

The Power of Social Media as a Networking Tool (Based on a True Story)

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I've written and spoken about social media a lot in the last few years, and I always stress that social media should be viewed not so much as "web marketing" but rather networking; a medium to meet new people, create relationships and, with a little bit of luck, translate those relationships into new business.

Despite my fervent belief in the power of social media for networking, even I have a hard time believing the story I'm going to tell you.

I belong to a number of "groups" on Facebook. My neighborhood, for example, has a group. There are also Facebook groups formed by some of my attorney friends, and I started a craft beer group for some of my friends as well.

Some time ago, I joined a Facebook group called the "Tommy Kramer Fan Club." As many of you may recall, Tommy Kramer was the quarterback for the Minnesota Vikings from 1977-1989. For folks of my age who grew up watching Tommy play, he was our hero. Growing up a Vikings fan, I had a Tommy Kramer #9 jersey, posters, football cards, and on and on. My grandmother

even made a custom ceramic Tommy Kramer statue for me as a Christmas gift one year.

Anyway, this fan club group consisted of several hundred members from all over the country. We would post old game videos (such as Tommy's famous "Hail Mary" touchdown pass against the Cleveland Browns in 1980) or share stories of meeting him. I enjoyed posting in the group and meeting new people almost as a release from the daily grind of the legal work I do.



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As I mentioned before, the group consisted of many members from all over the country, but joining all of us Vikings fans were a good number of Tommy's fans from his home state of Texas. Tommy won a state high school football championship in Texas in 1971. That accomplishment, plus his years as an All-American quarterback at Rice University in Houston, has garnered him legendary status in the Lone Star State. In fact, one of Tommy's sisters and a close high school friend were part of the group, and we connected and regularly chatted about our favorite QB.

This connection led to the ultimate introduction. They connected me with Tommy to discuss some business matters. He is a great guy and has become a good friend of mine. He's also become a client, which is all a bit surreal.

My point in writing this is to back up what I've always said about social media as a networking tool. It is because of Facebook and the now defunct Tommy Kramer Fan Club page that I not only met Tommy, but now get to help him out a bit as he launches his official website and Facebook page. It was not my intention when I joined the fan club group to represent Tommy Kramer; I just happened to build relationships with some people who were very close to him, one thing led to another, and the rest is history.

Speaking of which, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the address of the new "official" Tommy Kramer website – www.tommykramer.com. It's going to be a great site, with old video, new video stories from Tommy, and a store. Tommy even has a Twitter account now: @2MinuteTommy. For those of you who count yourself as Tommy Kramer fans, I would encourage you to connect with him on Twitter as he actually follows his fans back and talks to them!

Anyone still believe that social media is a waste of time? ■

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