



908 - Networking: Get to Work on Enhancing Your Marketability!

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Faculty Biographies

Art Bousel

Arthur Bousel is vice president-professional development of High Potential, Inc., a career development firm located in Chicago, whose services are designed and managed by lawyers who fully understand both the practice and business of law. Mr. Bousel applies results-oriented career advancement techniques in coaching attorneys to excel in their current organization or execute a successful transition. Over 1,200 lawyers at all levels have profited from his practical guidance to achieve their leadership, client development, or transitions objectives.

After practicing law at Simpson Thacher & Bartlett and Shearman & Sterling, Mr. Bousel built a company servicing America's largest supermarkets. He launched his legal career management practice when Crain's Chicago Business profiled his career, prompting attorneys to call seeking career assessment and planning advice. Mr. Bousel served as dean for career development at Valparaiso University School of Law.

Mr. Bousel built the largest attorney career networking organization in Chicago (Lawyer-to-Lawyer Network) and designed 2006 Attorney Career Enhancement Day, the best attended career advancement program in Chicago Bar Association history. His recent articles for the CBA Record, Daily Law Bulletin, Chicago Lawyer and NALP Bulletin offer practical solutions to common attorney career development obstacles and game-plans for building a professional network. He was chosen to serve on the faculty of ABA and NALP's 2006 Professional Development Institute in Washington, DC and to deliver the presentation on "Attorney Career Development Plans -- Tool for Success and Satisfaction."

Art earned a B.S. from University of Pennsylvania and a J.D.-M.B.A. from Columbia University.

Daniel Cotter

Daniel Cotter currently is assistant vice president and deputy general counsel – regulatory affairs and general counsel for Argonaut Select Markets in Chicago. He has responsibility for all legal matters related to the state insurance departments and regulatory compliance, including all inter-company relationships and holding company filings. In addition, he has responsibility for negotiating enterprise-wide IT and services agreements with Argonaut's IT group and provides all legal services needed by select markets.

Prior to joining Argonaut, Mr. Cotter served as senior counsel of Unitrin, Inc and has held various positions of increasing responsibility at CNA and Lord, Bissell & Brook.

Mr. Cotter is past chair of the young lawyers section of the CBA, and received its rising star award as well as the Milton H. Gray award. His avid powerlifting has raised more than \$25,000 for the Lend-A-Hand Program, which fosters one-on-one tutor-mentoring relationships especially in the inner city. He is a certified public accountant. Mr. Cotter is a

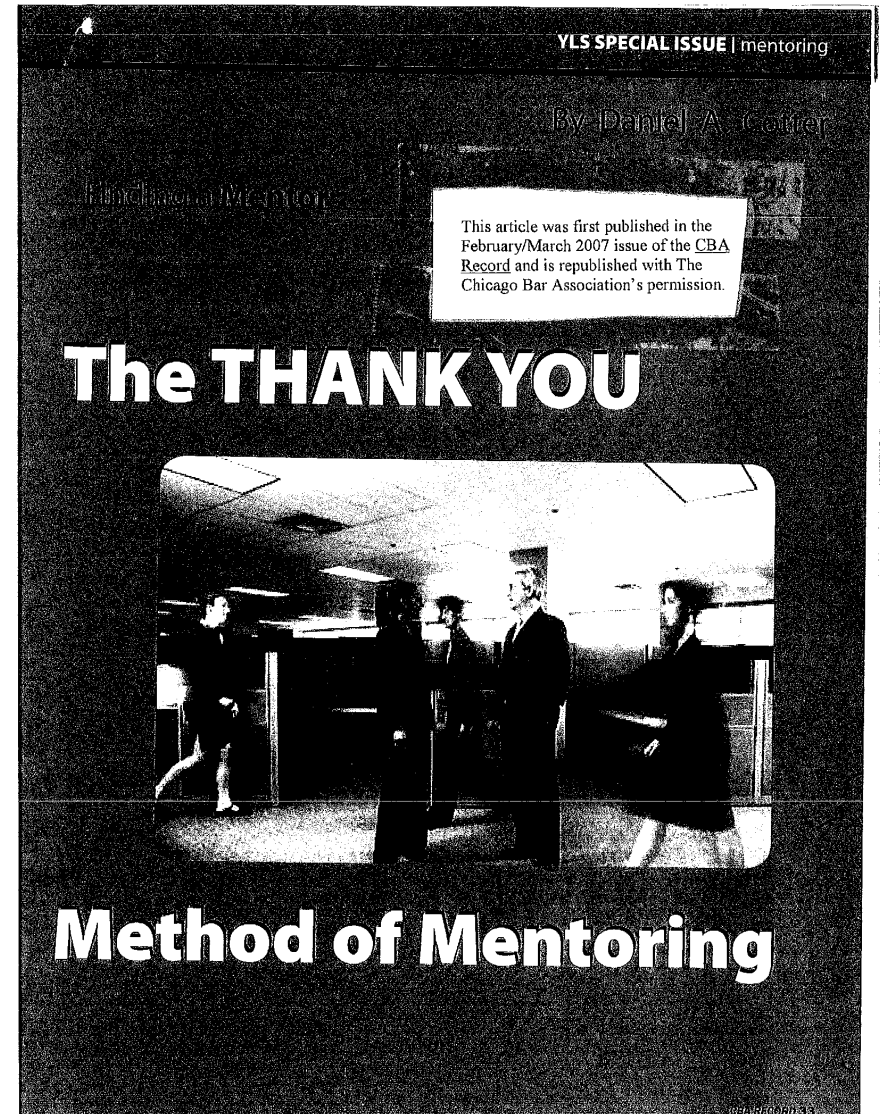
board member of the Chicago Bar Association, the Chicago Bar Foundation, Edgebrook School local school council, and Edgebrook School foundation.

