

Special Report:
Creating A Compelling and Effective
Online Networking Profile

About the Author



Soni Pitts is the Assistant Community Coach for the [Social Capital and Networking Community](#) at CoachVille. She works alongside the Community Coach, Kim George, and the Community Visionary, Business Network International founder Dr. Ivan Misner, to bring quality training in the art of building strong relationships and effective networking skills to the members of their community.

Soni currently lives in Asheville, NC where she also works as a writer, tending her online ventures by the flickering light of a computer monitor. When she first started her coaching career, she quickly learned the value of having a strong and vibrant online network and had to develop these skills on the fly by the sink-or-swim method. Hoping to save others from the same fate, she enjoys using what she learned to help other cyber-inclined solopreneurs and business people make the transition from physical to online networking a little easier.

Soni says: "If you are interested in checking out my work at the Social Capital and Networking Community, or want to know more about our eCourse or Live Teleclass curriculum, just click through the links above or check out the blurb at the end of this report for more information. We'd love to have you!"

Ryze Online Networking Site profile

<http://www.ryze.com/go/sonipitts>

LinkedIn profile

<http://tinyurl.com/9k5yd>

Coachville profile

<http://tinyurl.com/dj3nm>

Creating a Compelling and Effective Online Networking Profile

You are what you write

Creating a dynamic, effective and compelling profile is the foundation for a successful online networking strategy. Your profile is your showroom - you need to determine your audience, arrange your goods to best effect and, *most importantly*, pare down your presentation until it is a highly targeted, powerful and focused message. Remember - as far as your visitors are concerned, your profile *is* you.

Do it right and there's no limit to your online networking success. Do it wrong and the question you'll raise is that if you can't even be bothered to do a good job for yourself, so why should anybody else even think of letting you loose on their project?

The Biggest Mistake People Make When Creating An Online Profile

"Think of your profile as a marketing piece, rather than a repository for your life's story."

The biggest mistakes common to on online networking sites is what I call the "kitchen sink profile." Simply put, this is the practice of throwing anything and everything you can think of onto your profile, regardless of how it supports your purpose in using this site or service. Not only is this time consuming and disorganized on the user end, it is disconcerting and confusing on the visitor end.

Your profile needs to be clear, succinct and to the point. On the Internet, people's attention span is short and getting shorter. It's also geared to be attracted to the brightest, shiniest and most interesting moving object in the area. If your profile reads more like Moby Dick than an editorial cartoon, you're just so much cluttered scenery in the visitor's peripheral vision as they whiz on past to the next guy on their list.

Cut, cut and cut again. Stick to what's immediately pertinent and visually interesting. If a complete account is necessary for what you're trying to achieve, don't leave out vital information that a prospect may need. But instead of cluttering up your profile with it, save it for pre-screened interested parties by creating a separate detailed version of your qualifications and related history as a pdf file or web page and link to it from your profile.

Think of your profile as a marketing piece, rather than a repository for your life's story. This is your visitor's first (and possibly last) chance to meet you and determine whether or not you are what they are looking for. Don't blow it by hiding your brilliant light under

a bushel of composted history.

3-Step Plan for Creating a Killer Profile

Creating a killer profile is as simple as 1-2-3. Use this process to create a profile that works *for* you, rather than *against* you.

- **Define your target audience.** Know who you are trying to reach and why, and what you want them to do when they find you *before* you set out to find them. What magazines and blogs do they read? What tone or messages they are likely to respond to? Why should they care about you and your needs?

Don't try to catch every single fish that's out there. Bait your hook for one or maybe two closely related type of targets at a time. If you are networking for a variety of reasons at the same time, you'll probably be better off creating several tightly focused profiles on different networking sites and services, with each profile and site carefully chosen to attract a specific type of target, rather than by putting a broad, "catch-all" profile on one or two general sites.

