

THE EXCHANGE

This issue's featured subject is "Networking & Meeting New People."

WORKING THE ROOM

Imagine an event where there is a roomful of people. You walk into this room and scan the faces, noting a few familiar ones. What do you do?



If you are like most people, you make a beeline to those you recognize like a teenager gravitates to a video game. Unfortunately, you may stay engrossed with these same few people the way the fifteen-year old will with the video entertainment. If you do, you will leave the event without meeting new people.

There are benefits to getting outside your comfort zone and meeting different people. Stepping outside of your comfort zone can stimulate novel and interesting thoughts that lead to personal growth. Meeting new people can bring you a contact that may help you professionally, socially, or personally. When strangers show interest in you, it is a real uplift. You tend to feel better about yourself.

With all of these benefits, how come we don't get out there and work the room by meeting new people? Sometimes, it is because we think there is nothing to gain from the people that we see. More likely, we are a bit intimidated walking up to strangers to start a conversation. Here are some tips that will help you to "work the room."

- Have a pep talk with yourself before you enter the room. Increase your energy level and place a smile on your face. People are attracted to positive people. Look like someone who is having a good time.
- Soon after entering the room, get a drink. It does not have to be an alcoholic drink and may be better if it is not, depending on the purpose of the function. Holding a drink in your hand, and occasionally sipping it, will make you look more relaxed.
- Avoid eating and drinking simultaneously because that does not leave a hand free to shake. Keep one hand available to engage with others.
- Women, if you must carry a purse, keep it small with a shoulder strap.
- Mentally divide the room into quarters and make sure that you mingle, covering all four sections.
- Approach a group of three to four people and silently join their conversation, sipping your drink, for about a minute. Look at the speaker and other members in the small group. If they return your eye contact, consider that an invitation to remain if you desire. Make a short comment or question on what they are talking about. Make sure you do not focus the comment upon yourself, rather upon them or their conversation.
- When you enter small groups, strive to be the first to leave. After all, you invited yourself and do not want to wear out your welcome. It is better to leave them wanting more.
- Be prepared to have a quick and catchy statement about what you do for a living. It is the most frequent question asked. If you are a computer programmer, you could say, "I help get your computers to do what you want them to do." The statement is designed to open a short conversation.
- If you are an extrovert, select people standing alone to approach. Use open questions that start conversations, like, "What do you like to do when you're not working?" If there is a host/hostess, you can ask, "What story can you tell me about Chris?"
- When appropriate, give two business cards: one to keep and one to share. Ask for 2 of their cards and write key information about the person on the back of one, marking it with an arrow on the front. Look for an opportunity to pass along his/her unmarked card to someone else at the event. Promoting other people can make you very popular.

Working the room can be both fun and profitable. You can do it quickly or you can take your time. And when you get to those familiar



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LOOKING AHEAD:

- ♦ The March issue of The Exchange will focus on **DISC - Understanding Differences in People.**

LOOKING BACK:

- ♦ For previous editions of The Exchange, go to our [back issues](#).
- ♦ Re-read the [02/2002](#) edition: **Negotiations.**

Strangers are just friends waiting to happen.

What Our Clients Are Saying

Your unique blend of humor and relevant information on effective communication techniques was a definite plus. I am happy you were able to join us and I am sure that the 100 professionals who attended the event benefited from your session.

Cynthia Ghosten, Knoxville TN



Helpful Hints:

- Keep your business cards in your right pocket, and cards that you receive in your left.
- Eat before going to events where you want to make a good impression. Eat lightly or not at all once there.

Today, give a stranger one of your smiles. It might be the only sunshine he sees all day.

Quoted in P.S. I Love You, compiled by H. Jackson Brown, Jr.



To learn more about it, click here!

REMEMBER MY NAME!

By Ben Cairns, M.A.



When was the last time you forgot someone's name? Some people are a lot more sensitive about it than others. If you forget a name when

you are building a relationship in business, it could make the wrong impression and create a disadvantage for both of you. Think of everyone you meet as an opportunity to test your continuously improving name recollection skills. Here are a few of the ways you can prepare for your next opportunities:

