

-- Speaker 0 00:00:04 Make It Right. The manufacturing podcast

Speaker 1 00:00:10 Relationship building is the key to success in business because people do business with people they like and trust. So how can you build new relationships? When the traditional methods of meeting people at functions and conferences, et cetera, are simply not available to us now, online tools can help. And one of the key relationship building tools for business is LinkedIn. This week on make it right. Our guest has proven success using LinkedIn to build his network and those of his clients. And we're really pleased to have Justin Stephens, director of marketing at Kaitech Automation as our guests. Welcome to the podcast, Justin. Good to see you again.

Speaker 2 00:00:49 I am absolutely thrilled to be here. Thanks for having me.

Speaker 1 00:00:53 Oh, it's our pleasure. And Kevin Snook as always is joining us. Hi, Kevin, how are you? Hi, Janet. Thank you very much. Good. So this is an exciting conversation because you know, I use LinkedIn all the time, but I never know if I'm using it properly. So Justin you've been down this path. Tell me, when did you discover the power of LinkedIn for relationship building?

Speaker 2 00:01:18 Such a great question. I like you I've been using LinkedIn for a long time and it is a fabulous tool for, uh, specifically for business to business sales. Right? And my history, I spent 10 years running a sales training franchise. So I've been in and out of it. And when I first started using LinkedIn, I did what probably a lot of you have experienced, which is you go and you connect with someone and then you send them your pitch and hope that they jump on a meeting with you right now. That is the most unattractive and worst way to use LinkedIn in my opinion, because who wants to be pitched. And let me ask you this, when you get those connection requests, can you tell if someone's going to pitch you right away, most of the time based on their name and that little title right under it and the message they send, you can tell how soon you're going to get your pitch.

Speaker 2 00:02:31 And so you want to make sure that's not you, right? If you really want to build relationships, you've got to approach LinkedIn from a totally new standpoint. And that's what I've learned. I had the question was when did I figure this out? Honestly, I figured out how to switch from the immediate pitch to the longterm success that I've been using about four or five months ago. And it has made a world of difference. And so what, what you need to do is you need to realize LinkedIn is the new networking event that everybody's invited to. It's going on 24 hours a day, seven days a week. And you get to network. Whenever you have time, you don't have to go budget. Hey, I've got to be at this event for an hour. At this time I got to drive. You don't have to deal with any of that.

Speaker 2 00:03:38 If you play it right now, in order for a networking event to be successful, there's two things that have to happen. So the first thing in order to be successful at networking is you've got to show up. You've got to be there, right? Just knowing about an event does nothing for you. So when it comes to LinkedIn, showing up just means sharing what you're doing. It can be, it can be your family. It can be your friends. You need to put the business lesson you learned through that interaction with them, but it can be anything you've just got to be present. The second thing to make networking effective is you've got to participate. You've got to be there and engage with other people. So just putting out your own stuff, isn't enough. You've got to go like and engage and comment on other people's stuff.

Speaker 1 00:04:46 So let me ask you this. Is it, um, should you really be thinking about LinkedIn in the same way that you would approach somebody at a conference or whatever? Just, you know, you walk up to them, you hear them talking about something and you kind of go, Hey, you know, I have a comment on that. Do you kind of use the same strategy? It's all about humanity, right. But, but how do you actually get out there and know what's the right thing to say, to get people, to connect with you?

Speaker 2 00:05:16 So my first piece of advice is stop worrying about the right or wrong thing to say. So in business, in life in general, people always look for what is right versus what is wrong. There --

-- is no right or wrong. There's only what's working and what's not working. Like when it comes to manufacturing, you're looking at your lines and saying, all right, uh, we're getting the throughput. But look at all these rejects, we're getting, we've got to figure out how to make this work better. So that's the first thing I would say is, yes, you treat it just like another networking event. And you have to be willing to put your nose into a conversation without being invited. And that's one of the hardest things for a lot of people is to put their nose in that conversation, especially in light of networking. I don't know about you, but I, at first, when I started going to conferences, I would kind of hang back a few feet from the group and I've listened in and I'd be like, Oh, I, I don't want to seem like an idiot. Well, you've got to put yourself out there in order to build these relationships. So that is the first thing I would say is get comfortable. Just doing what your gut tells you.

