of the relationship, versus going very shallow. I think one of the mistakes people make with social media is they can spend all day long building a Twitter list of people that don't really care about anything they have to do with other than they click "follow."

So, I think using it to enhance a face-to-face, really nurturing sort of relationship with real human beings, not electronic friends, is critical. I can't imagine you being able to do anything I do if I was not able to truly network with people at that sort of level. But, again, like you said, it's not either/or, it's using both of them.

Ivan: Can I just say something about that? Because what you said there was so powerful. It really was, about the shallow thing. If your network is a mile wide and an inch deep, it's not going to be very successful. You need a personal network that is both wide and deep.

A great analogy for that is I live in Southern California, and every year, you have these big Santa Ana winds kick up, and you always see these trees knocked over after the Santa Ana winds. If you see that on television, take a good look at the trees. They're almost always the Southern California variety of eucalyptus tree. That tree has a root system that is very broad, but doesn't go deep. The reason they always get knocked over is that, when the winds hit, their roots don't go deep, so the tree goes right over.

Now, let's take that to today's times, the economy. When the economy is bad, when the economy is tough, if your network is broad but not deep, your business is going to go right over. You need a business that has a network that is both broad and deep.

That was such an important comment that you made, and a lot of people don't understand that. They're looking for numbers. Numbers are important, but you also have to have that deep relationship.

Dean: When you were saying that, Joe, about how online people measure hits, it struck me that the networking equivalent might be 2 people say, "How many business cards did you get?" at this meeting, thinking that you getting a business card is the answer.

Joe: I think that's translatable. Yeah, it really needs to be about the substance and the quality and the connection and the alignment. If people really are not masters at doing this, but clearly, like you said, Ivan, 91% of people have said how important networking has been to them, everyone listening, it would seem to make sense that probably visiting a BNI meeting and becoming a member, and picking up some of Ivan's books and mastering this particular topic would pay huge not only profitable dividends, but I think this extends itself way beyond this networking, because you have products and services, and you have a company, and you want to sell.

Clearly, you do it for that reason. But beyond that, I think this will help you in all areas of your life, because it just allows you to connect with human beings. More than

anything, that's what I think that's people want. We're more connected in the world, right now, than we ever have been electronically, but we're more disconnected than we've ever been in terms of face-to-face human socialization.

Ivan: Didn't Alvin Tossler get it right like 30 years ago, when he said, "We're becoming much more of a high-tech, high-touch society? The more technologically advanced we become, the more important it is to connect with people." I think we've achieved that, we've reached that. We're technologically advanced, but we still need to have those connections.

Joe: Yeah, yeah. Totally. The current economic state reminds me of this quote by Warren Buffett. I'm not sure exactly how it goes, but something along the lines of "It's not until the tide goes back, that you find out who was swimming naked and who wasn't."

Ivan: I like it. That's good.

Joe: You build your network now, while you're doing well, because there will come a point in time where if something really happens, it takes years, in some cases, to develop and build great relationships.

Early on, someone told me this in my career, because I've had my marketing company since 1994. One of my very best friends is a guy named Brian Kurtz. He runs a company called Boardroom Inc., founded by Marty Edelman. They're a \$100-million-a-year company, publishers of Bottom Line Personal, the largest non-paid-for consumer newsletter in the world. And I met Brian Kurtz 20 years ago, and you'd never think that today. I was a young guy back then, and I think I'm still relatively young.

But for the most part, I heard this saying, "Be nice to the people you meet on the way up; they're the same people you meet on the way down, and that you're going to run into people 5, 10, 15, 20 years from now, when you're in business, when you're first starting, that you would never even think you're going to run into."

And now, fast-forward. That has come true so many times. I simply run into people all the time in these relationships that I've developed and I've maintained, have become so valuable. Not only is Brian in my 25K group, but he's one of the legends of

direct marketing. And anything, I can call upon him. He's just one of many, many people that I know, but it's just the impact of doing this and working on it is such a gigantic life-long benefit that my hope for us introducing you to the Genius Network listeners, to I Love Marketing, is that everyone really starts to place a tremendous amount of importance and significance on not only their network, but just going out and relating to people because you want those roots. Those roots will hold you up when many other people will be knocked down. And it's one of the greatest competitive advantages you can have. And I think it's just a great way to run your life. Why wouldn't you? You know?

Ivan: Yeah. People may terminate a relationship with a vendor, but they're really resistant to terminate a relationship with a friend.

Joe: Exactly.

Ivan: And if you build those relationships, you build friendships. And they may be professional friendships, but they're still friendships. They're a little more hesitant to terminate that relationship.

Joe: Absolutely. Absolutely. Before I forget, and I did ask you the question about social media, what suggestions or ideas do you have, just to kind of bring some real meat to that topic? What's the ideal use and strategy for effective and efficient social media and social networking? Do you have some thoughts on that? Because we did talk about it, but I'd like to get a deeper perspective.

Ivan: Yeah. By the way, I have a blog, and I talk about this a little bit on my blog. It's BusinessNetworking.com. A lot of free content, obviously, up there. And one of the blogs I wrote on was the 5 common social media mistakes to avoid.

I think I'm all for social media, but I think it's really easy for you to get online, to click on somebody's friend request that takes you to their page, and then there's some video that you click on, and now you're on YouTube, which takes you to something else. And some crazy thing happens to the space/time continuum, and 2 hours has gone by.

And you're like, "Oh my god, that's 2 hours of my life I'll never get back. What did I just do?"

