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

Volume 2 Issue 2 March 2005

Welcome to the fourth 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!

In this issue:

1. **How Long Since You Cleaned Your Personal Filter?**
2. **Coming …Fourth Great Chicago Networking Extravaganza**
3. **Duoforce to Co-host Inscape Publishing Regional Meeting**
4. **Ask the Networking Authority**
5. **E-Learning Update/Duoforce in Forefront**
6. **Lillian to Present "What You Say Before You Speak"**

How Long Since You Cleaned Your Personal Filter?

As we near the end of another winter in Chicago, most of us in the Midwest share one commonality: We or someone we live with or paid to do so changed our furnace filters several times during the past months. We did it to ensure that we breathe clean air, and dust doesn't collect nearly as quickly on our belongings.

As a communication skills speaker, trainer and author, I ask you on a similar note: "When is the last time you changed your personal filter?" Some of us, I dare say, have so much guck in ours that we can barely hear, much less listen!

Good communication occurs only when others receive our message in the manner in which we intended it to be. Responsibility rests with both parties. Let's look at how we as "hearers" can block the process.

Listening is a six-step hierarchical process: sensing, interpreting, evaluating, understanding, responding, remembering. It's the second step where our "dust" comes into play.

To understand this step better, think of yourself as having a giant filtering system. Everything you hear passes through that system, which is made up of your needs, values, beliefs, knowledge, attitudes and experiences. Since each of us brings different ones to the listening process, each of us innately has different reactions to what the speaker says.

Each of us also has our own "stuff" that dirties our filters: prejudices, pre-judgments, lack of interest, envy, jealousy, anger, revenge, hatred, the need to be right and

our own special "grime." Can you see how hard it can become for anyone to get through clearly and how communication failures happen at work and at home?

To make matters worse, our filtering system is responsible for another major communication challenge: Words have no meaning. People give meaning to words. For example, the word "alcoholic" has a very different resonance for those who have lived with one. The same is true for the word "work alcoholic." "Discrimination" has a different emotional response for women and minorities who have experienced it in the workplace.

In my workshops I often ask people to list words they use in business that might be interpreted differently or be offensive to employees or customers. Most begin with hesitancy since they haven't been asked to do this before. Once started, they reel off words quickly.

> One of my participants, a software trainer, recalled how the first thing he said to his class was that today he would be used the bible of software training, i.e., they were getting the best. One of his students immediately responded with, "I know of only one Bible, and it doesn't teach me about software." It took him a while to recover from that initial "slap in the face." He never used bible in that context again.

On another level, I also give participants a chance to share words others use that offend them.

Take a minute and compile your lists. You have control over the first; stop using those words. You also have the right to share with others when they use words that offend you.

Awareness precedes change. Are you ready to start cleaning your filter? Follow these suggestions to help reduce conflict, improve communication and strengthen your relationships.

1. List your prejudices and face them head on. Are they based on race, gender, religion, age, status or educational background (add your own)?
2. Form your opinion in the moment. Don't prejudge situations, presenters, your co-workers or parents' or children's reactions, a book before you have read it, the taste of food before you have eaten it (add your own).
3. Help yourself. Read books and magazines, attend seminars, listen to CDs, watch select TV programs to help you grow personally and professionally.
4. Ask for feedback. Have the confidence to inquire how you are perceived.
5. Stop conversations that are going down the wrong track and ask, "Why"? Solve the challenges on the spot rather than parting confused or even angry with the other person.

To improve your listening skills, invest in our ***Shhh! Listen, Don't Just Hear*** CD and workbook. You can read all about them at www.duoforce.com/ldb/nhuwc.htm.

Coming … the Fourth Great Chicago Networking Extravaganza

I'm delighted to announce *the* networking event in the Chicagoland area. Mark your calendars now for another Great Chicago Networking Extravaganza from 5:30 – 8:30

pm Oct. 12, 2005. Location is the Mid-America Club (boasting one of the city's most beautiful views), 200 E. Randolph, Chicago. We'll provide the opportunity to give and get through a raffle to benefit the Special Kids Network. Call me now for great sponsorship opportunities at affordable prices! We offer corporate and not-for-profit rates and business category exclusivity. Click on www.duoforce.com for more details about the event.

Duoforce to Co-Host Inscape Publishing Regional Meeting

As a long-time award-winning distributor of Inscape's DiSC and other products, I will co-host the Open Network meeting from 8 am – 12 noon April 30 at the Lindner Center, Lombard. If you or any one you know is interested in adding these world-renowned tools to your training/speaking tool kit, contact me at lillian@duoforce.com or 630-983-5308. I've built an organization of distributors across the country, whom I enjoy mentoring and learning from at the same time. Click on **www.duoforce.com** for more details about the meeting.

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.

In several job interviews I have had lately, a third person has joined us. In both cases, they were men, and they shook my hand and made a big deal that I (a woman) stay seated. I did. Was that the right thing to do?
Seated in Portland

No, it wasn't. Height is power, and anyone who stays seated in the situation you described gives away power and lacks professionalism as well. Our culture considers handshakes a sign of courtesy and respect. Both men and women want to convey these attributes. Courtesy and respect suggest that we rise to greet others, no matter what the situation, e.g. a job interview or a social dinner with friends. Do a quick role-play to get the "feel" of this. Take turns shaking hands with someone … one of you sits, and the other stands. The feeling you get when you "look up" to someone whom you want to have treat you as an equal says it with more impact than my words can.

E-Learning Update

In 2004, the e-learning market grew 30 percent to a $14 billion dollar market that supports total training content, services and technology dedicated to e-learning according to www.bersin.com/research/freeresearch/index/asp. With 24 percent of the population, ages 18-24, coming into the workforce, online training is becoming an important and cost-cutting tool.

"Because of the cost effectiveness and convenience of the Internet, what the online medium is allowing companies to do is to stretch their training dollars and train people

that they would not have otherwise trained," John Mello of *HR Today* said. While a great training tool to utilize, e-learning is not all inclusive. It needs to be an integral tool of a blended learning program that includes lectured classes, e-learning, instructional CDs, etc. to maximize your employees' potential as well as the company's.

Duoforce is proud to be at the forefront of this learning phenomenon. For one of our course demos, visit www.duoforce.com/direct2-services.htm. This site also provides the opportunity for you to preview the other 400 courses we can offer you online. Contact us to find out how we can help you move to blended learning and capitalize on your training dollars!

Lillian to Present "What You Say Before You Speak"

Many of you have asked when you could participate in one of my programs. "What You Say Before You Speak" on May 26, 2005 is a fun, interactive presentation open to the public. It's sponsored by the Women's Business Council of the St. Charles Chamber of Commerce. Networking will begin at 11:30 am. Enjoy lunch and the program being held at St. Charles Place for only $25 as a non-member. The group averages 100 women at its events. You'll learn how your image (appearance + behavior) affects how others perceive you. You'll even get personal, anonymous feedback from those at your table. Call the chamber at 630-584-8384 for more details.

Top Ten Networking Tips for REALTORS

Realtors (and the rest of you, too!) can benefit from my article in the March 2005 Illinois REALTOR magazine. Click on www.duoforce.com and look under NewsFlashs.

© 2005. Duoforce Enterprises, Inc. Lisle IL. All rights reserved.

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.