Speaker 1 00:06:50 Okay. So you can't be a LinkedIn wallflower. Like you can't be a wallflower at a conference. Exactly. Right. You just got to get in there, man. Get in there and get dirty. Okay. So who should actually be using this tool for relationship building? I mean, we're talking to manufacturing business leaders here, right. But who can be using this? Everybody?

Speaker 2 00:07:16 Absolutely. Everybody and LinkedIn is so powerful. And my opinion there's a LinkedIn sells a premium service called sales navigator. And it is one of the best investments any business professional can make when it comes to building their relationships, if they use it well. Okay. And the main difference, just so everybody knows LinkedIn controls your newsfeed. Like the algorithm goes and says, Hey, this is getting a lot of engagement. Let's put this in front of them. I think Justin will enjoy this. I think Justin. Right. Great. And I love it. In sales navigator, you are paying to control that newsfeed so you can go pick strategic relationship. So I've got a couple different lists that I am personally engaging with and I engage with their content on a regular basis. Uh, so I have strategic relationships and it may be about nothing, but I just want them to know who I am.

Speaker 2 00:08:28 And I want to get to know who they are. Uh, I've got different core clients that we want to get into and build those relationships. I've got different, uh, investors that we're building relationships with because you don't want to need a relationship and not have anyone. So right now you need to be thinking about what are those relationships that I do need? Where can I find them and how can I nurture it right now? How can I figure out how to build that relationship? It's just like, when you go try to get money, right. When you try to get money, if you don't have any connections, it can be really hard. But if you're best friends with JP Morgan or whoever, the owner of Chase's, it's like, Hey, can I borrow a billion dollars? Oh sure. Here you go. Right. You want to build those relationships well, before you need them not wait until after the fact and hope they come through.

Speaker 1 00:09:37 Okay. So how do you find these people that you want to connect with?

Speaker 2 00:09:43 Great question. You've got to go hunting. You've got to go looking and where that starts is, what relationships do you need to build? So for example, another way you could use LinkedIn to build relationships. Let's say you're an employee of Nestle and you would like to get up into the top ranks within Netflix. I would go engage with all of the upper leadership within the organization. And then I would comment and like their stuff whenever they put it out, you know, who's going to recognize your name. When that promotion comes up, the people who can give it right. It makes a ton of sense. And far too often, we think, how can I get, how can I get a sale in the next month? How can I get this prospect to do something for me right away, LinkedIn, I have found if you play the long-term game will be way more successful. I've just in the last six months, I've got some crucial meetings and introductions into huge organizations that really, I would never be at the same networking event with them. At least not at this stage in our company's life. Right. But we're able to build those relationships because they have 10 minutes to jump on LinkedIn and I have 10 minutes --

-- to engage on LinkedIn. Does that make sense?

Speaker 1 00:11:27 Huge sense. Makes huge sense. So I guess my next question is, uh, if you're a business leader and you're looking for connections, you need to be on there and in order to, to go out and make those connections, but also have people connect with you. What about business leaders that just aren't on LinkedIn or I guess actually, maybe that's not really question, but I guess maybe the question is, are most business leaders on LinkedIn?

Speaker 2 00:12:00 It is a fantastic question. And I would say probably 60 to 70% are. And one of the reasons why a lot of people don't get on LinkedIn or get on LinkedIn and then stop is because they feel like it's the exact same experience as Facebook and Twitter. And everybody's out there trying to pitch him. And my opinion, I'm biased because it is my opinion. I think a lot of people misuse, LinkedIn and miss a lot of the power behind it, by what I said earlier, just going out and spamming what they do. If you treat it has that ongoing conference. If you treat it as that ongoing networking experience, you can get a ton of value. You can build relationships, you can build a following. And when you have a following, you can direct that following anywhere you want to go. So if we're speaking to manufacturers, every manufacturer needs a relationship, right?