- **Put your best foot forward.** Make sure that the information in your profile is up to date, accurate and shows your best side by following this checklist:
 - ❑ **Use a quality, professional photo** - Don't use the photo from your old driver's license, a scanned-in snapshot from your last company picnic or a group photo. And please, unless you run a doggy day care, sell children's toys and or can otherwise relate the background definitively and positively to your work, don't use a photo that includes extraneous items such as pets, kids, hobbies, touristy landmarks and so on.
 - ❑ **Make sure all your contact information is professional and businesslike** - All of your personal info should look as if a real, qualified professional stands behind it, not as if some fly-by-night pop-up shop is running the show out of his or her guest bedroom.
 - Use a professional-sounding address. If your home address sounds un-businesslike, you can rent a business address quite cheaply from any centralized shipping service like Mailboxes Etc. And keep in mind that this is the Internet - using your home address may only be unprofessional but in this day and age it can actually be dangerous.

"Know who you are trying to reach and why, and what you want them to do when they find you before you set out to find them."

"Make sure your copy is clear about the purpose of your networking and why your visitors should care."

- Ditto for your email address. No one in their right mind is going to trust their money or their project to someone who sends them mail from *hotty123@freeservice.com*. Most web service hosting packages these days come with free domain-named emails. Use them. If you must use a free service, at least choose a professional-sounding account name, like *bsmith* or *ABCwidgets*.
- Get a second phone line and number for all business calls. Nothing kills a sale quicker than having an important business call answered by your five-year-old who's old enough to know how to pick up the phone, but young enough to just set it down and wander off after a few initial burbles.
- **Tailor your professional history** - Do include relevant work history, background, skills, responsibilities and successes that play up your strong points. Don't include your high-school summer jobs (unless highly relevant and smashingly successful), your unrelated side ventures, your failed get-rich-quick schemes (unless there is a significant reason to do so), or other neutral-negative information (information that at best will have no effect and at worst will create a bad impression)
- **Use those "extra information" fields strategically** - Most profile pages have lots of sometimes-searchable input fields for extra information, from awards to hair color to hobbies. Do take advantage of these to boost your credibility and include items that might be useful to know but not have a place elsewhere. Don't use them to share personal information that serves no purpose other than to fill space or cater to exhibitionist tendencies.
- **Keep it simple & succinct** - This is neither the time nor the place to write the Great American Novel. Make sure your copy is clear about the purpose of your networking and why your visitors should care. Get clear early on in the process about what you are trying to achieve and laser-tune your message and profile to target that purpose and that purpose only. Then use those guidelines to create seriously powerful marketing copy within those parameters.

And don't forget to include an action statement. Do you want interested parties to call you, visit your website, download your resume - what? Give them something clear, concrete and easy to do and they're more likely to take the initiative to do it.

Pulling It All Together

Once you've filled in all the information you have on hand, look at your profile through the eyes of your target audience.

- Have you addressed everything that they need to know, without piling on unnecessary or distracting extras?
- Have you put the best spin on what is there and found a way to positively address any gaps in your qualifications or information that may be questioned?
- Have you presented your information in a compelling and positively charged manner?

"Don't get so caught up in content that you forget about presentation - the way your material is presented is at least as important as the copy itself."

Don't post your profile until you can answer each of those questions in the affirmative. A half-done profile is worse than no profile at all - your visitors have no way of knowing that it's a work in progress and not your best possible work - so don't "go live" until you've got a profile that presents you exactly the way you deserve to be seen.

Here's a time saving trip: Instead of reinventing the wheel every time you create a new profile and entering all the information from scratch, create a folder on your computer to hold your profile information. Include resumes, testimonials or endorsements, photos, awards, taglines, marketing text, sales copy, email signatures, logos and other items that might come in handy when building a strong profile. When your information changes, update your files, then use these materials to update your various profiles as needed.

Profile Formats

Don't get so caught up in content that you forget about presentation - the way your material is presented is at least as important as the copy itself. And remember that just because everybody does it one way doesn't mean that's the only way to do it. Step outside the norm and arrange your information in a way that's more effective than a straightforward job history - give your profile some zing. Here are some examples of profile formats:

- **Informational** - This type of profile, in which the information is presented in a linear and unembellished manner, is the most common profile you'll see. On the upside, it's easy to create and has the benefit of being absolutely familiar and acceptable to everyone. On the downside, it is also the most generic and boring style of profile around. Think of this sort of profile as the standard

resume - the information is usually chronological, cut-and-dried and presented in a "just the facts, ma'am" configuration and tone. Nothing wrong with it, but nothing special, either.

