



Geared for Success

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A publication of Training Werks -- Your Resource for Leadership Development

"Olympic" Career Networking

Networking is an organized method for connecting and building relationships with others. It is "Olympic" in nature since it requires practice, attention and consistent intention just as the athletes of the games perfect their skills. When I am coaching and working with professionals, I frequently mention the importance of networking for career building. Unfortunately, networking is greatly misunderstood. People see it as fake, opportunistic, too workplace political, begging for favors and just plain uncomfortable. Yet, networking skills are critical for career progression, job hunting, job exploration, relationship building, and much more. Networking has broad implications for interacting with others, helping you keep a pulse on current trends, meeting prospective clients and fostering your own development.

Being a good networker involves having excellent communication skills. These skills take time to develop and build. "There is no one-size-fits-all when it comes to networking. Different people are successful using different networking tactics", according to Amanda Augustine, Top Resume's career advice expert.

Finding your own strategy for networking is foundational for being successful. Each of us has a different approach for how we can take a step forward in this skill area. When you regularly practice networking, it will become more natural to you. First off, you need to create a mindset that networking is simply building relationships with others. Here are some suggestions for skill building in networking:

- **Practice networking in your workplace.** Get to know people across the organization and in different departments. Be inquisitive—find out what others do, how it aligns with what you do and

how you can build bridges of communication. Many people think networking is only done at conferences and conventions. You have chances every day to network with colleagues.

- **Use Social Media Effectively.** Social media platforms like LinkedIn offer ways you can keep your contacts in one place. Reach out to professionals you know past and present to create your list of connections.



- **Offer to Help on Committees and Special Projects.** Your involvement with others strengthens your ability to interact, contribute and see a bigger picture.
- **Know the "Rules" of Networking.** Networking isn't asking about jobs and trying to get interviews. It's all about relationships. If you get a reputation for not knowing the "rules" you may ruin any chance for possibilities in the future.
- **Set Goals for Yourself.** Networking means taking time to get out of your comfort zone. Think about some ways you can interact on a regular basis with others. Track how often you intentionally network.
- **Be Known for Great Work.** If you put your signature on excellent your

excellent performance, others will be drawn to you. This exposure creates a positive environment for networking.

- **Follow-up.** Have you missed opportunities to follow-up after meeting a new professional at a conference or during a meeting? Follow-up is simple, yet many professionals neglect this step in the process.

When you build your network, think about connections to professionals at all levels and with diverse profiles. Today's workplace requires consistent, effective networking. You will not only reap the benefits of knowing a lot of people but enhancing your career in positive ways.

Resource: "7 Professional Networking Tips and Tricks for a Successful Job Search", by Lisa Tynan

"Networking is a lot like nutrition and fitness: we know what to do, the hard part is making it a top priority."

Herminia Ibarra



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Are your Emails G.R.E.A.T.?

Evaluate your emails in a quick and easy way. Think “G.R.E.A.T.” when composing, editing, and reviewing your emails.

G = Goal – What is the purpose of the email?

R = Relevant Facts – Have I provided the necessary information?

E = Emotional Tone – What mood have I set for this email?

A = Action – Have I made a specific request? Do I want the recipient to take a certain action? Am I clear what the action needs to be?

T = Timeframe – Have I advised the reader as to when a response or action is needed? Have I informed them of time constraints that may impact the issue?

Resource:
[Customer Service for Dummies](#),
by Karen Leland and Keith Bailey

“The important thing about groupthink is that it works not so much by censoring dissent as by making dissent seem somehow improbable.”

James Surowiecki

Is Groupthink Holding Your Team Back?

“Great minds think alike” – or should they? Groupthink is a psychological phenomenon in which people set aside their own personal opinions for the consensus of the group. It is based on a need to conform and be accepted. Groupthink was first identified by social psychologist Irving L. Janis in 1972.