Speaker 2 00:13:14 Let's say, let's say your trying to get into Walmart, right? LinkedIn would be a great place to go engage with the Walmart buyers. Start building the relationship there. Let's say you need a strategic partner. Um, someone else who does a similar product or service, LinkedIn's a great way to go find them first. You've got to identify what you need. So that's the key you asked about connecting with people. You've got to identify what you need, maybe not today, but in the future, look at your growth plan. Look at where you want to go. What are you going to need down the road? Do you want to put in a new plan? It could be that you want investors who are going to buy you. So on LinkedIn, you can go do a search for investors and just start connecting with them and send what I would do.

Speaker 2 00:14:15 If I were in your shoes and looking to sell, eventually I would go on LinkedIn. I would create a list of investors. I sent them a connection request and in the body, I would say, Hey, Steve, I am in the manufacturing space. This is what we make. I am eventually planning on selling my business. And I just like to start building a relationship with you in case it would be a good fit. Would you be open to connecting on LinkedIn? You know, how many businesses just closed down because they don't know who to sell to or where to sell to any business on the planet can do that. And you could have people compete with you to buy your business. And when that happens, price, typically doesn't negotiate it down. Just say,

Speaker 1 00:15:15 Kevin. Yeah, go ahead.

Speaker 3 00:15:17 Yeah. And Justin, I love what you've been saying on here. And I know that you and I have talked about this before as well. And, um, you've really helped me with looking at LinkedIn in a different way. And for me, it's really all about what you said, the long-term relationships. This is not about getting on there to sell something. It's not even about getting on there just to, just to meet. And chit-chat, it's really building strategic relationships over a longer period of time and everywhere. All of us need that. You know, the, the world works through collaboration, right? And not, and this is not a direct competitive environment. This is not a direct sales environment. This is really about building collaborative relationships and, and finding out what, what you're looking for or what would help you finding out what would help me and then seeing if there's a, if there's a fit there and I loved your comment around, you know, if you're at a, if you're at a conference and you're only ever listening, you're only getting one way communication. At some point, you need to be able to step out there a little bit and say, Hey look, um, and, and your, your idea on that last comment around transparency, this is what I'm here for. I just want to let you know, and I am building this over a long period of time. And there's nothing right now that I want from you, but why don't we get connected and see if we can help each other out in the future. I love that approach. --

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Speaker 1 00:16:41 I think that's perfect because that shows the transparency on your part saying, yeah, you know, I'm not just randomly connecting with you just because I may want something from you in the future, but I'm a person in Europe person and let's, let's see if we can build something great here. And every it's very clear right from the word go, why you're doing that outreach. Right. So it's perfect. Justin, I want to ask you, how long does it take to do this, right? You say, you have to be present. You have to be out there. You have to engage. If I'm a busy manufacturing leader, how much time am I dedicating to LinkedIn on a, is it daily? Is it weekly? Is it hourly basis? Tell me

Speaker 2 00:17:27 Great question. So it definitely depends on your role within the organization and what you're trying to do. So if you are a CEO, COO of a manufacturing company, I would recommend take maybe an hour, a quarter and figure out, alright, what are those relationships I need to build? What are those things I need to do? Right? Who do I need to know? And then put together a quick strategy. It doesn't have to be in depth and then spend 10 minutes every other day. Like I'm talking. Have you ever been sitting in a doctor's office? Have you ever been waiting to pick up your prescription? Have you ever been to the bathroom? Like all of these places are great places to take 10 minutes and just engage with other people. And then you get that dual allocation of resources where, I mean, most people scroll Facebook anyway, when they're doing that. Right. So just change it from some social meaningless scrolling to something targeted, that's going to help your future.

