

Communicate and Network Your Way to More Success!

by Lillian D. Bjorseth

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Welcome to the second issue of Communicate and Network Your Way to Success. Our mission is to provide you with valuable information that you can use immediately in the office and at off-site meetings, conferences and other opportunities to build relationships. We'll also keep you up-to-date on public workshops, events and products we offer to help you hone your skills and grow your network.

Contact us directly for conference and meeting keynotes, workshops, in-house training or skills coaching in vital business development, communication, networking and team building skills. You ... and your audience/employees ... will be glad you did!

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The Art of Starting a Conversation

Almost all of us have been there. We meet a new person, we run into someone we have met once before, or we see someone we've spoken with numerous times. We want to start a meaningful conversation for myriad reasons; yet, we find ourselves asking those trite questions:

- Is this your first time here?
- Did you have trouble finding the building?
- How many people do you think will be coming tonight?

And, just for good measure, we throw in a few "hmmms" and "ahs" to make us appear even less confident.

Getting off on the right foot

Here are hints to help you feel at ease, make others comfortable, ensure you are memorable after the event and gain helpful information as well.

1. **Establish your purpose for attending event.**
 - a. To gather information? It can vary from learning more about the sponsoring organization to making an educated decision about joining to learning more about specific businesses or individuals who are likely to attend.
 - b. To get referrals? These can include business or job referrals or for support services necessary to run and grow your business.
 - c. To seek advice or support? This might range from encouragement in a job search or in your venture into entrepreneurship. Or it might be from people

in other companies who are employed in the same field or the same industry.

In any case, prepare your “ask for” questions and your “listen for” answers so you sound ready and are prepared to hold stimulating conversations while simultaneously enhancing your knowledge base.

2. **Prepare your verbal business card.** Be ready to share with others in one or two sentences *what* you do ... not *how* you do it or *who* you are. These logically follow. You want to intrigue people to talk with you while informing them about what you do that will benefit them or people they know. Keep it simple because while people are listening to you, they are also assessing your appearance and behavior, trying to remember your name and planning what they will say.
Always include your first and last name (even your friends have memory lapses!), what you do, benefits to others and active verbs, the most powerful words in the English language. In general, omit your company name (unless it is really well known), your company location, titles, business labels and go easy on adjectives and adverbs. You’ll want to tailor the above information when you are with people from your company or in the same industry. They will understand and even expect jargon.
3. **Remember introduction basics.** Even though you learned this in elementary school, you might need a refresher:
 - a. A younger person is introduced to an older person
 - b. A man is introduced to a woman
 - c. A less important person is introduced to a VIP.In other words, say the name of the person who is older, the woman and the VIP first. You deserve to be addressed as you want to be; however, you must let people know your preference so they can start the conversation correctly. If your printed nametag says “Robert,” and you prefer, “Bob,” it’s fine to cross through the name and print “Bob” on it. Use a felt tip pen so people can easily read it.
4. **Weave newcomers into the conversation.** When someone new joins you, immediately introduce him or her to everyone or allow the person an ample opportunity to do. Bring the person up-to-date by quickly reviewing what you were talking about (remember it’s a new conversation for them) and then asking them for an opinion or comment.
5. **Remember names.** The start of any conversation is a good place for you to start remembering someone’s name. Hopefully, the person knows to wear the nametag on the right side (unobstructed by lapels or scarves) so that your eye will easily travel to it as you make the initial handshake. Hopefully, the person also knows to say his/her name along with the handshake.
 - a. Look at the nametag.
 - b. Listen as the person gives you his/her name.
 - c. Study the person’s business card to help implant the name in your memory.
 - d. Repeat it several times during the first few minutes of the conversation.

- e. Use it when you introduce the person to others.
 - f. On another note, it is vital that you use the person's name as you make your rounds to say "good-bye" to everyone you met.
6. **Ask open-ended questions.** The best way to avoid those one-word answers that make you feel as if your attempts at conversation have been thwarted is to not ask "yes" and "no" questions. Or, if you start off with one, have two or three open-ended questions or statements in your pocket at all times. Those one-word answers are sure to get you perspiring if you are the kind who already doesn't like to start conversations.

52 Ways to Break the Ice & Target Your Market

There's hope! We've developed a product that will help you start conversations one-on-one or get your participants talking if you are a trainer, meeting planner or one of a plethora of other users we list below.

Our deck of 26 **Ice Breakers** help people mix more quickly and effortlessly, improve information flow and turn business card exchanges into business-building exchanges! What's more, they can be used in groups of any size since the exercise is done one-on-one.

Increase the excitement by setting a suggested number for others to meet and then awarding door prizes to some of the winners.

Intended users include:

- * Business leads groups
- * Civic organizations
- * College/university instructors
- * Human resource departments
- * Professional organizations
- * Speakers
- * Trade organizations
- * Chambers of commerce
- * Coaches
- * Consultants
- * Marketing managers
- * Service organizations
- * Staff meeting organizers

Venues include:

- * Adult education programs
- * Career centers
- * Conference registrations
- * High school, college classes
- * Industry conferences, meetings
- * Luncheon/dinner meeting registrations
- * Retreats
- * Board of directors' planning sessions
- * Civic, company, professional, social organizational meetings
- * Corporate sales meetings
- * Hotels, as a gift to meeting planners
- * Networking events
- * Organizations for people in transition
- * Trade shows

Our 26 **Market Targeters** are geared toward helping entrepreneurs through Fortune 100 employees use brainstorming and feedback to better refine their marketing strategies and enhance their own and others' knowledge about the benefits of their products and services.

