



PROVE IT! PODCAST

HOSTED BY DEBBIE ALBERT

Episode 123: LinkedIn (Part 2 of 3): Leveraging Your LinkedIn Contacts

Guest: Brynne Tilman, CEO, Social Sales Link

This is Prove It. A podcast for impatient business owners overwhelmed marketers and PR practitioners with no time for podcasts. In just 10 minutes they answer 3 questions and offer proof of what's working in marketing communications today. Here's Debbie Albert, President of Albert Communications.

Debbie: This episode of 'Prove It' is the second in a three-part series taking a deeper look into LinkedIn, which is so important in all our businesses. It's certainly the platform for B2B marketing and sales and our guest for all three of these episodes is Brynne Tillman, who has been immersed in LinkedIn for many years. So Brynne, welcome.

Brynne: Thanks, Debbie. This is so exciting. I'm thrilled to be doing episode number 2 about this.

Debbie: I'm glad that you're here. If you haven't listened to Brynne's first episode about updating your LinkedIn profile from a resume to a resource, do yourself a favor and take 10 minutes to listen to that. This one is going to be about leveraging your LinkedIn contacts. And the third one is going to be about what Brynne calls being 'vendor agnostic' with your content. So, there's more on that in the next episode.

You can read about Brent on our website or even better, check out her perfect LinkedIn profile. She's the CEO of Social Sales Link. In my opinion, she's the leading expert in all things LinkedIn, so.

Let's get started with leveraging your LinkedIn contacts. We have three questions and a 'prove it' point. So Brynne, **talk briefly if you would about who we should be connecting with, why we shouldn't connect with people and why. I guess that's three questions in one.**

Brynne: Yeah, so I look again at LinkedIn like it is this online networking meeting 24/7. There are really three types of connectors. There's the "lion," or the LinkedIn open networker. It's like they walk into a networking meeting with a handful of



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business cards and they walk around handing them out going. “Hi. I’m Brynne” and just hand out a card, right? Not having any conversations, and they might as well open the Yellow Pages. I actually don’t even know if they have the Yellow Pages anymore.

Debbie: We date ourselves.

Brynne: I know, I do all the time. You know, I think when you are that much of an open networker building this network of people that don’t know you, have no idea who you are and it’s just collecting business cards. We all have great big business card piles with rubber bands in the corner of your desk, right?

That’s what this is. It’s great big connections with rubber bands that we have no idea how we met them or why we’re connected. The second one is “the purest”. This I find often in higher level executives and folks that have been sales for 20-plus years that really value a very trusted network but are not necessarily great at expanding beyond who they know.

So, the purest will only connect with someone they met, or they’ve talked to. Anyone else they’ll completely ignore without any conversation. To me, that’s like going to a networking event, I’d make a beeline for you Debbie, we would talk the whole time and not meet anyone new. We could have just gone for lunch.

There’s got to be this hybrid approach. I am a networker and I want to engage. The good news is you still don’t have to connect with everyone to be a good networker because LinkedIn allows you to reply to a connection request without accepting it and that’s where I think it’s really important.

So, if you’re on the fence with someone and you’re not sure, you don’t have to accept but don’t ignore them. Reply “thank you so much for your connection request. Typically, I only connect with people I know. May I ask how you found me?”

Debbie: That’s a perfect way to respond. I love that.

Brynne: Yay.

Debbie: No, really. It makes a lot of sense because you get a request you don’t know the person from Adam and yet, I think it’s just very polite to do what you say. “Could you give me a sense of why you’d like to connect?”

Brynne: Yea. And there may be opportunities in there even if you don’t recognize it. I had one client who was a complete purist. He wasn’t even ignoring. He was ignoring



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but not clicking ignore. So, he had like 200 over the period of a couple of years of outstanding connection requests. And we went through and did that, and he got a reply from someone who had a very minimal profile that didn't even have a company that she was working for, a new picture, so he ignored it. But when we replied and sent that exact message, and ask "how you found me?" He replied, "my boss was looking for..." he's a project manager for manufacturing. "My boss was looking for a project manager and asked me to reach out to a few people on LinkedIn, but we got it covered. Thanks anyway."

Debbie: That speaks volumes.

Brynne: Yes. So, you don't want to ignore these folks. Now, there are a lot of bots out there. If you get a connection request from someone from Indonesia that has three connections and you're number four, you can, you know, unless you do business in Indonesia. There are definitely certain times where you are just completely sure that it's fake and I do ignore a lot of them.