Speaker 1 00:18:54 Okay. I want you to share a success story about how this has really worked well for you or somebody that you know.

Speaker 2 00:19:02 Okay, perfect. So, um, I, this was, and this is early in the relationship, right? Um, but about Oh a week ago, what was it? I was talking with you, Kevin on zoom when it happened. Um, about a week ago, I came across a post from the president of Chobani, uh, and president and COO, which would be a huge account for us and an awesome relationship to foster. And so I, this post showed up and I wasn't targeting him, but I was targeting some of the other people in the company. And I was like, what? What's the worst that can happen. So I went and I commented on his post and then I commented on another post. And then I sent him a friend request, I connection request and said, Hey, I love what you guys are doing at Shabani. I'd like to follow along, would you be open to connecting?

Speaker 2 00:20:06 And he accepted my connection request. And then on the next had time, I engaged with him. He then clicked on my profile and read through my profile. So I have yet to ask anything of him, because I don't have a specific ask to ask yet. And the relationship is still early, but he now knows who I am. He knows what we do. B another thing, how your LinkedIn profile is set up, all right. You need to make sure that's driving people wherever want to drive them. Like, if that's, Hey, I'm looking to buy a business, Hey, I'm trying to sell my business wherever you're trying to drive people. Your LinkedIn profile is your sales page. Like that's where you sell on comment. You just put yourself out there. You don't have to try and get someone to buy or do anything when you're calming, you just have to try and get them on your profile.

Speaker 2 00:21:16 And that's where you can strategically line out who you are, what you do and why you're on LinkedIn, which again, it's not working platform. No one goes there not to do, but the right, you're not, you don't go to a conference not to learn or not to see what there is. So just put it out there and have that very clear call to action. So now the president of Chobani knows I am a person in the world and as I continue to, so, like I said, sales navigator lets you control your newsfeed. So any time he posts anything or comments on anything or any of that, I get notified. And I comment on his posts and like his posts. And I do that. Uh, Kevin is one of those strategic relationships. I don't even, I just like Kevin he's, he's a nice guy. So he's also a nice guy. I engaged with Kevin it. Right. And I engage with this stuff whenever you post it. And Kevin, so let me ask you this. How does that make you feel?

Speaker 3 00:22:42 Yeah, it feels great. --

-- You you'll write the we're all there. We're all there for a purpose. Right. And, and being recognized and being seen is one of the core human needs. That's what we're on there for. And uh, when Janet, when you asked for a specific example, I was thinking back and in my connections and um, there's been one colleague or one person on LinkedIn that I've kept a connection with for about four years. And uh, when, uh, when COVID hit and all of our worlds went upside down and as a, and as consultants, we couldn't travel to other countries anymore. Um, you know, all of a sudden things are changing and I'm one of these contacts put me in contact with somebody else. And I hadn't done any work with him before, but all of a sudden he put me in contact with somebody in North America. And now I have a client in North America that we work on a virtual relationship with. Now we had never done any business. I'd never made an ask of him. He'd never made an ask of me. Um, but like Justin said, at the right time, you've got people on hand who are there and things just happen, but they don't happen if you're not there and you're not making those connections.

Speaker 1 00:23:56 So Justin, you had mentioned, um, earlier the power of the profile. Now I've interviewed people in the past about, um, the power of building your profile properly. It has to be up to date. You got to have your picture on there. You've got to have your real title. What else needs to be on that profile? So people know that you're the right connection for you.

Speaker 2 00:24:22 So my personal opinion, you've got to share who you are, right? Share part of your story. A lot of people run your profile like a resume, which that's not bad. It's not right or wrong.