- **Skills-Based** - Instead of dividing your work history up by job, consider categorizing your achievements and abilities by skill type. For example, instead of simply listing your prior jobs as a webmaster for various organizations, create headings for web content management, design, coding and so on, and under each heading describe the specifics such as programs used, certifications held, years of experience, position held and other important data.
- **Sales Pitch** - You know you're the right person for the job - why not simply cut to the chase and simply sell yourself or your services? Replace the boring old resume listings with highly targeted marketing copy, just like you would when creating a sales page or mailing. Just be sure you can pull it off (or hire someone who can). Persuasive copy is an art, and when done well it works like nothing else. But if it's done poorly it can come off as smarmy, offensive or just plain irritating.
- **Portfolio** - Let's face it - if you or your work is creative in nature, the information in a dry work history barely scratches the surface of who you are and what you have to offer your visitors. On the other hand, what demonstrates your talent and showcase the breadth of your abilities better than a portfolio? Downloads, galleries, thumbnail images, scanned clips, samples of your work - put it all online and design a creative and masterful profile around this treasure-filled hoard. And this approach isn't just for artists, either. Anyone who's ever worked on a project, created materials for their job or in any way, shape or form produced anything tangible has the makings of a portfolio profile. What's that, you say - all your work is intangible or service-based? You can use this style as well. Just link to case studies, whitepapers, presentations and testimonials instead.
- **The Want Ad** - Hey, you know what you want. Why waste time hoping someone else figures it out? Instead of selling yourself or your resume, consider writing a "want ad" that clearly states what you want and what you have to offer in exchange. Looking for work or selling a product or service? Write an ad featuring your ideal job, client or buyer. Hiring or buying? You can advertise for the perfect vendor, service provider or potential hire.

"...why paddle around in the shallow end of "been there, done that" when you can make a splash with something new and exciting?"

Of course, these are just a few examples of what's possible. Some styles will work better on certain sites and services, and for certain purposes, than others. But hey, why paddle around in the shallow end of "been there, done that" when you can make a splash with something new and exciting? And don't overlook the possibilities of combining two or more styles to highlight various aspects of your background. Imagine how a solopreneur with a ton of information products might benefit from a Sales-Portfolio profile! Or how a career shifter could use a Skills Based-Want Ad profile to

demonstrate how abilities gained in her old field would benefit a company in her new field of interest, and to make sure that her work history doesn't draw offers from companies in her previous career.

Make It Easy To Find You

Now that you've got your information gathered, sorted, tightened and working it's mojo, it's time to go back through and tweak for keywords and searchability. Read through your profile as if you were your target audience and make sure you're using terms they would use to search for you. It's no good being the best "pre-owned automobile" salesman if all your potential buyers are looking for "used cars." Replace bland, generic words with highly targeted keywords (and continually update them as they change). And don't forget to optimize your content for search *phrases* as well as search words. That will help you create even greater visibility.

Oh, and a quick word on creative job titles. If you are using, or have been given, a unique or "fun" title (Queen of Distribution, Office Overlord, MailMaster, etc), remember that while it's fine to use them in your main copy, your email signature and your business card, keep them out of the searchable fields. Nobody will be using those terms when they're searching and you will lose potential connections. Replace them with the industry standard wherever necessary to ensure visibility and searchability.

"...your user profile is your billboard to the online business networking world."

Simply put, your user profile is your billboard to the online business networking world. Don't clutter it up with unprofessional kitsch. Don't use risk being passed over by using boring or unusual terms and descriptions. And don't make people guess how to find you, because with so much competition out there making it easy to find *them*, no one will bother.

In Cyberspace, No One Can Hear You Scream

The Internet is a big place, and it's sheer traffic load makes downtown Manhattan look like a ghost town. If you are to stand even a small chance of making the connections that will bring you the success you desire, then you have to take the initiative of placing yourself front and center of the rest of the crowd.

In online networking, your profile is your whistling, stamping, hand waving portal to the global market. Don't blow your chance by slapping up some half-baked, half-formed mess. Do it right the first time, schedule regular updates to review and tweak your copy, and always keep your eye out for the next opportunity to raise the bar on your presentation in terms of relevance, attractiveness and effectiveness!

