

CASTAIN TRAINING SYSTEMS

15 Ways To Facilitate A LinkedIn Discussion

- 1) **Don't Post And Run:** By far one of the quickest ways to look like a tool. Call me crazy but I actually have this as one of our rules in my [Linkedin group](#). Aside from bad manners, your discussion has a greater chance of dying and dropping off of page one which doesn't do much for your visibility huh?
- 2) **Facilitate Your Discussion:** You facilitate a discussion by:
 - Expanding on someone's thought with a new one of your own.
 - Asking them to expand on their thought.
 - Asking them to give you an example.
 - Asking follow up questions
- 3) **Hold Off On Your Opinion:** A great facilitator remains neutral for as long as possible in order to bring out the best in others. There's nothing wrong with expressing your opinion, my suggestion would be to do it in a way that inspires additional discussion. Perhaps it could be phrased as a follow up question?
- 4) **Make Sure You Give Your Discussion "Wings":** In other words, give it someplace to go by making sure it won't just be answered by a simple "Yes" or "No" If that's the case, then instruct everyone (in the question) to explain why they feel that way and/or provide an example.
- 5) **Circle This One Please:** Everyone Has A Story And Wants To Be Heard: So make sure you acknowledge the thoughts of the participants. Want to know a secret? People like to feel good by being acknowledged publicly. That's how you get more and more people hunting down your discussions because they get to feel good all over again. How cool is that? Answer: Way cool!

- 6) **Enhance The Rock Stardom Of The Dudes/Dudettes In Your Network:** Think about people in your network that have a particular area of expertise that can be invited. In some cases I would even talk them up before they get there. Do this (sincerely please) and you have a network of people who will jump into your discussions at the drop of a hat! Oh, before I forget, we should be doing this on any discussion we come across where we know someone who could add value . . . not just OUR discussions!
- 7) **When You Disagree . . . Do It Politely.** A simple “Thank you for your input” is a nice neutral way of “not going there girlfriend”. But that's common sense and everyone understands that in the groups. Right? Common sense is not always commonly practiced!
- 8) **Don't Let Others Diminish Your Real Estate:** I've had only a few situations where I thought someone was going out of their way to be an A Hole. In those cases I brought it to the group manager's attention so I didn't have to play “Paul Castain Online Vigilante” Do that, and you become an A-Hole by association.
- 9) **Thank People: Online and offline.** Who doesn't like a little gratitude in front of thousands of their closest friends?
- 10) **Don't Grade The Responses:** In my coaching practice I always remind people to never grade the question when handling Q & A. Grading in this context would be if I tell Mary that her answer rocks and meanwhile I go silent on the other 12 responses. Way to tell everyone else they suck! Oh, and can we all stop with the “(fill in the name) nailed it” comments. Do this and you shut a discussion down real quick.
- 11) **Keep The Discussion On Point:** When someone misses your question entirely or takes a long winded trip to the land of “tangent” bring them back to planet earth by asking them a direct, and yet polite question. If they persist, shoot them an offline email suggesting they start a new discussion with their thoughts.
- 12) **Don't Disguise A Sales Pitch As A Discussion:** I despise this one. If you want a discussion, start a discussion but don't mislead the participants. And those reply privately messages with the sales pitch are equally annoying. Why would someone come back to participate in your next discussion if you just conditioned them to have their guard up? Think Forrest. Think!
- 13) **Don't Start A Discussion To Blatantly Posture Yourself:** I see this one a lot. The problem with posting a question and then going in to “coach” mode is that most people don't like it because they didn't ask for it. Certainly not in front of thousands. Nuff said!

14) **Don't Over Post:** It spreads you out way too thin (especially if you do this over multiple groups). Give your discussions a chance to breathe. I would keep it between 1-2 discussions each week depending on the volume of comments you get. To that end, only post one at a time dude!

15) **Understand That Discussion Ideas Come To You At The Oddest Times:** Don't ever commit them to memory. You can use the handy dandy voice recorder on your phone to make a "note to self" when you are on the go or even just call your voice mail and leave the thought there.

Tip: Create a word doc with a list of discussions as you think of them. One way to get ideas is to review and think about the responses you get during a discussion. You might find a great opportunity for a follow up discussion!

