

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

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

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? What is your UO: Unique Offering? How does what you do benefit your employers, customers or 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/ and volunteer organizations as applicable.
5. Whom do you know who already knows your target market and can introduce/refer you?

Lillian D. Bjorseth  
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)

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.

© 2006. Duoforce Enterprises, Inc. Lisle IL

**Lillian D. Bjorseth coaches people in business development skills so they achieve their desired networking results. Based in Lisle IL, she's a people-skills speaker, trainer and author of *Breakthrough Networking: Building Relationships That Last*; *52 Ways to Break the Ice & Target Your Market*; and the *Nothing Happens Until We Communicate* CD and workbook series. She's a contributing author to *Masters of Networking*. You can reach her at [lillianspeaks@duoforce.com](mailto:lillianspeaks@duoforce.com), [www.duoforce.com](http://www.duoforce.com) or 630-983-5308.**

**Lillian D. Bjorseth**  
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)