



By Chris Haught

Five Reasons and Five Groups

Where do you get your information on new products, tools, business advice and Social Media? How much do you interact with others in the paint industry? Magazines like this are a great way to access industry information. If you are reading this, then it is a sure bet you are interested in this type of information.

Here are 5 reasons to join some type of group:

- 1 Learn about new products on the market and see how others use them.
- 2 Learn about new tools that may increase efficiency and productivity.
- 3 Learn how to train employees.
- 4 Learn about new marketing ideas.
- 5 Learn how to estimate and price effectively.

Here are 5 groups to join to help further those efforts. These are in no particular order, the key is to find what fits for your personal and business style.

BNI

This is a networking group started by Ivan Misner. It has required weekly meetings where members pass leads to one another. There is a membership fee. The right mix seems to be crucial, as it only allows one member from each trade and you have to be in a position to offer leads to other members in the group. (<http://www.bni.com/>)

PDCA

This is a group dedicated to professional painting contractors (<http://www.pdca.org/>). It offers Continuing Education in its Contractors College, a set of Industry Standards and an active forum on LinkedIn to share industry news. There are local chapters in many areas where contractors work together. I attended the PDCA Expo in Las Vegas in February and was very impressed with the camaraderie and networking going on. There were educational seminars on a variety of topics and a trade show that represented the best the industry has to offer, check out my blog for my details at bloggingpainters.com/pdca-expo-2012/.

LinkedIn

Most users look at LinkedIn as a digital resume. It is great for that as you can list your experience and skills as well as search for jobs. There are several professional groups, both private and public, that have active discussion groups. These groups are a

great resource to connect with other professionals in a variety of specialties. There is no charge to belong. (<http://www.linkedin.com/>)

Paint Forums

There are several paint forums/chat rooms out there. I am a moderator at Painttalk.com, where there is a healthy mix of information sharing and socializing. It's a great place to share ideas and to hang out with like-minded contractors. Learn how others market their businesses and share project ideas.

Blogging/Social Media

This is a great resource for many paint contractors, the variety of topics is endless. You can find blogs that are dedicated to commercial work, RRP work, residential painting, faux finishes and more. You can also find these resources on several platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. These are great places to learn how your colleagues think about products and share your experiences in the field.

All of these require some input on your part, sometimes it is hard to step out of our comfort zone, to accept others' opinions or even to share strategies with someone we may view as a competitor. I belong to several communities of professionals and learn something every day from the people who reach out and share. Won't you join us? [TPC](#)

Chris Haught is the Editor at Blogging Painters (bloggingpainters.com), an online resource for painting contractors. She operates RC Painting in Southern Utah.