

## GENERATIONAL PERSPECTIVE OF ONLINE NETWORKING

from Phyllis Weiss Haserot

# Practice Development Counsel

60 Sutton Place South  
New York, NY 10022  
212-593-1549

- Social networking is the perfect tool for getting associates to do what marketing professionals have been asking of them for years: keep in touch with classmates and other peers.
- Boomers are flocking to LinkedIn and Twitter trying to catch up with the social networking trends and tools. Many still use LinkedIn passively, fearing the time commitment or unsure of how to take advantage of the capabilities, but they are eager to learn how to use the features for business development/marketing.
- Boomers' participation on Facebook is steadily growing but not primarily with a business purpose unless they have a young target market or are using it for recruiting.
- Many or most LinkedIn groups appear to be cross-generational – a good opportunity for dialogue without stereotyping.
- With web 2.0 tools and activities, the user is in control. Employers are not in control of what employees do online when using their own technology. Freedom requires responsibility.
- Professionalism issues can arise. Firm leaders are leery of leaving Gen Y/Millennials unmonitored with access to web 2.0 sites. Some block access, but this tends to be counter-productive.
- Firms can channel Gen Y enthusiasm by harnessing creativity and social networking and tech skills for firm business development/marketing and recruiting. Make a junior associate the relevant committee co-chair.
- Take the online contacts offline when feasible to develop deeper relationships.
- Web 2.0 tips and techniques are a great reciprocal mentoring and reverse mentoring topic.
- Boomers worry about the online social networking time commitment taking away from work, live relationships and personal life. To Gen Y, social networking is integral to life.

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