

Dean Lindsay

Cracking the Networking Code

Profile photo

If only connecting with people in the corporate arena were as easy as a game of connect the dots. But networking is more than passing out business cards. Dean Lindsay, author of *Cracking the Networking Code*, offers a fresh perspective on selling yourself while building strong business relationships.

“Successful networking is Being Progress™,” says Lindsay. “Just because you meet someone doesn’t mean you’re connecting in such a way that they want to build a relationship with you. You have to be seen in their mind as a catalyst for their progress, as an agent for their progress, as a Progress Agent™.”

The term may sound familiar. The Progress Agents is the name for Lindsay’s business, a Plano-based consulting firm in sales, service, and workplace performance. Clients range from New York Life, Ericsson, Mary Kay, Haggar, and Pacific Life & Annuity to American Express, Washington Mutual, and Western Union.

In *Cracking the Networking Code*, Lindsay explains that every decision we make, from what we do to who we meet, is based on the Six P’s of Progress™:



A Progress Agent’s Guide to Cracking the Networking Code is a first book for actor-turned-entrepreneur Dean Lindsay.

Pleasure, Peace of Mind, Profit, Prestige, Pain Avoidance, and/or Power”. “We are totally sold on that. Every TV commercial boils down to the Six P’s of Progress™ – Pleasure and Power for cars, Peace of Mind and Pain Avoidance for insurance, for example.”

Lindsay emphasizes the difference between progress and change: “It’s very natural for us to resist what we view as change,” he says. “We are bombarded with different impulses or possibilities of things we can do with our time ... suggestions, ads we see. Those things

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we don’t want to do, we see as change, but the ones that do spark our interest, position themselves as progress. When we have the opportunity to connect with somebody, we’re just another one of those impulses competing with everything else or everyone else.”

He continues, “If I had an upset tummy ... ‘Ohhh, it’s gotta change. Ohhh, it’s gotta change!’ mimics Lindsay. “And you lean over and punch me in the nose – is that change? Yeah it’s change! But it’s not progress.”

Lindsay’s sense of humor infuses *Cracking the Networking Code*, making typical business books appear dry. He warns his readers from the start, “This is *not* a textbook. We’re going to have some fun along the way.” That means making references to Mr. Rogers, Monty Python, Jessica Simpson, and the Rolling Stones and pitching phrases like “I know what your parents said, but you must talk to strangers.”

For a business book, the author’s tone is light and informal. “People will call me up or come see me live after they’ve read the book and say they like that I write the way I talk,” says Lindsay, “which is incredibly gratifying to me because,” he pauses, “I gave them me. That book is not just information. If you dig that book then you will dig me.”

A *cum laude* graduate from the University of North Texas, Lindsay received a communication studies degree in 1991. He currently serves on the Executive Advisory Board

for the Department of Marketing and Logistics.

For eight years Lindsay pursued professional acting and landed a role in *Twister*. “Don’t blink. The flying cow ended up with a bigger part than I did,” he jokes but admits that acting, as well as coaching acting, influenced his profession as an entrepreneur.

Lindsay has been recognized by the *Dallas Business Journal* as a “sales-and-networking guru,” and he is a featured contributor to *Executive Travel* and *Executive Excellence* magazines, as well

as the nationally distributed audio publication *Selling Power Live* by Jeffrey Gitomer.

Cracking the Networking Code is Recommended Reading by the United Professional Sales Association and *Profit* magazine, and it is currently being translated into Korean. The book has gained popularity in the nonprofit arena as well.

“Will this book help you get a job? Yes. It has helped people who are in sales or network marketing; it has also helped Christian organizations,” Lindsay says. “You can take the same principals in this book and get a date!” he laughs. “It’s all about relationships. And once you have relationships, what *can’t* be done?”

Excerpt from *Cracking the Networking Code*, page 21

Top 10 Benefits of Networking

- 1) Friendship and support
- 2) Advice and access to different points of view
- 3) New career paths, employment, and business opportunities
- 4) Referrals and introductions to professionals and quality prospects
- 5) Important information (Market/organizational shifts, upcoming events, etc.)
- 6) Promotions or lateral moves within your organization
- 7) Unique sales ideas from sales professionals in other fields
- 8) Introductions to quality vendors and resources
- 9) Advocates w/in related organizations and industries
- 10) More sales

Dean Lindsay sits down with the *Profile* and cracks the C.O.D.E.

Create personal curb appeal

“Long before you feel like you can connect with somebody, you have to feel like you have something worthy to bring to the table. It really comes down to honest communication and authentic confidence. Creating personal curb appeal is not about how you look to the outside world, even though that’s important, but more how you look on the inside. I’m encouraging people before they step out to go inside themselves.”

Open face-to-face relationships

“Know as much as you can about the attendees at a networking event. Research the people you want to meet. Contact a keynote speaker ahead of time and schedule a lunch.”

Deliver solid first impressions

“Have you ever met someone who would have delivered a better impression on you if you had never met them? At a networking event, talk to one person for about five minutes – eight minutes maximum. You’re trying to find the next step. You’re not trying to move in. Learn things that you can act on. You need to make a series of progress-based impressions to go from met to net.”

Earn trust

“Avoid general compliments. Specific is always better. It shows the other person that you really were paying attention. More powerful is a comment about something positive that person has done: a compliment on behavior or achievements.”