

## Quit Politicking, Start Networking to Ensure Career and Business Success by Lillian D. Bjorseth, President Duoforce Enterprises, Inc.

The decades of downsizing, mergers and acquisitions have brought new emphasis to job security and career management. So what is the best way to position yourself within a company to protect your job and get an occasional promotion or to grow sales within your own business? You have two choices: politicking and networking.

### Politicking

Politicking has long been a favorite ploy for those who want to “work” their way up the ladder. They are willing - maybe even enjoy - buttering or kissing up to someone who is in a position to help achieve what they want. One of the pitfalls of politicking is that the people you are playing up to already are in power and usually don't need your help to progress. You are at their mercy, and, when push comes to shove within their own political system, you know whose welfare comes first!

Another shortcoming is that if **the** person leaves the company or falls into disgrace, you may be left “friendless.” Also, if you stepped on others managers' and peers' toes while you were sucking-up, they may relish doing the same to you.

### Networking

Networking - the art of beginning and maintaining relationships - with employees and others who can help you reach your goals and get new customers is a far wiser and effective way to control your destiny.

When you can give as well as get in a relationship, no matter what the person's level, you can create a bond that leads to satisfactory results for both of you. Once that rapport has been established, you can count on each other even when one of you changes jobs within or outside a company. In fact, this can be a time to help each other infiltrate new arenas and build new relationships.

Because networking is an overused buzzword, its impact has been trivialized. It is so much more than glad-handing or simply attending “after-hours” events. It needs to be a well-planned part of your targeted marketing efforts. Word-of-mouth is by far the most effective way to get a new job or a new customer. Therefore, you need to be sure you are always networking where your potential customers are or with people who can introduce you to your target market.

When all things are equal between two candidates, products or services, the person making the decision will choose the one they know and trust. Your networking goal is to be **the** one known and trusted in your area of expertise.

The following hints will increase your relationship building and maintenance skills (and lessen your reliance on politicking):

- Always do what you say you will do - no matter how large or small the commitment.
- Help others without asking for a favor in return.

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- Stay in touch ... with people where you work, where you used to work and where you want to work or get business.
- Never pull rank when someone asks for a favor.
- Build planned, targeted networking activities into your weekly calendar.
- Consciously improve your interpersonal communication skills.

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**Lillian D. Bjorseth is known nationally for her infectious enthusiasm and her practical, insightful and pertinent content that you can apply on the spot and throughout your life. Lillian's a people-skills speaker, trainer, consultant and a prolific author. A graduate of the prestigious University of Missouri School of Journalism, she's also a member of National Speakers Association. Her Fortune 100 experience includes more than 10 years at AT&T where she trained top executives in media and communication skills. Contact her at [lilianspeaks@duoforce.com](mailto:lilianspeaks@duoforce.com), [www.duoforce.com](http://www.duoforce.com), or 630-983-5308.**

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