- **Ask the other person his/her name.** If it is hard to hear or understand, ask again. You can also ask for the spelling. It is polite to make the effort to know someone's name, so most people usually do not mind at all if you take it seriously. If you are not sure of the name shortly after you've been introduced, it's also acceptable to make sure you remember it correctly at the point where you disengage from the conversation. You can say something like "So, it's Robert Turner, right?" Or, you can say, "How do I say your name?"
- **Say the name out loud.** This allows you to test your correct pronunciation and to reinforce it. Make eye contact when you say the name. A smile and a head nod can make you appear friendlier. If you can't repeat the name aloud, repeat it silently in your head. It is most helpful to do this as soon as you hear the name for the first time and again shortly after. Use the person's name at least once in the conversation. It personalizes the exchange and improves your recall.
- **Make a creative association with the name.** If you were to meet me, for example, you could visualize me holding a small pile of rocks in my arms (a cairn), or me holding a Cairn terrier. Recollection is more likely if there is a creative connection. You can also strengthen associations by incorporating sound and motion. To make my name visualization more active, you could think of me juggling the noisy stones or laughing and smiling while trying to keep the Cairn terrier from licking me on the face.
- **Link the face to the name.** Look carefully at the facial features of the person you're being introduced to. Clear your head of other thoughts for just a moment and focus on the other person to make the association.

- **Write down the other person's name.**

In addition to writing the name, record a key piece of information that could make future conversations more meaningful. Things to remember might be what they do for a living, that they care for a sick parent, study a certain subject in school, or have 3 kids. Of course it is not always convenient or appropriate to whip out a pad and pencil, so sometimes you'll have to do it retrospectively. I review my name list periodically and again right before I know I may see a certain person or group.

- **Introduce the person that you just met.**

Introduce the person to someone else that you already know or tell a friend about him/her later.

I recently got an interesting tip from a client who deals with a lot of important people in his business. "Don't say 'it's nice to meet you,'" he said, "You may have met the person before and forgotten. That could upset them, so it is much better to make a habit of saying something like 'it's nice to see you.'"

When you remember a name, you can "break the ice" and start the new relationship on the right course. Take the time to apply some of the above suggestions to see how much improvement you can make in 2003.

BEVERLY INMAN-EBEL PARTICIPATES IN WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE

TLC's CEO was one of 40 business owners from across the nation who participated in a conference call through Women Impacting Public Policy. Representing the Bush administration on the call was Keith Hennessey, Deputy Assistant to the President on Economic Policy, and Cynthia Williams, from the Office of Public Liaison. The information provided was to be used in President Bush's State of the Union address in January. "It was an honor to give direct input to the man who left the conference call to have a meeting with the President," reported Beverly. Issues discussed included repealing the inheritance tax, employers taking a "holiday" from paying the FICA tax, health insurance, and removing the barriers of bundling large government contracts.

BREAKING THE ICE

For almost half of us, the hardest part of engaging in conversations with new people is just starting the conversation!



Often, discussing something general like the weather, or just introducing yourself, can "break the ice."

But what does breaking ice have to do with starting a conversation? This one might surprise you! By today's definition, breaking the ice means "to overcome an initial awkward interactive situation," or "to initiate talking when rapport or trust is missing."

This expression originated over 500 years ago! Give the credit to nautical engineers who sailed through the areas around Greenland and Norway. These sailors had special boats that were used during navigation through frozen waterways. The boats possessed equipment that cleared pathways through the ice so that other water transportation could sail through. These sailors, with their special boats, literally "broke the ice."

Being on long voyages with limited people, there was plenty of opportunity to chitchat. The crew was often made up of people who did not know each other. Over time, the saying, "breaking the ice," came to refer to overcoming the barrier preventing conversations. The "ice" represented the cold, hard feeling of trying to get through to someone. The "breaking" was usually a question or an introduction to lead to more interactions.

Starting a conversation for some is easier than it is for others. When you are at your next social gathering or have an opportunity to engage in a conversation with a stranger, for the best results in conversational sailing, remember to first, break the ice.

ASK THE EXPERTS



Dear TLC,

I am up for a promotion that I really want. The problem is that this new job will require me to travel across the country and meet a lot of new people. This is not one of my strengths. Suggestions?
Wall Flower

Dear Wall Flower,

Think of something that you are good at now, that at one time, you were not. It will be the same with meeting strangers. Tell yourself that you can do this, and you will. Have some open questions ready to ask to get the other person started talking. You can literally listen yourself into success.

CONVERSATIONS MADE EASY (well,... easier!)

By Vincent Ivan Phipps, B.S.

Quick! Think of a person who you feel is a good conversationalist. Got it? Good. Now think of a person who you feel is a good listener. Are they the same person? If you are like most, we give credit to someone for being a good conversationalist when they let us do all the talking.

Since February is traditionally the month of love, there are probably several opportunities for you to get credit for being a good conversationalist. If your conversational skills could use some improvement, below are some easy-to-apply tips that could help.