No team is immune from groupthink. In fact, groupthink may become more pronounced over time on teams. Once groupthink begins to happen, the team no longer explores the depth of an issue, brings up other options or identifies concerns. The team stays on the surface and opts for easy solutions. In [Communicating at Work](#), the authors, Tony Alessandra and Phil Hunsaker list four reasons Groupthink happens:

- **Illusion of Togetherness.** The group takes pride in its lack of disagreement and ability to come to rapid decisions.
- **Conformity Pressures.** Dissenters are discounted as not being team players.
- **Self-Censorship.** Team members keep opinions to themselves and fail to question the direction of the group (e.g. “If everyone else sees it this way, it must be right.”).
- **Time Pressures.** Time pressures can block the will to change course.

Preventing groupthink is an important responsibility for leaders. Below are several techniques needed that should be practiced on a regular basis.

- **Promote an atmosphere where team members feel free to disagree.** Gather all ideas from the team including minority viewpoints. Members should be encouraged to play devil’s advocate. Silence should not be taken as agreement.
- **Facilitate the airing of viewpoints – Ask for different ideas.** Solicit views from non-vocal team members. Ask for the team to point out hidden risks.
- **Generate ideas before evaluating them.** Divide discussions into two phases. Prohibit evaluation of ideas in the generation stage.
- **Hire a diverse workforce.** People from different backgrounds contribute by seeing situations from unique viewpoints.
- **Discuss ideas in terms of Plus, Minus and Interesting.** This Edward de Bono tool helps to launch thinking in positive ways (e.g. “What is interesting about this idea is...”).
- **Think through an idea more than once.**

Groupthink may result in failed projects, financial losses or unintended consequences. It may lead to blind-spots, lack of preparation, ignoring important information, overconfidence in decisions and resistance to new information. A leader’s awareness and ability to stop groupthink is critical for decision making, team building and individual development of team members.

Resources:
“What is GroupThink & Why It’s Bad for Business”,
by Erin Sandage;
“Getting Rid of Groupthink”,
by Jamie Davidson

How to Deal with Talker Dominance in Meetings

As you know, when one or two people dominate a meeting consistently, everyone else goes silent or stops trying to talk. As leaders hearing from all of our team members is important for idea gathering, seeing the big picture, understanding perspectives and building a cohesive environment. Virtual meetings have increased the challenge of balancing the voices of all in attendance. Below are some techniques for controlling the dominant talker and getting them to share the talk time with others.

- At the beginning of the meeting, create a list of ground rules including: Share the Talk Time, Speak Wisely and Sparingly, We will all Hear and Be Heard.
- Say, "It will be great to hear from everyone and then we can merge common themes."
- Interject when the dominant person pauses – "Thank you. What other opinions are there?"
- Use the Round Robin Technique to go from person to person with a specific amount of time.
- Say, "I need to interrupt you. We only have ___minutes and it would be helpful if you summed up your ideas quickly

so others can add their thoughts."

- If the dominant talker is bringing up issues not on the agenda, create a parking lot for those ideas/comments.
- Say, "_____, I know you have a lot of experience in this area. What do you think?"
- Coach the dominant talker on their meeting behaviors. Perhaps they are not aware of how much they are talking and how it impacts others.



Being an effective meeting facilitator is critical for building your team. Some of your quieter team members may have exceptional ideas that go unheard. Your role is to build a collaborative, inclusive space for everyone to express their ideas in a safe way.

Resource: "People Who Talk Too Much in Meetings— Respectfully Dealing with Dominance", by North Star Facilitators

"Stress is the trash of modern life - we all generate it but if you don't dispose of it properly, it will pile up and overtake your life."

Danzae Pace

Shifting Paradigms for Less Stress

Is it time to redefine your view of stress? Most of us look at stress as something to be managed. In the book, [Unwind – 7 Principles for a Stress-Free Life](#), by Dr. Michael Olpin and Sam Bracken, the authors suggest that we can learn to "unwind" usual reactions to stress and replace them with healthier habits. By doing so, we can take control of stress in our lives and reprogram our thinking.

Short term stress can be helpful to motivate and alert us that something is wrong. It is when we have chronic, long-term stress that we may experience and act out inappropriate responses. This can lead to harmful effects in emotional, psychological, and physical ways. Stress impacts our relationships, our decision making, the work we do, and much more.



