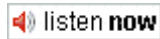


SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 05, 2009

BREAKTHROUGH NETWORKING: Divide and Conquer for Better Results



Breakthrough Networking with Lillian Bjorseth

Volumes have been written and said about how to network successfully as an individual. I'm going to take a different approach and discuss why to do it as a team when your goal is "all for one and one for all."

Interestingly, more than one also appears to be the approach for deciding who first said, "Divide and conquer." It is attributed to sources ranging from the Bible and Philip II of Macedon to Julius Caesar, Louis XI and Sun Tzu ... and probably others! May as well join ranks like that!

Recently, three of four who comprise the [Speakers Roadshow](#) in the Chicago area (we visit prospective clients to give a free 10-minute preview of our presentations so clients can see us before they hire us) attended a large networking event (400 attendees) at Hard Rock Café. We arrived together, split up and reconvened in two hours. Conservatively, we spoke in aggregate and exchanged business cards and information with at least 35 people. Far more than each of us could ever have successfully connected with solo!

I want to examine this method in more depth so that hopefully you, too, can benefit from it.

- **Who can use this approach?** Companies, associations and other not-for-profits that send more than one person to conferences, trade shows and chamber and other professional meetings.
- **Why use this approach?** It's the number one way to increase value for your time and dollar. You/your employer pays for more than one person to attend outside events to build more relationships and increase your exposure ... not to talk with each other. I learned this well when I worked for AT&T. We were instructed to sit at different tables, talk to "strangers" and save the water cooler talk for the office. In this economy, organizations can certainly benefit from this practice and educate their employees about this approach.
- **Here's an example.** In addition to standard networking events, use this approach when numerous company employees attend the same trade show. As the owner or supervisor, review the program ahead of time and assign booths and presentations to various people. (No one person can successfully visit 500 booths or attend fifteen presentations!) **And** make them accountable to report at a debriefing shortly after the event.
- **Use the tag team approach.** If two of you are speaking with the same person, it's a great opportunity to say positive things about the other person that s/he may not be comfortable saying. At our recent event, someone was complementing one of our group about the excellent presentation he had given for her organization. One of our other members asked the person making the flattering remarks if she had written a LinkedIn recommendation encapsulating those thoughts. She hadn't ... and promised she would the next day! Another use is when one of you is speaking to a person and wants to move on. One of your team members can "relieve" you seamlessly.
- **Get free exposure.** Consider having a business card with more than one name if that is appropriate for your business. In our case, we have one card with four names/email addresses/phone numbers on it. To help the person receiving the card, we put a check mark by our name ... that way s/he knows immediately whom they met since we have two women and two men in our group. Each of us is gaining exposure when any one of us gives out a card. As I was writing this, I got an email from one of the group letting us know she had had lunch with a hot prospect at a big company and had shared "our" card with him along with the invitation to visit us at

our website. Great publicity for me while I'm writing an article for
The National Networker!

For more information, please visit [Lillian's TNNW Bio](#) and [The Speakers Roadshow](#).