

## Building Relationships is a Continuous Process

By Lillian D. Bjorseth, president  
Duoforce Enterprises, Inc.

Recently I was interviewed for an upcoming e-book on relationship building. One of the questions I was asked is becoming a perennial favorite from clients, audiences and the media: How do you use networking to help you in these tougher economic times and especially when you are in transition?

The answer is simple: if you need to *start* to leverage networking when the times get tougher or when you are no longer employed, you are in for some rough sledding.

You should be networking continuously (so you have people who will gladly help you anytime) starting with pre-school and grade school. My grandsons call them play dates. They qualify as much as relationship-building events as do meetings and conferences or having coffee with someone. The challenge is that you tend not to stay in touch with the people on your Little League team or those you stayed up with all night cramming for exams ... until you suddenly need them because your cradle to grave job leaves you looking at an early job "death."

Of course, some of you continue this pattern as you change jobs, leave professional organizations or move geographically. You keep breaking those links in your networking chain. (Some of them rust and can never be repaired.) Others of you network until you find a job and then fall back into your old ways. After all, you are busy at work and want a life outside of it, too. Networking is an after thought until you get a pink slip or discover you're the only employee in your department not to get a raise.

Networking is a continuous activity because it is the number one way to build relationships, the key to business and career success. Relationships are built on trust, and trust develops over a period of time. It is also wise to weed the seeds you plant at networking events to make sure you are spending time on mutually beneficial relationships. Networking is as much about giving as it is getting.

Your network is also your number one business support source when you are in transition. Your family supports you in a different way. They are not the ones you commiserate with when you had three job interviews in one day, and none of them was positive. You need to talk with people who understand ... who can remove themselves emotionally from the conversation because they don't depend on you to put bread on their tables.

Here are some key ways to build trust so you always have a pocketful of good business relationships no matter where you find yourself in your career. Keep in mind that people build trust at different rates; some people enter new situations as a doubting Thomas while others assume trust is a given. The suggestions below are ones you can control and generally speed up the relationship-building process.

- **Behave with integrity.** Be honest, reliable and truthful in all your dealings. No one undermines *you* like you when your actions and words do not mesh.
- **Be trustworthy.** I still remember the sage advice a human resources director gave me at one of my first jobs. To find out whom you can trust, share information with only one person at a time. If others learn the same information, you know from whence it came.



Lillian D. Bjorseth  
President  
2221 Ridgewood Rd.  
Lisle, IL 60532

630-983-5308  
630-983-5312 (fax)

[www.duoforce.com](http://www.duoforce.com)  
[lillian@duoforce.com](mailto:lillian@duoforce.com)

- **Listen with your eyes and ears.** Practice your people-reading skills until you know what others are really saying and then respond accordingly.
- **Listen in proportion to how you were born.** If you forget, look in a mirror and note you have two ears and one mouth.
- **Support those who work for you/with you.** Consensus doesn't mean you always get your way; it means you are a team player.
- **Share good news as well as bad,** particularly if you are in charge. It will stifle rumors and build rapport among the troops.
- **Meet your commitments.** Always do what you say you will do ... else don't promise it. Over the years, I guesstimate that at least 30-40 people have said to me they would send me a business card (they had run out, hmmm, wonder how that happened!) or email me their information. I've yet to receive one card in the mail and, sadly, have received only a few emails. They easily ruled themselves out of my network.

**Lillian Bjorseth helps you build a new kind of wealth - social capital - by improving your business networking, business development and communication skills. She's a Lisle IL-based internationally known speaker, trainer, coach, prolific author and certified DISC trainer. Contact her at 630-983-5308, [lillianspeaks@duoforce.com](mailto:lillianspeaks@duoforce.com), or visit [www.duoforce.com](http://www.duoforce.com)**



Lillian D. Bjorseth  
President  
2221 Ridgewood Rd.  
Lisle, IL 60532

630-983-5308  
630-983-5312 (fax)

[www.duoforce.com](http://www.duoforce.com)  
[lillian@duoforce.com](mailto:lillian@duoforce.com)