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Perfecting Connecting®: A Personal Guide to Mastering Networking in the Workplace

Perfecting Connecting®: Learning to Speak the Language of Others



Quick Card to Perfecting Connecting®

Book Sarah!

Welcome to this month's edition of my e-column focusing on Perfecting Connecting®. Each month I hope to inspire, motivate and encourage you to strengthen the connections in your life. My message includes strategies, inspirational stories, recommended reading and action steps for you to take that will help you begin your journey to perfecting your connecting. If you find this article helpful, please forward it to people in your network.

September 2005 eZine Sarah Michel

Networking For Life

I was so excited about my book recommendation this month, "Never Eat Alone," and the great connecting strategies that author Keith Ferrazzi openly shares in this truly "must-read" book. And then Hurricane Katrina struck.

Since this tragedy more than 10 days ago, I have witnessed the power of effective networking and the healing arms of great connectors. Then I realized this month's focus had to change. As my good friend Kappy said, "Sarah, there's an elephant in the room and you can't ignore it."

If you believe you only need a strong network for business success, I suggest you think again. Your network may just save your life! Pay attention to the stories that are being told by victims of Hurricane Katrina and you will see how their network has come through for them, sometimes providing jobs, homes and clothing, while for others the most basic elements of survival, such as food and water.

A friend from Denver sent an e-mail last week putting her network to the test: a friend of hers from New Orleans needed help. Nine months pregnant and due any minute, this friend was evacuated from the hospital in the middle of the night. The hospital had lost power and sustained severe damage from the violent storm.

This friend of a friend and her husband left with nothing but a change of clothes for themselves and a new blue onesie (bodysuit) for their first child, a baby boy that they planned to bring home to his new nursery, the same place they just spent months preparing for his arrival.

Fortunately, they reached a hospital in Baton Rouge just in time to deliver the baby, who arrived healthy and oblivious to the trauma and desperation that surrounded him. But their home is gone, both of their businesses are destroyed, their neighborhood is wiped out and they

lost everything but a diaper bag, infant car seat and a change of clothes they stashed in the car.

Through the power of networking, more than 100 people from around the country started making a difference by sending clothes, baby furniture, money and lots of gift certificates to this young family now sheltered in her sister's Austin, Texas house. They will begin to rebuild their lives there.

This is not FEMA, Red Cross or the Clinton-Bush Relief Fund...this is just normal people, like you and me, reaching out to help other people. Most of us who responded to the initial e-mail by offering help don't even know this family and will most likely never meet them. But someone I know and love, who is an important part of my network, knows them and asked me for my help. That's all it took.

Here in Colorado Springs, more than 1,000 miles away from the destruction, people have sponsored families who have lost everything. Through their church, family connections or friends of friends, people are being welcomed into our community and provided with homes, clothing, and sometimes a simple sign of loving support.

I would encourage you to look for opportunities where you could make an impact on this national tragedy by leveraging the power of your network. Here are just a few ideas;

Perfecting Connecting® Action Steps:

1. **Sponsor a family.** Together you and your network could collect clothing, furniture, gift certificates and money needed to rebuild their lives.
2. **Contact your local Red Cross or Salvation Army and offer to volunteer** together with several clients, colleagues and friends from your network. Almost every major city is currently housing survivors in temporary shelters and they desperately need volunteers. Visit: www.redcross.org or www.salvationarmy.org.
3. **Reach out to your network to see if there are companies or organizations that might be looking to expand their workforce.** Collect these opportunities and contact your local unemployment office, which will be the best source for job postings.

One lesson we can learn from this national tragedy is the power of building a strong, global network. Treat people the way you want to be treated. Zig Ziglar says, "You can have anything you want in life, *if* you help others get what they want and need first."

Here are some helpful tips John C. Maxwell, author and international speaker recommends on becoming a more effective connector. He devised a simple formula using the word **connect** as an acronym:

- C** = Consider others first.
- O** = Open yourself up to them.



- N** = Never violate their trust
- N** = Never manipulate them
- E** = Encourage them at every opportunity
- C** = Constantly add value to their lives
- T** = Treat them with respect

Network for life, not just for the moment: You never know when your life will depend on it.

If you have a great story of how your network, or someone you know, helped a victim of Hurricane Katrina, please [click here](#) to tell me about it. I will be sharing these inspirational stories in future columns.

Comments or Questions?

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