Speaker 1 00:24:42 Yeah. But I'm going to quickly interrupt here. Are you talking be a little bit personal, like give a little personal side. Is that what you're talking

Speaker 2 00:24:50 A hundred percent, right. I I'm a father of three. I've been married 10 years and I can't imagine life without my kids. Right. You need to say stuff like that because people buy from people no matter who it is or where it is. If someone doesn't like you, they are not going to buy from you. Right. Have you ever, let me ask you this, have you ever bought something in spite? In spite of the salesperson? Yeah. Right? It's you need something and the salesperson sucks and they're pushy and they're a jerk, but you need it. See, that's not what we want to do. We want to make sure they see who we are. Because again, this is about relationship building. Think about when you're out networking and you tell people a little bit about your family life, right? A little bit about what you do. And so I always include a little bit about me, my story, my journey, what am I, what is my ultimate goal? What is my ultimate outcome? And then I always talk about what are the problems. And again, it comes down to what are you trying to attract? Right? So what are the problems that you're trying to solve for those people that you're trying to attract? So for me, we work with people who are frustrated. They can't find labor when it comes to throughput and they're struggling keeping their lines up because they just

Speaker 3 00:26:44 Can't find the hands to do the work and automation. We do robotic integration, we do conveyors and stuff like that. And so it's not, Hey, this is what we do. I do include the way we do this is through robotic and integration and conveyor. But it's more about the problems they're experiencing right now. We work with people who are frustrated. They can't find labor. They're concerned because the turnover, when they do find labor is so high, they just can't keep afford to keep going through it. And they're looking for options and don't know where to go. Right. It's not about, Hey, you need a robot. Hey, do you have this problem?

Speaker 1 00:27:32 We can solve it. Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Kevin, do you have any more comments for your adjusted?

Speaker 3 00:27:38 Yeah, definitely. And I, I want to use that as an example, Justin and I got to talk to each other. Um, I'm not even sure how we first got together. I think, I think I had put some content out and Justin had commented on it. And then we started talking a little bit and then Justin said to me, Hey, you want to jump on a call and talk about something completely not manufacturing related. And that was what we did. And as we di --

-- d that, I checked out Justin's profile. I looked at some of the videos from the work that he did because I was kind of interested in and who I was going to be talking to. But there was, there was no interest at that point for me to go in and look at automation, end of line solutions for manufacturers. Now, the fact is I work with hundreds of manufacturers who need end of life solutions.

Speaker 3 00:28:30 But because I discovered that myself and the Justin and his company are experts at that, then all of a sudden I'm feeling like, Hey, look, there may be something here else that we can work on other than just helping each other with LinkedIn or whatever it is. Right. And so that's why when you discover that pot, it becomes so much more powerful than having someone trying to stop it down your throat. Right? And this, this is to me, that's the power of relationships first and Justin's a master of that. And so, um, you know, getting your profile right, but making sure there's something on there that explains clearly what you do as well in case that might be of interest to somebody.

Speaker 1 00:29:16 And I know people that actually, uh, connect on hobbies first, they find out, you know, what you're interested in and they talk to people about their hobbies. And then they're also looking to see what kind of business they're in and how they can connect and maybe build the relationship and take it down that path as well. So there's many things, but you, I, I guess my key takeaways that I'm taking and I'm going to get you to give me your key takeaways, but you have to be personal. You have to be willing to share. You have to be interested in the need of that other person. When you get to that point where there is that, Hey, maybe we can help you with that. Um, and you have to be present, right? So those are, those are what I'm getting from this whole, um, this whole conversation. But Justin, from your standpoint, if you're to leave, uh, business leaders with a couple of comments, what are your key takeaways? Get in there. And, and you're on LinkedIn, what do you need them to do?

Speaker 2 00:30:18 So my first piece of advice is don't, over-complicate it? When never someone starts with something new, they tend to go, I'm going all in awe, going all in. I'm going to post every cat. I'm going to comment on everything. Don't do it. Okay. If you don't have a LinkedIn account, here's going all in, in my opinion, post once a month, once a month, comment on five posts a month, make it easy to win. And this is, this is true of goal setting, right? Most of us, when we set goals, we say, we're doing a billion dollars this year. I know we did 500,000 last year, but we're going right. And we set these goals that we use as a club to beat ourselves with. And then as we're getting closer to the goal. So let's say we did that. We did five 50,000 this year set a goal for a billion.