So, you have to plan your time. You really do. You have to budget your time. You want to get on the social media on your normal off-hours. I think the more you can do on off-hours, the better. You don't want to do it during the middle of the day. You don't want to do it during prime selling/marketing/networking time. You want to do it while you're watching some crazy American Idol show or something. Get on and do your social media.

You want to engage in the conversation. It's really important to not just post stuff, but to engage in it. And people are always surprised. Somebody wrote on my public Facebook page, because I guess I put 3 or 4 things up in a row that were business oriented, and she said, "If I would have known better, I would have thought this was a robot, not actually Ivan Misner."

So, I got on and I said, "Hi, Agnes, this is the robot speaking. Here's why we posted these things that we posted. Oh, by the way, I'm in a coffee shop in Idaho, just in case you want to know."

You've got to engage in conversation. You've got to let people know you're out there. Otherwise, it just becomes more white noise that's going their way. At least 2 or 3 things.

Joe: That's great. That's really helpful, and I really want to reiterate what you said about time, because you could spend 2 hours watching some video, the person doesn't even know you, and you've had no real connection whatsoever. And you can go down a bizarre rabbit hole that could just waste an exorbitant amount of time.

So, when it comes to any sort of electronics, people really need to think about utilizing them, not letting them use you. My experience is most people don't use email, it uses them. Most people do not use social media, they get used by it. And I think it's really important.

More than anything, the strategic byproduct. One thing that you said about diversity is really, really important. People ask me all the time, because I am pretty known to be a pretty darned good connector. Most people come to me because they want access to my relationships. I've established a pretty big network. And I love hanging out with all kinds of different characters. I think it's fun to be like in the Star Wars bar, where there's all kinds of different weird creatures and all kinds of different things, because of the strategic byproducts that come out of it.

You'll learn and hear about things that you'll never even think about until you put yourself in that sort of environment.

One of the things I would like to encourage everyone at I Love Marketing and Genius Network to do is go to a BNI group. Even if you don't join, just go visit one, and do it, because I think you'll actually want to join, and you'll see the big benefits. And I say that not because I've got Ivan on the line here with me. I've had members for years in Piranha Marketing; dozens and dozens of our members have talked about how they utilize education-based marketing that we teach, and they go to BNI meetings and they give out consumer awareness guides, and they meet with people, and they help people.

So, I know that just tens of thousands, I would even venture to say it's probably, at this point, in the millions have been transacted through just my network of carpet cleaners as a result of BNI meetings and stuff.

So, I know this works. And when you combine direct response marketing you're learning at I Love Marketing with it, I just think it's going to enhance everything that you're doing.

So, that was one of the main reasons I wanted to bring you on, Ivan. I really appreciate you sharing your methods, sharing your thoughts, and having been an industry transformer in the whole networking business, and creating what you've done.

So, having said that, and with enough babbling from me, Dean, anything else you'd like to ask?

Dean: Of all of your books, what would be the best place for somebody to start? Which one would you recommend?

Ivan: I think the last one I had is a great place to start. One of the first books I wrote, *World's Best-Known Marketing Secret*, is a good place to start. But *Networking Like A Pro* is a really current book that has some new stuff in it. It's a great primer for people.

If, on the other hand, you're really systems-oriented and you want to plan, you want to really create a plan week by week, it would have to be *The 29% Solution*.

Dean: I was going to recommend that. I love that book.

Ivan: It's based on week one, do this. Week 2, do this. And here's something I tell people you'll never hear from an author: "Don't read the whole book at one sitting. It's too much." It's overwhelming.

So, read a couple of weeks at a time, at the most. But let me tell you a book I've got coming out.

I mentioned that we did that survey of 12,000 people. I'm going to give you one more blog. It's the name of my book that's coming out. It will be out next year. It's called *Business Networking And Sex*. Not what you think. Seriously. That's the website, BusinessNetworkingAndSex.com.

It's about – this is going to be really disappointing now – the difference between men and women and how they network.

Dean: Oh, I gotcha. That's a great title.

Joe: I will have to give you credit. For being in the market, that is quite a title. BusinessNetworkingAndSex.com

Ivan: Yeah. Go take a look at the website. We're putting up some preliminary material that will be in the book, and things that won't be in the book, and it's really all about the difference between men and women. It's a fun book. I have 2 co-authors, and I've got a few video blogs up there that I think your listeners might enjoy watching. Keep an eye out for the book. It's going to do well.

Joe: Awesome. Well, Ivan, on behalf of myself and Dean, and all of our I Love Marketing and Genius Network listeners, we really appreciate the time. I would tell everyone, right now, go get a copy of *Networking Like A Pro*. In chapter 29, there's a thing called a Networking Scorecard. Like you said in the very beginning, uncommon application of common knowledge. I would recommend that people just pick up that book and use it as a roadmap.

And, yeah, check out BNI.

Thank you, Ivan. In the future, we'll keep our listeners posted, and maybe, as we go along, we'll maybe do a future interview. We really appreciate it.

Ivan: Thank you, gentlemen. I really appreciate the interview. A lot of fun.

Joe: Awesome. And everyone at I Love Marketing, give us your comments at ILoveMarketing.com. Over and out. Dean, happy birthday!

Dean: Thank you.

Joe: Hello, this is Joe Polish. I want to thank you for taking the time to listen to this interview. I hope you found it very useful. Please give me your feedback on all of the interviews that you listen to. I love to hear your feedback, so we can always deliver a great program for you.

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