

Social Networking for 2015: Create More Value for Others

By Michelle LaBrosse, CCPM, PMP®, PMI-ACP, Chief Cheetah and Founder of Cheetah Learning

In our first column of 2015, we're going to skip the talk about New Year's resolutions and ask you instead to think about "success." How do you define career success, and how do you know when you've attained it? Perhaps there's a particular salary level you'd like to reach, or maybe for you "career success" means working in your dream job. But think a little deeper. Say you get that dream job - what would it look like for you to reach your highest potential in that position? Here at Cheetah Learning, we tend to define "success" a little differently than the way most people use this term. We find that the value you create for others is a crucial part of your own career success. Regardless of your job type or position, there are numerous ways you can leverage your strengths to help others in your social network reach their personal and professional goals. In this article, we'll outline ways you can create more value for your "peers" in both your professional and personal life: your co-workers and, outside of work, your family and friends.

The first step in creating value for others is to assess the state of your current social network. Start by grabbing a pen and a blank piece of paper. In the center of the paper, draw a small circle with your name inside. Around the circle, write the names of the people (co-workers, supervisors, family, whoever) who you interact with most often in your daily life. Add layers to the circle of the other people less involved in your life. Then, draw circles around the names corresponding to the amount of influence they have in your life; make the circles bigger for those folks who have the most influence. These "big circles" are the people who play the biggest role in shaping your personal and professional success. When you create value for the people who have the most influence - and the most positive influence - in your life, you increase your own opportunities for success.

Creating value for your co-workers might seem insignificant - isn't the value you create for your clients, supervisors, and organization what really matters for your career? Here at Cheetah, we find that creating value for your co-workers is just as important for your professional success as is creating value for your superiors. This is because, as the cliché goes, "no man is an island." Even seemingly "individual" projects you take on at work almost always require some collaboration with others. Project success ultimately depends on your ability to work with others. To most successfully collaborate with others, we suggest approaching it from the perspective of, "what's in it for them?" Before you ask someone to help you with something, for example, pause for a minute to consider their point of view. If someone were to ask you for help on a project, how would you prefer to be asked: with "I need you to...", or with "I am working on X, and I could really use your expertise to do Y. Would you have time to help me with this?" This isn't just about being nice (though it's about that, too). When you develop positive collaborative relationships with your co-workers, you learn to work together on projects that build on each team member's unique strengths. Far from being a "waste of time," this effort you make to collaborate more intentionally with others will pay back dividends in terms of how fast you get projects done and how well you and your project team communicate with each other.

Second, we find that it's important to think about creating value for others beyond the work environment. One of our mantras here at Cheetah is that "life is a series of projects." And like any project you'll encounter in the work environment, projects in your personal life have stakeholders, requirements, and deadlines. It may seem silly to worry about getting "stakeholder buy-in" for your personal projects - let's say, for example, planning a Christmas party. Actually though, we find that getting stakeholder buy-in for these sorts of projects is *especially* important, as personal projects will likely involve the most important people in your life. Doing these sorts of projects poorly doesn't just cost time and resources - it can also harm significant relationships in your life. By taking the time to figure out "what's in it for them" when it comes to people helping you with your personal projects, you find out ways to engage them that create value for them and which give them intrinsic motivation to help you out again with future projects.

We've reviewed two areas in your professional and personal life where you can create more value for others: in your relationships with your co-workers and with the "stakeholders" in your personal projects. By assessing your current social network and taking advantage of opportunities to create value for the people in your network, you don't just improve your karma - you open up new possibilities for your own career and personal success.

About the Author:



Michelle LaBrosse, PMP, is an entrepreneurial powerhouse with a penchant for making success easy, fun, and fast. She is the founder of [Cheetah Learning](#), the author of the Cheetah Success Series, and a prolific [blogger](#) whose mission is to bring Project Management to the masses.

Cheetah Learning is a virtual company with 100 employees, contractors, and licensees worldwide. To date, more than 50,000 people have become "Cheetahs" using Cheetah Learning's innovative Project Management and accelerated learning techniques.

Michelle also developed the [Cheetah Certified Project Manager \(CCPM\)](#) program based on Myers-Briggs Type Indicator personality profiling to help students master how to use their unique strengths for learning, doing projects, and negotiating. CCPM graduates are able to choose the right projects and complete those projects "cheetah fast" based on their personality. They also learn how to leverage others' strengths which significantly improves overall project

team performance. When an employer has a cadre of CCPMs on staff, they achieve whatever they set out to achieve in record time. This is why over 90% of Cheetah's clients experience an increase in both profitability and revenue within the first year of retaining Cheetah Learning for their Project Management training needs.

Honored by the Project Management Institute (PMI®), Cheetah Learning was named Professional Development Provider of the Year at the 2008 PMI® Global Congress. A dynamic keynote speaker and industry thought leader, Michelle is recognized by PMI as one of the 25 Most Influential Women in Project Management in the world.