

Communicate and Network Your Way to More Success!

by Lillian D. Bjorseth

Duoforce Enterprises, Inc.

2221 Ridgewood Rd.
Lisle, IL 60532

630-983-5308
630-983-5312 (fax) www.duoforce.com
lillian@duoforce.com

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Welcome to another issue of Communicate and Network Your Way to Success. My mission is to provide you with valuable information that you can use immediately to build high-value relationships in the office and at off-site events. I'll also keep you up-to-date on public workshops, events and products to help you hone your skills and grow your network. Contact me directly for conference and meeting keynotes, workshops, in-house training or coaching in vital business networking, business development, communication and team-building skills ... or if you would like to reproduce any part of this newsletter in your organization's print or electronic media.

Please enter lilianspeaks@duoforce.com or unmark as spam into your e-mail database to ensure you receive this newsletter. If you are unable to view it here, you may read it online at <http://duoforce.com/ldb/direct3-newsletter.htm>.

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Holiday Networking Etiquette

Office parties. Neighborhood open houses. Country club dances. Festive chamber of commerce after hours. Professional organizational luncheons and dinners. From Thanksgiving through Jan. 1, these events have a much more social than business air, even though your membership may be business-based. So is it okay to network, and, if so, how much?

The answer is a definite “yes” and, in most cases, “differently and in moderation” also apply.

- **Be subtler.** Start conversations with small talk about the holidays, the surroundings, the weather, etc., rather than with “What do you do?” Be ready to reciprocate with similar topics. Have your Verbal Business Card in your back pocket just in case you need it.
- **Look and act professional.** People still decide 10 things about you within 10 seconds of seeing you and will carry that impression with them into the boardroom or onto the telephone. Specifics include:
 - **Don't overeat or over drink.** Moderation is the key, and you know your limits. Don't overfill your “little” plate. Snacking ahead of time can curb your appetite at the event. Keep cold drinks out of your right hand. Ice and condensation will likely make it feel cold and moist. Using your left hand is a far better solution than wrapping a napkin around the glass. If

seating is available, sit down for a few minutes to eat. When you rise again, your hands will be free. And, don't forget to wash them before you start shaking again!

- **Don't tell off-color jokes or use crude language just because the atmosphere is more relaxed.** Such behavior offends most people, including coworkers, their spouses, partners and families who can carry a lot of weight.
- **Dress properly for the occasion.** Find out ahead of time the appropriate dress for men and women. And, women, don't show excessive cleavage if you want to be taken seriously in the office or to use the event to lay the groundwork for future employment.
- **Remember the behavioral basics.** Exhibit good posture. Shake hands firmly. Maintain eye contact at least 85 percent of the time. Keep your gestures understated, especially in a crowded room where expansive gestures can lead to touching someone else or even spilling your food or drink ... or theirs!
- **Don't target only the head honcho.** Whether it is the company president or the organization chair, don't think your evening is incomplete if you don't spend the token two minutes with them. Have longer and more meaningful conversation with those who are lower on the totem pole and aren't besieged by everyone else. Top brass seldom gets involved in the day-to-day hiring, promotions and other managerial duties. Make a positive impression on everyone you meet so you will be memorable long after the event is over.
- **Listen more than you talk.** Use your two ears and one mouth as a proportional guide. Ask questions and give others time to answer in their own style, from rapid fire to slowly. Never interrupt or finish their sentences. Store the information to process later. Avoid long one-on-one conversations, especially during a meal when you also have people on your right and left. When business does come up, keep the discussion general rather than zeroing in on your job specifics. Networking is planting seeds, sales is harvesting. This is *not* the place to sell.
- **Carry your business cards.** Women, keep at least a small supply in your holiday bag. If attending with a male partner, have him keep some extras in his inside suit pocket. It's so much more professional than writing your vital information on a cocktail napkin.
- **Don't press people on the spot.** If you want more information, a referral or an appointment, get a business card and permission to e-mail or call later. Then follow up during normal business hours.
- **Don't be the last to leave.** Unless you are close friends with the hosts, don't be the last to leave the neighborhood open house. Similarly, unless you have volunteered for clean-up duty, don't be the straggler at company or organizational functions. It's like pushing back from the table when you are still hungry: leave while you're still making a positive impression.
- **Send holiday cards.** Bypass the pre-printed, sterile ones. Take the time to sign your name and write a short personal note. As appropriate, send to clients, prospective employers and, particularly, to those people at any level who are vital links in your networking chain.

Lillian will be giving while getting during the holidays by addressing holiday and other important networking techniques at the St. Thomas the Apostle Jobs Ministry meeting, Naperville IL. If you are in transition or want more information for someone who is, contact Jim Breen at jimb4853@yahoo.com. The program is from 7 – 9 pm Dec. 14, 2006, and there is no cost to attend.

Lillian Makes Page 2, Right After Former Presidents Bush & Clinton!

As expected, former Presidents Bush and Clinton were front-page news when they spoke at the recent National Association of Realtors annual conference in New Orleans. What was particularly exciting is that Lillian's program was highlighted on page 2 in the same issue of the *REALTOR Show Daily*! You can read the article, "Get them with 'Hello'" at <http://duoforce.com/ldb/media.htm>. Ah, the power of the press!

Our Readers Write Us.

"I've read your articles and newsletter, and I am very impressed with the powerful content. We'd be honored to include your materials in our self-improvement goldmine archives at <http://www.20daypersuasion.com/articlelist.html> (where we publish only the highest quality self-improvement articles). Please let us know."

Thanks and Best Regards,

Michael Lee

www.20daypersuasion.com

Yes, Michael, you may!

Ask the Business Networking Authority

Do you have questions about business networking protocol or how to network strategically? Send them to me at lilianspeaks@duoforce.com, and I'll answer as many as I can in this newsletter. Put "question for newsletter" in the subject line.

The phone companies tout the "hold" button as a great multi-tasking feature. What do you think of it from an interpersonal communication standpoint? Should I really put anyone on hold?

"On-hold" for your answer in Colorado.

It rates an "F" in my book. In fact, I won't allow my office to have the call-waiting feature. I have challenged audiences across the country to give me positive reasons for putting people on hold ... from the perspective of the person being put on hold. This is, after all, the person who has your attention and is the most important in your business and personal lives at the moment. From the "other's person's" viewpoint, it says:

- Someone on the other line is more important than me. (And you as the receiver may not even know who it is!)
- My time is not as valuable as yours.

- You're in control and can make me wait.
- You're important. I'm supposed to be impressed.



Did You Know ...

- TYPEWRITER is the longest word that can be made using the letters only on one row of the keyboard.
- There are only four words in the English language that end in "dous": tremendous, horrendous, stupendous, and hazardous.

... until next time, Happy Holidays!

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