Entrepreneurs and small businesses may want to use these exercises with their peers at chamber and association events, while larger companies may choose to do them internally. Whatever method you choose, you are bound to gain valuable marketing insight.

The intended users and venues are similar to those for the **Ice Breakers**. While each card contains a question/statement and an objective, the manual further contains suggestions for the facilitator/table leader to keep the discussion focused and lively.

*Deanne Brezette, CPM, former purchasing manager at Elkay Manufacturing Company said: "I'm WOWED! You **Ice Breakers** address [networking] situations with thought-provoking, stimulating queries guaranteed to spark interactions. Your unique **Market Targeters** challenge entrepreneurs as well as big companies to take a strategic and tactical look at themselves and the business. They ignite brainstorming sessions that produce results!"*

*"What a gift to have a tool we can all use to connect people! Consultants, trainers, entrepreneurs and anyone who services others can benefit from the marketing expertise that Lillian has so cleverly built into the **Ice Breakers** and **Market Targeters**."*
Robert Moran, president, Moran Consulting, Inc.

*"Lillian brings us a fun, effective technique to break the ice ... and go even further. Her **Ice Breakers** are tools to discover important tidbits that forge a relationship and increase effectiveness. They also give people a great reason to start a conversation. Her **Market Targeters** generate a "focus group" environment to help discover those crucial elements of marketing such as competitive advantage, benefits vs. features, media vehicles and messages, buying decisions and much, much more."
*Don Morgan, MA, president, BNI Canada and BNI Illinois**

Newsletter special

To find out more about *52 Ways to Break the Ice & Target Your Market*, see www.duoforce.com/52Ways.htm. The cost is \$52 and includes one deck each of **Ice Breakers** and **Market Targeters** and an instructional manual. To save the \$9.80 shipping and handling charge, contact us at lillian@duoforce.com and ask for **the newsletter special**. Hope to hear from you!

Ask the Networking Guru

Do you have questions about networking protocol, working a room or how to network strategically? Send them to us at lillian@duoforce.com and we'll answer as many as we can in this newsletter. Put "question for newsletter" in the subject line.

This question comes from another Lisle IL resident.

Career coaches and books often criticize aspiring executives for not "networking high enough" in organizations to reach decision makers. Inasmuch as many events and forums often draw people a level or two lower than the intended audience and who are designated to stand in for the boss, what is your response to

this advice? Even a solid new connection could be reluctant to bother the boss or "sic someone on him/her".

The bigger question, of course, is how to be empowered as a networker when the person you meet has relationships of varying quality (that you can't control) to other individuals. I'm sure this is partly why many career builders' networks look more like hairbrushes than neatly knit chicken wire.

Kent Vincent, IS & R Services, Lisle, IL

Kent,

This is a common concern among entrepreneurs and people at all levels within associations and corporations. My number one piece of advice is to network strategically rather than just network. Networking is planting seeds, and your chances of getting a good crop are enhanced when you plant in fertile ground.

Define your objectives and your target market and then research where people in that target market are most likely to "appear." For some people, it is chambers of commerce; for others it's professional organizations, conferences and trade shows; and for still others it is country clubs. One of my clients flies first class because of the people he meets there. His ROI is to be envied!

Secondly, always act and behave professionally. You never know whom people know (even when they don't seem likely prospects). Also, never underestimate the power and influence of the people "a level or two lower than the intended" ... when you state your case articulately and meaningfully.

I speak from experience. When I was handling public relations for the man who started computer systems for AT&T, many people knew they had a better chance to get to him through me than by going to him directly. They were correct. While I had the authority often to decide who might visit with him at a conference or trade show, it also came with a lot of responsibility. I had to make the right decision for what was right for him and the company. I made it my responsibility to know whom he might wish to meet and who not.

In other words, trust those a level or two down and treat them with the same respect and courtesy as you would the top person. Who knows, you might get that audience you want!

[News from Duoforce](#)

In my ongoing effort to provide the latest and best training on the world-renowned DISC products from Inscape Publishing Company, I attended the company conference in Orlando Oct. 1-2, 2004. I am in the first small group of people ever to be certified to train DISC and plan to complete the process within the next few months. My goal is to be among the best prepared to lead you through the powerful tools that help you talk the language of customers, peers, supervisors, management ... and your family!

Coming soon! We are updating our well-respected and much-used *Nothing Happens Until We Communicate* audiotope series and will be releasing them as a new CD series. We'll also have sound bytes on our website. The CDs, too, can be used in tandem with our series workbooks. Stay tuned!

And, you'll want to read, "Want to Get Along Better With People, Try the DISC Approach ... Customer service and relationship building go hand-in hand" at

www.duoforce.com (link at bottom of page.) I wrote the article for the October 2004 issue of *Springs* magazine, a publication of the Spring Manufacturers Institute.

While I didn't make the top 101 experts in David Riklan's new book, *Self Improvement, The Top 101 Experts Who Help Us Improves Our Lives*, I am honored to be listed among the renowned "Other Valuable Self-Improvement Experts" who make a difference in people's lives!

The Lisle IL Post Office is not renewing its lease on the building where we have out PO Box ... so we are closing PO Box 1154 forever. Our new address is 2221 Ridgewood Rd., Lisle IL 60532.

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To unsubscribe from this newsletter and all information regarding Lillian's events, send an e-mail to lillian@duoforce.com with the subject "unsubscribe." It is our ongoing commitment to communicate and network only with those who want to hear from us.