Mr. Cotter received his B.A. from Monmouth College and his law degree from The John Marshall Law School.

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908-Networking: Get to Work on Enhancing Your Marketability
Outline for Panel Presentation

- I. Introductions of Presenters and Program
- II. Questions for the Audience
- III. Short Hands On Exercise I
- IV. Networking – Real Life Tales
- V. Short Hands on Exercise II
- VI. The “Thank You” Method of Networking – in a Nutshell
- VII. Conclusion/Questions from Audience



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Are you an effective networker? Do you actively build your network? If not, do one of the following excuses sound familiar?

- "I am too busy."
- "Why do I need to network? I am not looking to leave my current job."
- "I do not feel comfortable asking people for help."
- "I don't know anyone who can help me."

THESE AND MANY OTHER REASONS ARE GIVEN for why attorneys and others do not make any significant attempts at networking. However, when the mystery and anxiety over networking are removed, people immediately recognize that they are all networking to one extent or another.

In 2005, the Chicago Bar Association hosted "Career Enhancement Day." A huge event, the program offered several tracks and, at the end, a speed networking session. Preparing to moderate the corporate networking session, I came up with the "thank you" method of networking. The acronym consists of eight easy steps that can help people become better networkers. This article discusses what networking is and then describes each step of the "thank you" method.

What Is Networking?

The idea of networking is often met with a sense of dread. People perceive networking as difficult and time consuming. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines networking in part as "the exchange of information or services among individuals, groups, or institutions; specifically: the cultivation of productive relationships for employment or business." A recent article summed up networking as "creating a fabric of personal contacts who will provide support, feedback, insightful resources, and information." Ibarra & Hunter, *How Leaders Create and Use Networks*, Harv. Bus. Rev., Jan. 2007, at 40. Networking is nothing more than socially interacting with others — something that we all do on a fairly regular basis.

Networking is a two-way flow. You must cultivate the network and be willing to both provide and receive support, feedback, job leads, and other information. If you go to the network only when you need something, the network will dry up, and members within it will cease to be the resources they could be.

The word "networking" contains the root word "work," and it takes work and effort to establish and maintain a network of personal relationships and contacts. By using the simple "thank you" method set out below, you will be on your way to effective networking in no time.

The "Thank You" Method of Networking

My oldest son loves acronyms and acrostic poems. As I was preparing for Career Enhancement Day, acronyms and acrostics were in my head. I started jotting down the elements that seemed to be most important in effective networking and that would be easy for people to remember and implement. As the ideas fell on the page, I played a bit with the words and discovered that the first letters of each element spelled out "thank you." The elements are listed and discussed below in their acronym order. As a result, some of the elements are not in the natural order.

