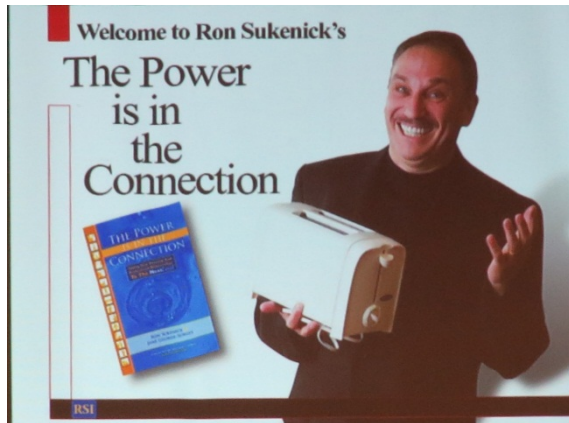




## The Power is in the Connection



Last week we had the pleasure to introduce Ron Sukenick as our dinner meeting speaker. Ron is a best-selling author and professional speaker who specializes in business networking and training.

For those of you who attended the meeting, he is also Bachelor #2! The primary topics that were covered included networking on LinkedIn and how to truly listen and engage with others.

One of the questions that was asked towards the end of the night was *“How do you approach a new customer that you want to work with which you don’t have any contacts with now?”* The answer from Ron was simple. He replied *“Don’t go in blind”* and one of the ways that you can accomplish this is by connecting via LinkedIn with people that work at the company. In this way you are able to start a conversation with someone at your target company, even if it isn’t your target individual.

To better explain this let’s say that you wanted to contact the Cocoa Cola Company to sell them Sugar but you don’t know anyone that works there. A good option would be to go on LinkedIn and see if you have any connections through friends and colleagues that work there. If you find that you’re connected through a colleague to an R&D Person at the Cocoa Cola Company you should contact them! Sure, they can’t agree to purchase sugar from you, but it’s a way to start a conversation and begin getting to know them and the company better.



Another option is to find someone more removed from you via LinkedIn. Sometimes you may have a friend of a friend that knows someone. LinkedIn has a convenient option to ask for an introduction through this person. Next time you need to approach a new customer or contact take a closer look at what this powerful networking tool can do for you!

Another topic that we covered was how to really listen and connect with people by fully engaging with them when they are speaking with you. The old adage says you have 2 ears but only 1 mouth and you should use them in the ratio given to you 2:1. We did an experiment at



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our table where we first had someone tell us about their passions and things they really care about in life and at the same time the other person “listening” was supposed to completely ignore them and seem as disinterested as possible. In fact Ron suggested that you could get up and leave the table while they were talking if you wanted to.



The response to this is a bit obvious and is an unpleasant feeling when you are speaking to someone and know that they aren’t listening to you. When we did the opposite and truly listened and paid attention without speaking or

interrupting, the feeling was terrific. It feels good to have people listen to you and you want to interact with them. This is something to keep in mind when working with others. Truly listening instead of talking about what you want all the time can pay big benefits with the level of social connection that you can build with others.

We hope you’ve enjoyed the dinner meetings so far this season, we have only one left before the summer break where we will conclude with the annual Tanner Lecture. We’re looking forward seeing you at your next event and networking further!

Glenn Bluemer  
CSIFT Chair Elect / Program Chair  
Barry Callebaut