When it comes to networking or meeting new people, please **avoid** doing the following:

- Asking, "Excuse me, but are you going to eat all of those sausage balls?"
- Saying, "You are right, this punch is watered down. That's why I poured mine back in the bowl."
- Beginning a conversation with, "You know what I hate most about this place?"

Here are some suggestions that could help make you an instant conversational expert:

- Ask the other person open questions: "So, what do you enjoy doing when you are not at these office parties?"
- Use BridgeProbes® - questions that contain something the other person said. For example, if a person says they just moved from up North, you can ask, "From what part of the North?" If they say, "New York," you can respond, "I have never been to New York. What's it like?" They could say, "The city is always energetic. Something is always happening!" You can ask, "Well, if I wanted to visit, what are some energetic things I should do?"...etc.

Being a good conversationalist takes a combination of a few things: actively listening, asking good questions, and choosing the right responses. Whether you are unaccustomed to talking with new people, or you're an expert, practice helps. Instead of waiting for your next social event, start working on your conversational skills today. Speak more to your waiters, engage in quick conversations with the people at the grocery store, and look for opportunities to discuss general topics like the weather, music, or cuisine with others.

Becoming a better conversationalist is as easy as 1, 2, 3.

1. Talk. 2. Listen. 3. Communicate!



Remember to...

- **Fake it until you make it!**
- **Toss back a question based upon what the person was talking about.**

People seem not to see that their opinion of the world is also a confession of character.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

I've never seen a smiling face that was not beautiful.

Fear makes strangers of people who would be friends.

Shirley Maclaine



If you have the will to win, you have achieved half your success; if you don't, you have achieved half your failure.

David Ambrose

If you don't like something, change it; if you can't change it, change the way you think about it.

Mary Engelbreit

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CEO CORNER: Talk to the Mirror

By Beverly Inman-Ebel, MA CCC-SLP

Being a true extrovert, I am not shy. Yet, like most people, there are times when I feel inadequate meeting large groups of people that I do not know. It is then that I must practice what I preach and draw courage from within my deepest self. That is when I talk to the mirror.

Back in 1986, I was invited to Washington D. C. to represent the State of Tennessee as an individual who survived a potentially fatal car crash because I was wearing a seat belt. The preparations were rather exciting, as I had to go through security background checks in order to meet the President of the United States and other famous people.

The day of the event was very full before we got to the Capitol Building. By then, I had something spilled all over my skirt that I had so carefully selected to wear to this big 'to-do.' I found myself in the ladies room literally washing the silk garment in the sink and striving to dry it via the hand dryer. Needless to say, this was not a confidence-building activity. I looked in the mirror and saw a young woman who was about to cry and who was angry with herself for the weakness. I told myself that I would not allow a silly mistake to rob me of this adventure. I challenged myself to be able to tell my children a funny story about this one day. I put a smile on my face that was bigger than the stain on my skirt.

Just a couple of years ago, I went to the National Speakers Association's national convention with thousands of other people. Being alone during the breakout sessions was no big deal. Going to the big gala at the end was mildly stressful. I had just come through a period of not feeling good about myself. Before I left my hotel room, I again talked to the mirror. I remember saying with a determined smile, "You're back! Go get'em!"

As I entered the cavernous room, there did not seem to be an empty chair that was



not being saved for someone. I remembered the determination I felt when I talked to the mirror. I confidently walked to the very front table, introduced myself, and was invited to join the officers of this organization for dinner.

A few months ago, I was going through some old pictures, and showed Vincent a picture of Sugar

Ray Leonard and me, taken at that "Saved by the Belt" reception so many years ago. The picture revealed a confident, smiling, younger me. The talk I had with the mirror that day had obviously worked.

Michael Jackson had a hit song, "The Man in the Mirror," that I relate to. When you need a boost of confidence to meet new people or to accomplish any goal outside your comfort zone, look yourself in the mirror and have a heart to heart talk. You are the only person who can give yourself, self-esteem. Look! Motivate! Live your dreams!

FEATURED PRODUCT: Introducing Two New Books

Our CEO, Beverly Inman-Ebel, has co-authored two new books that will be available in Spring 2003. One is, *Power Learning: Communication* (paperback; \$14.95), and the other is, *Success Is A Decision of the Mind*, (hardback; \$24.95). Both books by Insight Publishing Company will be available in bookstores. Also available, through TLC, are a limited number of copies signed by the author. If you would like to reserve your personally autographed books, please call TLC at 888-BECAUSE (232-2873).

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