T-Talk

You cannot develop a network or learn what is happening by sitting isolated at your desk. Pick up the phone, dash off an email, go out to lunch or a bar meeting, and meet people. Talk and build the network! Like the shampoo commercials of old, the network grows if you add two people and they add two people. The size and scope of your network are up to you; there are no limits how large your network can be or who can be part of it.

Why network? If you intend to stay at your firm, partnership tracks generally consider business generated by the partner candidate. If you are chained to your desk, you might be doing quality work, but more than likely you are not generating business or meeting people who can direct business your way. If you are at a corporation and intend to stay, you inevitably will encounter issues for which you have no expertise and for which you might not be authorized to retain outside counsel. Someone in a network can help you, or know someone who can.

Why network now? Because it may be too late to build the network when you need something to happen. Whether you are looking to make a firm or company change or need someone to bounce ideas and issues off of, you need to have a network in place. Trying to tap into a network when you need it immediately is not productive, because people may sense that you are tapping the network as a "user" and not as part of the fabric of the overall network.

Who do you talk to in order to build the network? Contact friends, family, co-workers, former colleagues, classmates from col-

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lege, neighbors, anyone and everyone. The broader the network built over time, the better for all who are in the network. And remember, networks are like Venn diagrams: each person has his or her own network, and there will be overlaps between and among the networks. By building a broad network, you will effectively become part of numerous networks, which will expand your contacts exponentially.

H-Handwritten Notes

After meeting with people, jot off a handwritten note. Thank a person for taking the time to listen to your career decisions or to address an issue of law that you do not practice. Email can be used, but with billions of emails being transmitted globally each day, they don't have the same personal touch that a short note does.

A-Appreciation for Network Members' Time

Appreciate the time constraints that the person you wish to contact may have. Begin a call or other communication by asking if there is a good time to chat. Most people are willing to take the time to talk with you. If a person is not, then cross him or her off of your network list. Such people will waste your time and potentially prevent you from making contact with those who can offer help. If someone is busy at the moment, arrange a time that is convenient for both of you.

N-News

Browse the journals and papers for people you know who have received promotions or won big cases. Also browse for news that may be of interest to those people and send a note. Pay attention to what is happening outside of your personal world. Keep abreast of things that are of interest to members in your network. A newsworthy item may be a great reason to make contact.

K-Keep In Touch

Make periodic contact with members of your network and stay in touch. Grab a cup of coffee or a bite to eat, take the train home with a member of the network or pick



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Handouts: Networking

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up the phone and check in with members. A career consultant friend of mine and a master networker advises people to make four networking connections a week at a minimum. With job, career and personal obligations, that is sometimes difficult to do, but making the effort to touch base with at least four networking connections a week is necessary to keep the network strong.

Y-Your Inner Circle Network

We all have our own "kitchen cabinet," a team of very close people we can bounce anything off of and from whom we can receive practical, objective advice. A network begins with talking about job changes and can move on to everything else.

My team includes my wife, my best friend from law school, my best friends from college, and others who I have met along the way and brought into the inner circle. That inner circle has been invaluable in providing guidance, feedback, and support. Your inner circle will help you develop your network and career in a number of ways.

It is crucial that you develop within your inner circle one or more mentors. As discussed, an important reason for building a network is to have support. You need someone who can provide guidance and support as your career unfolds. A mentor fills that role. Traditionally, the mentor has been someone more senior; however, find a mentor wherever that person is in his or her career. For example, many senior partners at law firms talk about reverse mentoring: seeking out younger attorneys who have

a better sense of current trends, such as technology.

You can establish a mentor relationship informally by reaching out to someone you think would be a good mentor for you, or you can find a mentor through formalized programs, such as the Young Lawyers Section's Pathway to the Profession Mentoring Program. However you establish it, make sure that you really focus on developing the mentoring/support relationship. Having a trusted mentor with whom you can openly discuss career issues is a crucial element of effective networking.

O-Optimism

When you develop and teach out to the network, be optimistic. This is especially crucial when you are trying to build the network. There is no less effective way to begin a conversation with someone than to be down on a current job position, the market in general, or other issues. While it seems like an obvious piece of advice, you would be surprised at how many people at social events or other settings will meet you and immediately lament about something. You will have little luck developing an effective network if you introduce yourself in such manner. Remember, you want to build a network that is useful and supportive. Make positive first impressions on people, and they will want to bring you into their networks.

