

SPOTLIGHT



Network More Effectively and Reap the Rewards

BY RAY BERNAZ

The lifeblood of any business is its relationships – those with partners, clients and, most importantly, prospective clients. How you manage those relationships over time can determine how successful your business becomes in the long term.

More strategic development and nurturing of relationships often takes second priority simply because it tends to take time and effort, the pay-off isn't always immediate, and can be easy to postpone. It is all too easy to focus on what's in front of us today – the deal we are trying to close, the partner agreement in discussion, or the customer issue that just cropped up.

However, investing in your network can reap massive dividends – especially when the process involved can be simplified. Scale, a new type of relationship management tool launched by Socialibrium LLC in Short Hills, does just that.

Scale provides an automated "heatmap" for your professional and personal network based on frequency of contact. Day-to-day interactions through email, phone calls, SMS, and meetings are automatically imported into Scale, compared to preferences set, and then reflected in a dynamic, color-coded dashboard. One quick glance immediately identifies who

requires the most urgent attention, ensuring that your network remains connected and each relationship at the "right temperature."

Scale helps you continue to make the regular "investments" in your network so they remain vibrant, healthy, and there when they are needed – whether it is to stay "front-of-mind" with existing clients or keeping a previously "cold" lead "warm."

There are numerous resources for sales-oriented professionals to help track leads and sales prospects, but these often require a lot of manual work to keep updated. They are also often too complex, too robust, or too expensive for many users – regardless of whether you're a salesperson or not.

Scale provides a different approach. By removing the need to manually track interactions, and then automatically highlighting where there are gaps in your network, Scale provides a relationship management tool anyone can utilize.

Scale allows you to configure groups of contacts from your address book and set preferences as to how you would like to be in touch. Daily activities are dynamically imported into Scale and compared to these preferences. Red, amber, and green "traffic lights" are then used to reflect whether a contact or group requires attention. For example, if you indicated you should call a

prospective client every week, that contact would stay green until you started approaching seven days, at which point they would turn amber, then red, and back to green once the call was placed.

Scale also gives you a single place to find all your communication history with these contacts. All calls, emails, SMS, and meetings are organized by person in Scale's dashboard, prominently showing how long it's been since you were last in touch.

Professional services providers and small business owners found Scale the most useful because they tend to rely on relationships to drive business, but don't always manage a typical sales cycle. They were able to turn their daily interactions into information that could more precisely direct their interactions to the relationships that most required them. This saved time and stress and, since Scale is a mobile application, it allowed them to leverage free pockets of time throughout the day, regardless of location.

Implementing Scale is also easy, as it works with existing email accounts, address books, and phone numbers; there is no need to adapt any tools or behaviors to integrate Scale into your daily life. And, Scale user data is always safe as it resides on the device, not in a third party "cloud." ■

Ray Bernaz is the chief executive officer of Socialibrium. For more information, visit www.socialibrium.com.