

Communicate and Network Your Way to More Success!

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Welcome to the third issue of Communicate and Network Your Way to Success. My 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. I'll also keep you up-to-date on public workshops, events and products I offer to help you hone your skills and grow your network.

Contact me 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!

Newsflash: I have a new 8-part CD series on Nothing Happens Until We Communicate, and we have redesigned our website. Check out both at www.duoforce.com

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Improve Your Presentation Openings & Closings

Recently, I gave a different kind of talk on presentation skills. Periodically, I stepped out of the speaker role and explained why I said or did what I did.

Since speaking in front of people is the number one fear, I'm sharing information on two vital presentation parts that I covered: the opening and the closing. After all, those are the most remembered parts whether you are presenting at an in-house meeting, an "after-meal" talk or a conference workshop.

Get Comfortable With Your Opening

Rehearse your opening until you can carry it off with ease no matter what happens. Since it makes your first impression, be sure it doesn't contain any "ahs," "ums" or pauses in the wrong places.

- ***Tell a story.*** This is one of my favorites. Hopefully, it has humor and a good punch line so you can build up to the climax. One of my favorites for my "speak easy" talks is this one.

The Roman Gladiator Androcles developed quite a reputation for staying alive. He was frequently thrown to the lions, and, just as frequently, he

returned alive. He always used the same approach. Just as the lion was about to eat him, Androcles would whisper in his ear, and the animal would appear to lose his appetite and slink away with a defeated look. Finally, the Roman emperor called him to his court. “Androcles,” he said, “I can take it no longer. I need to know your secret.” “It’s this way, your highness,” Androcles said. “I merely remind the lion that when he has finished dinner, he’ll be asked to say a few words. I’m living proof that lions don’t like to give after-dinner talks!”

The key is to make sure the story fits your topic and can lead right into it. After this story, I say, “I know a lot of *people*, too, who don’t like to make after-dinner talks, or after-lunch talks or before lunch talks ...”

- **Use a quote.** One that can be easily adapted to many situations is this one by Abraham Lincoln:
“Things may come to those who wait, but only what is left behind by those who hustle.”

Then, you can easily move into your topic by adding, “And, today we’re going to talk about the kind of hustle we need to make us the number one real estate agency in the state.”

- **Ask a question.** When I speak on effective communication skills, I often ask how many people have read Shakespeare. (Most hands go up quickly.) Then, I say, “Good. I bet you can help me complete these lines from Hamlet’s famous soliloquy: ‘To be or not to be ...’” People quickly respond with “... that is the question.” Then, I go on to say that when I talk about communication skills, I like to paraphrase Hamlet and say, “To be is to communicate, and there is no question. You cannot not communicate.”
- **Relate a personal experience.** This gives your talk a flavor all its own and one that cannot be duplicated by anyone else.
“When I was a little girl growing up on a farm in the outskirts of a town of 83 people, I used to stand on my porch and pretend the fields were filled with people who were listening to the stories I made up. Those were my first rehearsals!”
- **Other effective openings can be to:**
 - Summarize the main points of your presentation.
 - Ask a rhetorical question.
 - Make a dramatic statement or give a startling statistic.

Prepare Your Ending

Don’t just let it happen! The mark of professional presenters is that they end on time (even when they have to start late) and make it sound as if the audience got the entire message with a planned close.

- ***Tie it back to the opening.*** Using my first opening as an example, I say:
“I hope that many more of you will now have the confidence of Androcles when you need to give what you used to think of as a near-death experience.”

It can help you reinforce a good beginning and give you two shots at making your point in the most remembered spots.

- ***Use a quote.*** One I like when I am speaking on polishing your professional presence is from Ralph Waldo Emerson:
“What you are speaks so loudly that I cannot hear what you are saying.”
- ***Summarize what you have said.*** This is one of the most popular. It goes along with the three-point theory many people use:
Tell you audience what you are going to tell them; tell them; then, tell them what you told them.
- ***Use a personal experience.*** Again, you can use your own experiences to sum up the points you have been making. However, curb your desire to ramble on about yourself. Say just enough to peak interest and close your subject appropriately.
- ***Call people to action.*** You’ve told them how great your new widget is. Now, ask the board for more funds to produce and market it, i.e, close the sale!”

And, in conclusion:

One important warning: An ending is just that: an ending. It is *not* the prelude to an ending! Here’s one more story to make the point:

- One evening the person introducing Thomas Edison for his after-dinner talk went on and on and on. One of the things he said was that Edison invented the talking machine. When Edison finally got the podium, he said he needed to clarify a point the announcer had made: “I didn’t invent the talking machine. God did that. I just invented a way to turn it off.”

I am now turning off my “talking machine!”

Nothing Happens Until We Communicate CD Series

Good communication skills are vital to our personal and business success. We engage in the communication process around the clock; however, that doesn’t mean we are good at it. Practice doesn’t make perfect ... unless we are already using effective communication skills. In my updated series, I help you, your employees, co-workers and your family communicate better through appearance, body language, gender differences, listening, presentation, self-esteem and writing skills. You can read more about each of them by clicking www.duoforce.com and then clicking on the Newsflash copy in the upper left-hand corner. You’ll find sound bytes as well. You might also choose to buy

our workbooks, especially for more in-depth individual work or training classes. Call me about bulk orders. Be sure to check out my *Speak Easy* CD and workbook at www.duoforce.com/ldb/nhuwc.htm for many more helpful hints on creating and making winning presentations.

Ask the Networking Authority

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

I consider myself a "with-in" male, yet I am baffled by how to politically correctly shake a woman's hand, when she only offers me what I call "limp fingers." Help me in Atlanta.

Your problem is real. If you give a traditionally firm handshake, you run the risk of hurting the woman's hand, particularly if she is wearing a ring, and it is slanted to the right on her finger. The stone will then leave an impression (ouch!) in her little finger. I continually suggest to women that they extend their full hand (never cup the fingers), so the other person can get a good grip even if the shake is weak. Women tell me repeatedly in workshops that they want men to give them the same firm handshake they give other men. My advice is to keep shaking your normal way. You're not committing a networking error.

News from Duoforce

If you are contacting us via snail mail, remember our address is 2221 Ridgewood Rd., Lisle IL 60532. We no longer use the PO Box.

It was 10 years ago that I opened my first website. At that time, only three percent of companies had one. I've updated it several times since then and now am pleased to announce a brand-new version. The address is still www.duoforce.com. My goal remains to make it as easy as possible for you to find information about my wide ranges of services and products and all the Inscape products (especially the new online versions and group and facilitator reports that are knocking people's socks off).

Stay tuned for the next **Great Chicago Networking Extravaganza** coming in fall 2005! It will have new features as well as some of the tried and true from the previous three. Watch my website for details.

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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.