Speaker 2 00:31:27 And at the end of the year, we only doubled to a hundred thousand. Did you really lose? But that wasn't your goal. So instead you pick that club up and you bash your head in and you're like, right, make it easy to win because I promise you, if you had set your goal at 60,000 and then in February, you blew through it. That's what you're not going to be like at all. I met my goal, go, you're going to be like, Oh, to right. You're going to keep powering through. And as entrepreneurs, we do that all the time. We set these goals that are deemed moralizing and we can handle it. Entrepreneur can our employees paint, they get demoralized, they get upset, they get frustrated. And that lowers morale. So if you really want to do this well set a goal that you are going to blow through.

Speaker 2 00:32:40 The goal could be, I'm going to sign into LinkedIn once a week. Right. Don't make it so complicated that you can't get there. And then when you do get there, you're always going to go further. When I first started working out, I hated working out, growing up. I just, I never did it right. When I first started, I set a goal to go to the gym, like just to the parking lot. I didn't even have to go in, but over time it got to the point where I'd go into the gym and get like a drink of water and then I'd leave. And then over time I actually worked out. So I made it easier on me to hit those goals. So that's my number one piece of advice. Don't go all in and think it's going to make this huge radical shift in your behaviors --

-- and your habits overnight because it just won't so set manageable goals and then kick them in the ass.

Speaker 1 00:33:52 Any final comments from you, Kevin?

Speaker 3 00:33:57 No, I, I, I love this conversation, John it, and um, for me it was, you picked up the bids be present on that, participate, be personable and most, most of all give value to people, right. Actually help people out. And, and when you're helping people out, then, then you, you you're magnetizing them. Right. That relationship is there. And so whatever it is that you can do to help, but it doesn't have to be related to your business. There's some way when we meet people, you know, sometimes it's just helping them get a drink at the bar, right. It can become a completely different. Um, and so it doesn't have to be business related, but if you can help people out there, especially processy there and, uh, and you build good long-term relationships. I think that that would be the key for me. This is a long-term relationship building tool. This is not a sales tool. Okay.

Speaker 1 00:34:48 Justin, you had your hand up again.

Speaker 2 00:34:50 I did. And so one other thing that I want to just encourage everyone, most people are very withheld with their introductions. Okay. One of the best ways to build relationships is to look for what is something, the relationship you're trying to foster needs and introduce them to a resource that could help. And you don't lose anything by making a referral and you have everything to gain. So be generous with your referrals and introductions.

Speaker 1 00:35:32 Hmm. Oh, one more from Kevin. No,

Speaker 2 00:35:39 That's perfect advice. Okay,

Speaker 1 00:35:42 Gentlemen, thank you so much for your time today. This is a great conversation, Justin. Uh, we'd love to have you on again, and, uh, I'm going to go and take some of your tips and, uh, see what happens with my LinkedIn profile over the next couple of weeks and see if I can start making something happen, but it's been an absolute pleasure to talk to you.

Speaker 2 00:36:03 Thank you so much for having me. If I can ever help anybody, let me know. I'm here to serve.

Speaker 1 00:36:09 Okay, great. Have a great week, Kevin. Thank you. Good to see you again.

Speaker 2 00:36:14 Thank you, John. It's been great. Okay.

Speaker 1 00:36:17 That is our show this week. And if you're interested in finding our good friend here, Justin Stephens, he's the director of marketing at Kaitech Automation and yup. You're going to find him on LinkedIn and you will also find Kevin Snook leadership advisor and author of the best-selling book and Make It Right. Five steps to Align Your manufacturing Business from the front line to the bottom line. I'm Janet Eastman and I am also on LinkedIn. Don't probably not doing it quite the way I'm supposed to. How do you raise that as our show this week? Thank you so much for joining us and we'll see you again.

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