In stressful situations, the time between the stimulus we feel and the response we give provides us with an opportunity to control how we react. Your paradigm is how you perceive and interpret the world. By shifting your paradigms with the following techniques, you can lesson your stress.

1. **"Reactive" to "Proactive"** – Think ahead with the big picture in mind. Do all you can in situations to look beyond the problem at hand.
2. **"Unmotivated" to "Inspired"** – Disliking your situation can bring more stress on you since we tend to ruminate

our thoughts. Instead, create a path for yourself. Set goals and make small steps toward changes to follow your heart/passions.

3. **"Pressure" to "Priorities"** – Sorting through what is important is a critical step in building your priorities and shifting away from unwanted stress. There may be times that you may need to ask your supervisor to clarify priorities for work. Multitasking actually causes more stress. Focus on one important thing at a time and complete it.
4. **"Hassle" to "Harmony"** – Instead of thinking about winners and losers, modify your strategies to collaborate and build bridges with others.
5. **"Anxiety" to "Empathy"** – Listen with the intent to understand. Focus on investing in relationships in supportive ways. Isolation and conflict bring anxiety.
6. **"Defensive" to "Diverse"** – Open your mind to different solutions and ways of thinking. Stubborn adherence to a singular viewpoint can lead to missed opportunities and defensive stress.
7. **"Tense" to "Tranquil"** – Practice tranquility in your life by meditation, exercise, being with loved ones and seeking out your calm place. Tranquility can be found in these ways: mental, physical, emotional and spiritual.

You can't avoid stress, but you can reframe your thinking and actions around it. Your thought patterns may be winding you up to create greater stress. Use the seven techniques listed above to change your paradigms around stress.

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Power Up Your Skillset and Mindset in the Women's Leadership Journey Program. This 2 ½ day intensive training program will focus on your workplace performance and mastery of skills necessary for gaining a professional edge—all while you collaborate/network with other professional women. Don't miss this opportunity to elevate your strengths!

What You Will Learn:



- Ways to leverage your professional presence through your communication skills.
- Coping strategies for stress and methods to build your resilience.
- Emotional Intelligence competencies needed for workplace success.
- Insights from women in many industries and experience levels.
- Strategies for being your most authentic, dynamic self—present and future.

Interested?

Contact Jan Hovrud at 435-647-0516 or email at jhovrud@training-werks.com to find out more, get on the waiting list or pre-enroll. All levels from emerging leaders to executives are invited to attend.

Act now! Only a few seats are remaining.

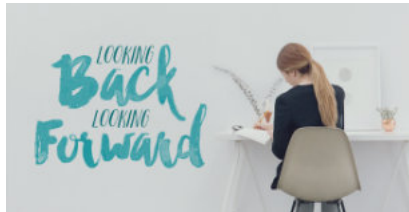
“Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards.”

Søren Kierkegaard

Take a Look Back as You Move Forward

Set a block of uninterrupted time to reflect on your work and life. These simple questions can help to clarify your thinking, prioritize your actions and build a model for moving forward. Reflection can also help you take stock, celebrate fulfillment, become more effective and reach higher levels of achievements.

- 1. What Did You Accomplish?** Think about times you were proud of yourself, did something well or solved a problem.
- 2. What Were Your Biggest Disappointments?** Recall times when you disappointed yourself or were disappointed by others. What expectations remain unfulfilled?
- 3. What Did You Learn?** Look at questions 1 and 2 above. What would you do differently? What did you notice and change? What were your “ah-ha” moments?
- 4. How Do You Limit Yourself? How Can You Stop Doing**



So? What beliefs stopped you from achievement? What mental messages do you run through your thoughts regularly? What do you tell yourself?

- 5. What Are Your Core Values?** Are you living what you believe to be important and true? If not, what should you do to change your situation?
- 6. In what work and life roles did you spend the most time?** Assess where you spend the most time and energy. Are you living in ways that support your core values in this role?
- 7. What is Your New Paradigm for the New Year?** What goals would support a better you—a stronger you, a happier you?

Self-exploration is an important part of personal and professional growth. Taking a look at your life as if you were on a balcony, helps you assess and determine your path forward.

Resource: [Your Best Year Yet](#), by Jinny S. Ditzler

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