You're on a roll - don't stop now!

Creating a compelling and effective profile is just one piece of the online networking puzzle. But there's much, much more you need to know if online networking is going to deliver its full success-boosting potential to your business activities.

Finally - A "Getting Started" Ebook Designed Specifically for the Online Networking Newbie!

Introducing *Online Business Networking 101*



I'll be honest - if you've been around the online networking sites for a while and are comfortable with your online networking skills, then this ebook is going to be far too basic for you.

However, if you're just now venturing into online networking, but don't know where to start or how to get going, then my ebook is the "online networking cheat sheet" you've been looking for - designed specifically to save you time, effort and the headache of trying to figure it all out by yourself!

Each of the five chapters in my ebook, *Online Business Networking 101*, walks you through the key concepts you'll need to master each subject, in the order you'll need to learn them.

Section 1: Online Networking: An Overview

The basics of online networking sites, plus the 5 rules you need to master in order to become an effective online networker.

Section 2: First Steps: Choosing The Right Tool For The Job

How to tell which types of online networking sites are right for you, and how know the best sites from the not-so-good alternatives.

Section 3: Getting Started - Learning The Rules of the Game and Creating an Effective Profile

The most common online networking "newbie" mistakes and how to avoid them, plus information on creating a compelling and effective profile.

Section 4: Getting Heard: Beating the Signal-To-Noise Ratio

Getting your message heard and understood over the din of the virtual marketplace.

Section 5: Blogworking: Networking in the Blogosphere

How blogs are changing the face of online networking - and how you can get in on the action!

Resource Kit: A section of helpful and informative links, plus an Online Business Networking Checklist to help you stay on track.

It's your call - you certainly don't need my help to sign up for a free online networking account, post your profile and start making friends. But if you're new to the whole concept of online networking or find all the options and potential pitfalls confusing and overwhelming, why reinvent the wheel as you're backing down the driveway? **My ebook teaches you all the basics you'll need to know in order to start networking online like a pro from day one!**

But wait, there's more! (I've always wanted to say that.)

Bonus #1: Go immediately from learning to doing!

To make sure that what you learn in the ebook sticks in the real world, this offer comes complete with a chapter-by-chapter workbook that gives you assignments to complete and questions to answer to help you master the basics of online networking.

Bonus #2: Go confidently from online to in person!

Of course, not all networking can be done online and eventually you're going to have to go out and meet people face to face. As an additional bonus, this offer also includes a Networking Event Checklist, which will ensure that you get the most of every physical networking event you attend.

Bonus #3: Go with assurance that you're off to a great start!

Just like learning any new skill, it can be scary to take off all on your own no matter how much information you have at hand. How can you be sure you're doing it right?

I'll tell you, that's how. As a special bonus available with this offer only, in your "thank you" email you will receive a coupon code entitling you to **a complete online networking profile audit and review**, for US\$15 - that's half the regular price of US\$30. I will give your chosen profile a complete and thorough review, using an extensive grading sheet and background information provided by you, then provide you with component-by-component comments and suggestions for improvements. **Check your "thank you" email after your purchase for the coupon code to redeem this bonus.**

Your Satisfaction is Guaranteed

Interested, but afraid of getting burned? Here's what others have had to say about this amazing resource after attending a beta testing teleclass workshop that introduced the ebook and the principles in it:

Soni is top notch as a presenter and has put together a very organized and valuable supporting document to help guide a person into a personalized plan for on-line marketing. Very informative and straight shooting.

Jana Rogers, Productivity Without Struggle
<http://www.janarogers.com>
ana@janarogers.com

Soni, I really loved your (Online Business Networking 101) workshop and I appreciate the wonderful and in-depth preparation. I would certainly recommend it to everybody who is confused about all these options and wants some guidance to choose, what suits his purposes best. Thank you very much!

Marion Froese
<http://www.marionfroese.de>
marion@marionfroese.de

I loved the written guide - it was so comprehensive with so much information and resources.

Susie Kong
<http://www.susiekong.com>

But you don't take their word on it - see for yourself, risk free!