Debbie: So, let me ask you this for official question number two. **You have something you call your centers of influence. Can you talk about what you call your centers of influence, how people can better utilize not only their own context but those of people they're going to meet?**

Brynne: So, centers of influence can range from literally your clients to vendors that sell into the same buyer but are not a competitor to networking partners or people that just have a great network may be in a location or an industry that you're looking to work within. And the key in LinkedIn, and you can do this in the free LinkedIn, in it's even better in Sales Navigator, but the free LinkedIn gives quite you a few filters to be able to search your connections' connections and identify who they know that you want to meet and bring that list to them.

Now, you've got to be careful. You don't want to bring a list of 30 names and say, "Hey, can you introduce me to these people?"

I could say "Hey Debbie. I notice you're connected to 18 people on LinkedIn I'm trying to get in front of. Can I run these names by you?" And we have a conversation and I can go one of two routes depending on my relationship. And I can either say "Hey, would you mind making an introduction? I can provide you a little paragraph and you could copy us both." Or, let's say there are nine people of the 18 that you say, "these would be great for you Brynne."



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I'm not going to ask you to make nine introductions, but I might say "Thanks so much for the feedback and your thoughts around who I should reach out to from this list. Would it be okay if I mentioned we had this conversation?"

Debbie: That's great. That's another great tip. I appreciate that.

Brynn: Yes. and now when I reach out, I might go to Debbie and say "I just got off the phone, your name came up in a call. She thought it made sense for me to reach out and introduce myself. Let's connect."

Debbie: I like that. That's good. So, let me ask you a third official question before we jump into the "prove it" part. **Since you have all the secret tips on LinkedIn, I was wondering if you could give us like one more secret about a way to use your contacts that may not be so obvious.**

Brynn: So, there are so many different ways to use your contacts, right? One of the things I would do is if I am looking to get into a specific company, I will go to the company page, I'll click on "all employees", then I'll go to "all filters" and then choose the titles of the people in the company that I might want to meet and choose the filter of second-degree connections. And so now, let's say I want to see all the marketing people at Aramark, I might do that search and there may be 300 marketers at Aramark, but when I go to the second-degree connection, there might be seven.

And then I can see exactly from 64,000 people down to the seven people that I want to meet that I have a shared connection with or more. And then I can look through those connections and figure out who might be able to make an introduction for me.

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Debbie: So, let's get to the "prove it" part and you already gave us a great example of someone who ignored all those invitations and lost a potential piece of business. **But do you have another example that you could share with us about someone who did Leverage their LinkedIn contacts in a way that did work to their advantage?**

Brynn: Oh, I have so many. I'm going to actually use my Aramark story since I'm on the call with you. When I originally heard that Aramark did the Challenger Sales Training and then they said, "Now what?" And the Challenger guys said, "Go get some LinkedIn training." So, one of the employees was out on LinkedIn and a couple of people mentioned me and I reached out and quickly he got back.



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“Thank you so much for your interest. We’re Aramark and you’re a little tiny company and I don’t think that there’s going to be much of a match here but appreciate you reaching out.” Well, I look to see and who her shared connections were. I’m going to say it was a Nicole Bradley and I look to see who she knew, and she knew a professor at Rutgers. There was a shared connection with me.

Once a year, I go down to the Rutgers and I do one class for this professor. So, I reached out to Professor Richmond and I said, “how do you know Nicole Bradley?” She said “she was my student. I love her. She was amazing”. “Do you mind just reaching out to her and putting in a nice little word?” She actually took her to lunch for me, which was so amazing.

Debbie: Wow. That is serious. Yes.

Brynne: And she was really excited to see Nicole again anyway. And so, she said “I’m not telling you to hire Brynne, but I’m saying just talk to her. It’s worth the half-hour.” So, I went in and I met with Nicole and her boss and at the end of the three hours that we met, from the half-hour, they handed me the Challenger sale and said “Okay, this is what we need. Go build it.”

Debbie: Terrific. So that’s a great one.

Brynne: Yeah.

Debbie: That’s good. Well, we’re out of time for this episode. Thank you for this. Here we go again with more LinkedIn homework. I really think that people need to carve out part of every week to respond to those introductions, to those inquiries, to update their profile. And I’m sure in the third episode you’re going to give us even more homework, right Brynne?

Brynne: I have so much homework, you would not even believe.

Debbie: Alright, so this is what we’re going to do. Everyone keep an ear out for the next episode with Brynn and for more episodes of ‘Prove It’ to gain more clarity in what’s happening in Marketing Communications today. As always, thanks for listening.

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