

Communicate and Network Your Way to More Success!

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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 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 consulting 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 printed or electronic media.

If you are unable to view this newsletter, you may read it online at www.duoforce.com.

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If You Want to Catch Trout, Don't Go to a Catfish Pond

Unequivocally, the number one question I am asked about networking is "How do I improve my results?" (After all, word-of-mouth is the most effective marketing tool!) And, my answer consistently is "Learn to network strategically." If you are into synonyms, that means advantageously, deliberately, intentionally, purposefully. All of these words further amplify what I mean: You have to have a plan and target your audience. You can be the world's best networker and not even get a nibble if you're in the wrong room. Of course, you also need to know effective communication techniques once you get there; however, we'll leave that for another time.

Most people who "love" to network don't like the details that a **real** plan involves; they just want to go and do it. Those who enjoy preparing the plan spend far too long perfecting it because they don't enjoy the implementation.

Even if you don't fish, you probably know that trout inhabit different bodies of water than catfish. The same is true of people. Different people attend different events. It's your responsibility to know whether it's trout or catfish you're after and where to find them.

Create a Relationship-Building Plan

1. Decide your business/career focus. What is your main function? How does what you do benefit your employers/customers/clients? Are you employed, in transition, looking for a promotion, job change or a different career? Your

answers in total determine your networking venues, which can change as your focus and goals change.

2. Decide your main purpose(s) for networking. Generally, your reasons for networking fall into four categories, which I call AIRS. Just as your body needs air to survive so does your business/career. Always decide which purpose(s) is guiding you to attend any event.
 - a. Advice
 - b. Information
 - c. Referrals, recommendations
 - d. Support
3. Who is your target market? Define and refine as explicitly as possible.
4. Where are you most likely to meet them? List specific groups/activities/volunteer organizations as applicable.
5. Whom do you know who already knows your target market and can introduce/refer you?
6. Whom would you like to meet (add to your network) to help you better reach your target market?
7. Based on your answers, what are the two/three best organizations to join or events to attend? Then, take it a step further. What events within those organizations does my target market attend?

Corporate employees benefit from preparing an external and internal (which varies from the one above) relationship-building plan.

Need Help?

Most people do! It's hard to stay on task when no one is making you create a plan, and no one is looking over your shoulder to see that you put a little blood, sweat and tears into every answer.

When you get ready to make networking work for you, contact me. I have a successful track record personally (I get at least 95% of my business through word-of-mouth referrals) and helping others with this vital business development function. The principles work well for executives and managers, entrepreneurs, sales forces and for people in transition or looking to get promoted or change jobs.

My goal is to help good people get better! And, you can have fun doing it!



Ask the Business Networking Authority

Do you have questions about business networking protocol 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.

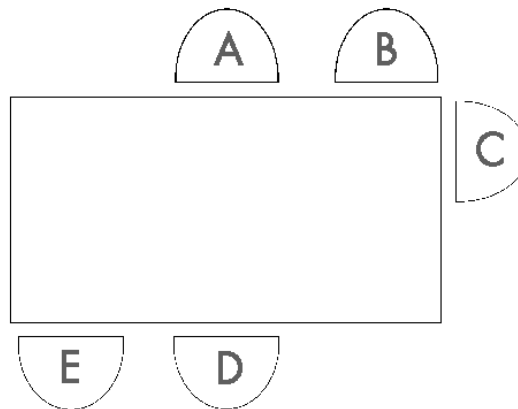
I've heard your presentation on what we say before we speak through our appearance and behavior. I have a question for you: Does where we sit at a table "speak" also?

Curious in St. Charles IL

It surely does! And, most people are not aware of the “sitting” language. You can create the illusion of power or equality in your relationship-building efforts by where you sit and where you seat others at meetings, conferences and after-hours events.

Power Position

The power position in a meeting being held at a rectangular table is always in the center facing the door, where the person can see who is coming and going. On television clips, you’ll notice it’s where the president of the United States sits. The second most important position is to the person’s right, the third to his/her left.



Cooperative

Let’s assume in our illustration that person A is calling the meeting. The most cooperative position is next to him/her (B) because there are no barriers between them. People who already know each other frequently assume this position in business and social situations. While it is acceptable and recommended, business people meeting each other for the first time rarely use this position.

The next most cooperative position is C. Business people often use this arrangement at a first meeting or until they get better acquainted. It is recommended for a job interview. It allows two people to be close while still having the corner of the table as a safety zone.

Competitive

The most competitive position to A is D. The table is a barrier between them, and people may become competitive and defensive when seated across from each other. If you have a choice, like in a restaurant, sit in the corner position or ask for a booth. Don’t set up a competitive situation unnecessarily. It can hamper an otherwise potentially positive relationship-building situation. When seated in the competitive position, a person also becomes defensive about his/her personal territory (or half of the table). Don’t accidentally push items into someone else’s space, as it is as much an invasion at dinner as if you had reached into their space and touched them.

Autonomous

A fourth position (E) is autonomous. It’s across the table, and in the position next to competitive. It is where you sit when you need to share a table, and you do not want to be involved with the other person. You might choose it at a library or in a self-serve restaurant. You may have to share space, but not necessarily conversation.

Meetings

You can direct or control responses in a meeting through seating arrangements. Putting chairs in a circle encourages equal contributions. A horseshoe or “T” will recognize and emphasize people at the head of the table. Theater seating or side-by-side says, “You are here to listen, not to talk.”

In a training situation, you can use circles for small group discussions, a horseshoe for workshops led by internal or external experts and theater seating for a keynote presentation. When you add a raised speaking platform, you are giving special status to the speaker, as well as setting up more of a barrier between him/her and the audience. Interaction is reduced; in fact, people usually wait to be called upon.



Fifth Great Chicago Networking Extravaganza coming in spring!

We'll be back!!! Look for the fifth Great Chicago Networking Extravaganza in the spring ... in the western suburbs. Until then, read what two participants said about the fourth one last month! Contact me if you want more information on sponsorship opportunities. We already have commitments and will continue to offer business category exclusivity.

The Great Networking Extravaganza is exactly as touted "great" - a great opportunity to exhibit as well as to participate in the engaging and focused networking interactions. I've had breakfast with one of the participants I met during the table topics portion, which expands the networking event beyond the one night. To Lillian, Jason and the excellent panel - thank you, thank you, thank you. Trisha Svehla, president, Managing The Mosaic

I found the Great Chicago Networking Extravaganza to be a valuable networking event. The roundtable activities and panel discussion provided very helpful information and resources on networking. I developed some key relationships and received quality leads just a week after the event. Those leads have generated possible future business for me. It was a GREAT event!

**Amanda A. Sprenger
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