U-Unlimited Potential

If you implement the other elements of the "thank you" method, the network you

create will be one of unlimited potential! When and if you need it, the network will be there to assist you. On the flip side, you will be there to help others should such needs arise. As mentioned, your network will overlap and interact with the networks of other members. By working on building an effective network, you have the potential to be within "six degrees of separation" of just about anyone.

Conclusion

Networking does not need to be, and should not be, a mysterious process. We are all networkers to one extent or another. With the "thank you" method of networking, have some fun and get out and build an effective network. You will thank yourself for doing so. ■


Daniel A. Cotter is General Counsel of Argonaut Select Markets and is a member of the CBA Record Editorial Board.

The CBA is Wired

The CBA has installed wi-fi throughout its headquarters. Members are able to access the Internet via their laptops, blackberries, etc. To obtain a login password, stop by the CBA Bookstore on the first floor. Bookstore hours are Mon-Fri from 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Call 312/554-2130 for more information.

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(Help Yourself by Helping Others)



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Build Your Professional Network

“NETWORKING MADE SIMPLE”

January 2006 CBA RECORD

By Arthur J. Bousel

Attorney Professional Development Specialist

In working with attorneys, whether their focus is on building a client base or transitioning to a new career, we find one of the most dreaded and misunderstood concepts is networking. In reality, effective networking is quite easy. It boils down to one simple proposition: assisting and helping others is the most effective strategy in creating a network that can aid in both career advancement and client generation.

Many attorneys seem to view networking as something artificial, for a special occasion, when they dress up, take a stack of business cards followed by three deep breaths and walk into an imposing room full of strangers, whom they will ask for new business or job interviews. In this context, networking can be a terrifying experience to be avoided whenever a convenient excuse materializes – a reason so many attorneys breath a sigh of relief when a last minute assignment arrives immediately before such a function.

In reality, networking is nothing more than helping as many people as you can within the context of your day-to-day life. When you view networking as a means to assist other people, you move from a process over which you have little control, to one in which you are the master, making for a very different experience and more successful outcome. Through a focus on a “help” rather than a “take” mind-set, many clients who formerly dreaded networking actually look forward to it.

At the CBA's panels on the importance of networking to a successful career, every panelist recounted how giving of his or her self over time led to their current high-level positions. Often, some luck was involved, but had the individual not focused on “giving” rather than “taking,” the opportunity would not have arisen.

The “GIVE” and The “TAKE”

One example of how networking really works is the monthly Lawyer-To-Lawyer Network meeting at the CBA. A CBA committee, the Network brings together practicing lawyers who are exploring career transitions in order to share information of mutual benefit. By exchanging leads, strategies and contacts, each party's career search is enhanced and accelerated. Participants find that the “take” is related to the “give,” with those devoting the most time to assisting others benefiting from the large networks committed to helping them.

Serving on a CBA practice committee, either as a chair or vice-chair, is another “giving” opportunity that can prove helpful in your overall career advancement.

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Build Your Professional Network

CLIENT EXPERIENCES

Viewing networking as a means of helping others has totally changed the networking experiences of several clients. The experience of a senior associate at a mid-sized firm is typical.

She previously viewed networking as going to crowded bar association and alumni events, then passing out business cards in hope of generating new clients. A very shy individual in large groups, the entire setting and process made her nervous, as did the increased recognition that the strategy was unrealistic.

On the other hand, in small groups, the attorney has consistently come across as warm, charming and witty, with a great sense of humor.

Once she accepted the proposition that networking is simply the process of helping other people, she started volunteering for various alumni committees in order to meet people in comfortable, personalized settings. Importantly, when she meets someone new, she thinks first of how to help that person, instead of simply handing out a business card and offering unfocused comments. Now she is beginning to enjoy even the large alumni gatherings and finding that without the pressure of unrealistic objectives, they can be less intimidating and a lot more productive.

EVENT PREPARATION

Here is a realistic example of how, with appropriate planning and a focus on helping others, you can use an upcoming function to grow your network. Let's say you are attending an event where many other professionals will be present, whether it is sponsored by a trade organization, religious group, bar association, or business conference.

First, you should investigate the opportunity of being a speaker and sharing your expertise with other participants. Second, review a list of attendees and determine in advance whom you want to meet. Then, think of favors or other assistance you could provide those individuals. Perhaps you could offer them articles they would find interesting. Alternatively, if you learn they like the same type of exotic food you do (or have other related interests), a restaurant referral might be appreciated. You can provide anything, as long as it will keep you in touch with the target.