I am convinced that this is the perfect resource for the online networker who's just starting out and who is confused by all the options and worried about the potential hidden dangers. And I absolutely believe that reading this ebook and using the workbook will give any "newbie" online networking the edge they need to start networking like a pro from the moment they open their account.

But if you give it a try and find that the information and exercises aren't helping you strengthen your online networking muscles and build a workable online networking strategy, then I'll cheerfully refund your money. It's as simple as that.

Get your copy now and start networking your way to success today!

Look, let's not get into that cheesy "pricing dance" where I plaster up some arbitrary and gasp-inducing high figure before letting you all in on the "unbelievably-low special one-time buy-it-now get-it-while-it's-hot" price (whew!) that the ebook actually sells for most of the time. That's just BS and we all know it - and, quite frankly, I don't feel like wasting your time or mine.

Plain and simple, this ebook package is yours for **everyday low price of US\$27**. Yeah, I could probably get more if I played the pricing-hype game, and I won't guarantee that the price will stay this low forever, but I think it's a fair price and I think you will too.

Of course, that US\$27 **includes** the Online Business Networking Workbook and the Networking Event Checklist, so you'll be completely prepared with everything you need to make your networking strategy a success on and offline.

Get Your Copy Now!

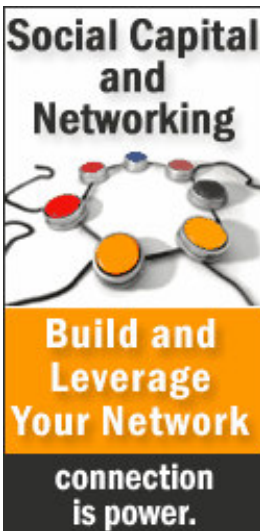
P.S.

What are you waiting for? You get the Online Business Networking 101 ebook **plus** the OBN 101 Workbook **plus** the Networking Event Checklist **plus** the half-price Online Networking Profile review **plus** a complete money-back guarantee if you're not completely satisfied. What more could you want? The keys to your success are out there on the Internet just waiting for you to show up and claim them. Don't let their potential go to waste.

P.P.S

Remember that your half-price Online Networking Profile Review coupon code will come in your "Thank You" email after you purchase the OBN101 Package. To ensure that you receive this email, which also includes contact information in the event you have a question or problem, please give a legitimate email when you make your purchase.

Order Now!



Are you A Networker...Or A Netshirker?

- Do you break out into a cold sweat at the thought of meeting new people – especially in a new and unfamiliar environment?
- When someone important-looking approaches you from across the room, do you start looking around for the person they're looking for...or for the nearest place to hide?
- Have you ever stumbled over your own name during a round of introductions?

The Social Capital and Networking Community is here to help!

Let's face it – unless you run the only funeral home in a 100-mile radius, your clients are not going to come to you. You have to go to them. The same goes for finding colleagues and partners who can work with you on large-scale projects or collaborations, and who can provide you with that Holy Grail of business building – a steady stream of pre-screened referrals.

In fact, in today's hyper-connected world, you can't even begin to build a successful business unless you first master the art of effective networking. Unfortunately, many business owners would rather chew their own arm off than attend a networking event full of people they've never met, while others would love to go but have no idea of what to do or how to do it once they get there.

If this sounds like you, then the Social Capital and Networking Community of CoachVille is the place to be. Not only is our community staffed by coaches who are networking pros, and who enjoy helping others make those vital connections, but our community Visionary, **Dr. Ivan Misner**, is a world-renowned networking guru and the founder of *Business Network International*, the world's largest referral organization. So if you're looking for people who live, love, and breathe networking – and can help you do the same – look no further.



Look ma, no stress – you can meet us online! You can tour the Social Capital and Networking Community and start learning how to make the connections that will make your business today – without shaking a single hand or trying to carry on a witty conversation over an unstable paper plate full of chips-n-dip. Our community offers tons of resources, an open forum for community discussion and support, and a monthly Networking Fearbuster call – all at no cost to you. And when you're ready to move up, we offer several well-priced packages of teleclasses and learning guides that will help you connect to the networker within.

[Get Started Now!](#)