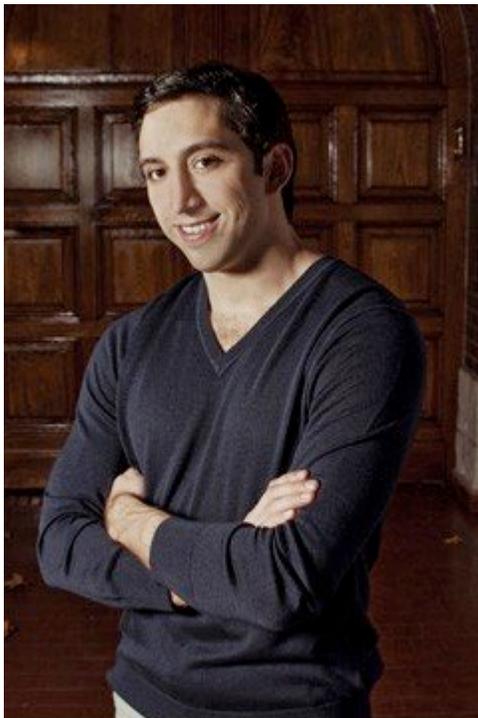**June 11, 2010**

Virtual Dating Assistant Explains the Science of Online Hook-Ups

Scott Valdez can attract hundreds of women each month in his boxers.

The 25-year-old is the founder and president of Virtual Dating Assistants, a company that makes "the dating dreams of busy individuals come true."

Courtesy of VDA

"Online dating is like a part-time job," he says. "We alleviate the burden of searching for the perfect match by ... allowing our client to select top candidates, handling all online communication and then setting up an in-person date" -- oftentimes without the woman ever knowing.

They call themselves the "Concierge of Online Dating." We prefer "Matchmaking Ninjas," but "Scientists of Internet Dating" might be the most accurate.

"The whole process is pretty systematic," Valdez reports. "We're sending out sometimes a thousand messages a month for our clients. For each one, we track 19-plus variables: general approach, subject line, time of day, etc. We export the data each month and

crunch the numbers. That has really helped us to craft our messages better."

Don't have $400 a month to spend on outsourcing your love life? After the jump, Valdez shares five crucial tips for getting dates online.

Corbis

1. Find the Site That Best Suits You
   There is a niche site for everyone: Date My Pet, Black Christian People Meet, Farmers Only, Geek 2 Geek, etc.

   "Choosing the right site is a vital first step to achieving success online," Valdez says. "I usually recommend pay sites. We found [on those sites], for every email we send, we have twice the chance of taking things offline with the recipient."

   And in the same vein, know your league.

   "We've gotten dates for our clients with women who are out of their league, but the response rate is much lower," he admits. "Definitely swing for the fences, and if you do things really well, you will get a bite once in awhile. But we're actually about to put something on our blog that shows by what percentage your response rate decreases if she's more attractive than you."

2. Choose a Compelling Subject Line.
   "If you put 'Hi' or 'Hello' in the subject line, it's over," Valdez says. "If your email doesn't get opened, you have a 0 percent chance of receiving a response. The goal is to grab her attention. Maria Veloso, an expert in Web copywriting, recommends using a 'brain itch,' an incomplete thought in the subject line. Think of it as a cliffhanger."

Valdez uses this technique for his own online dating.

For example, "This girl was extremely hot, way out of my league," he explains. "She had a photo on her profile of a baby on top of some paperwork. In the subject line, I wrote, 'I don't care how ...' [then in the message] '... adorable a photo it makes, you can't just steal someone else's baby and make it do your paperwork. It's wrong and illegal.' She loved the message, we met, and things went really, really well."

3. Don't Write Too Much

    Don't over-think and write her a complex allegory.

    "Each message should take between 15 and 20 minutes to prepare," Valdez says. "Try to keep it within five to 10 sentences and conversational. Don't talk about yourself unless it pertains to something you have in common or something she may really find attractive. As a general rule of thumb, include a question or two max. Questions placed at the beginning of the message are often forgotten, so it's best to place it at the end as a call to action."

4. Ignore the Woman's Perspective

    Sorry, ladies, but guys should not ask sisters, mothers or female friends for advice.

    "There is a big difference between what women think they want and what women actually want," Valdez says. "I think that applies offline as well, but I've definitely seen it online. Their profiles will say they're looking for a nice, romantic guy, but they don't respond to those types of emails.

    "We've had female writers write for male clients looking for women. However, their response rates have been significantly lower than our male writers. It takes women longer to accept the things I teach them. They don't want to admit their friends would go for those things."
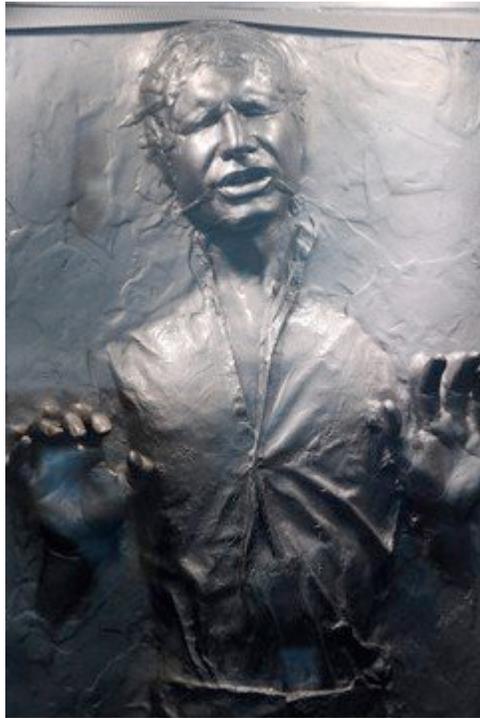
Getty

5. Channel "Han Solo'

Princess Leia didn't like Solo, but she *loved* him. He's strong-willed and cocky-funny.

"Women respond to challenging, playful, teasing messages, especially when a woman is really attractive," Valdez says. "The more attractive she is, the more she is used to men sending her power-giving messages, giving her all the power on the first message. What has worked best for me, and for our clients, is to retain that power by being funny and challenging."

6. Use Emoticons

"There's a fine line between being challenging and being a complete ass," Valdez says. "You have to evoke emotion without offending or trying to hard. The problem with online dating is you don't have body language. Offline, 90 percent of communication is body language. There's a lot of room for miscommunication. To avoid that, use emoticons. Don't put smiley faces and winks everywhere, but if you're going to challenge someone, put a wink at the end so they know you're not being completely serious."