CONCLUSION

While a continuous array of books and articles will continue to appear on networking, often linking it to the secret for opening the “hidden job network,” the most important truth to keep in mind is that Assisting and Helping Others is the most effective networking strategy. Everything else is just detail.

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Build Your Professional Network

What Is Networking:

- Connecting with people who help each other reach their respective goals. The *mutual* nature of the experience is what makes it so valuable.
- Assisting, Informing and Helping Others.
- Reaching out to people, finding their need and filling it.
- Sharing relevant information for mutual benefit.
- Expanding your base of supporters and referral sources.
- Creating the personal relationships you can ask for advice and referrals.
- Initiating and Nurturing personal relationships who want to assist in your career advancement.
- Building a reputation that makes others aware of the value you can contribute.
- Informational Meetings: Contacting people who can provide advice and possibly introduce you to a potential employer or client so you don't have to approach that employer or client through a less personal means.

Why It Is Important:

- Personal introductions are the most effective source of new jobs, clients and business referrals.
- Networking is the most effective method for an attorney or law firm to build and expand a client base.
- Experts in the career development field estimate that over 70% percent of new jobs are obtained through personal introductions.
- Since most positions are not advertised, some form of self-initiated contact is very helpful.

Build Your Professional Network

Plan of Action to Build Your Network

What are the steps to follow?

IDENTIFY WHERE YOU WANT TO WORK

- (1) Research and Informational Meetings to find out more about specific opportunities. Research should include developing competence level and knowledge about the companies and businesses that you will be targeting. Use web sites, read trade magazines, contact trade associations, read analyst reports, check business press.

DESCRIBE YOUR VALUE PROPOSITION (NETWORKING MESSAGE)

- (2) Draft "thirty second" Networking Intro (Value Proposition.) [Helpful to prepare a testimonial to yourself and to ask others to prepare a testimonial to you.](#)

DEVELOP LIST OF KEY SUPPORTERS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE FIRM

- (3) Identify people in desired positions who can help you get in front of key decision-makers. Set up informational meetings with as many individuals as possible. Ask contacts for referrals. Utilize Alumni, ABA Lawyer Profiles, CBA Panels & Committee Chairs, Martindale-Hubbell, Yellow Books, regional ACC officers.

PRACTICE DELIVERING YOUR MESSAGE

- (4) Practice delivering your message for networking meetings and job interviews. Ask colleagues to critique your message and delivery.

ENHANCE YOUR REPUTATION

- (5) Attend networking events sponsored by the organizations of potential interest to target. Join and participate in the Committees of the CBA and ABA. Ask committee members for referrals and leads. Perform volunteer work that could help expand your network of contacts. To enhance reputation and gain recognition, write articles, deliver presentations, speak at trade conferences, attend networking events.
- (6) If your objective is to build a business or attract new clients, prepare a Marketing Brochure -- with the "Value Proposition" at its core -- that relates your firm's expertise to the needs of the target.
- (7) Draft an Intro letter that integrates and builds on the "Value Proposition" and contains the name of a referring party.

Build Your Professional Network

Tips For Developing Contacts

Developing an Effective System

1. Set specific networking goals (who, how and when you will meet)
2. Don't ignore your colleagues.
3. Get into a position where you will naturally meet your target contact
4. For each networking event, prepare a list of contacts you most want to meet
5. Follow-up after meeting (preferably with personalized note)
6. Call when you believe target will be in office. Avoid voice mail

Developing Your Message

7. Know your objective, the more specific you are, the more others can help
8. Be precise when asking for information or referrals
9. Develop & be ready with a Thirty Second verbal description of what makes you special
10. Practice introducing yourself using the Thirty Second introduction
11. Emphasize skills & strengths of value to target
12. Ask for advice and additional referrals, not for a job

Focus on "Them" not "You"

13. Focus on the contact's needs, not on yours
14. Demonstrate concern/respect for contact's needs, goals, schedule, agenda
15. Try to be helpful to your contact – you want to be invited back!

Develop Your Reputation / Know Your Value Proposition

16. Proactively increase your visibility within professional community
 - publishing, speaking, volunteering
17. Serve on Boards of Directors, Committees, Task Forces, Leadership Councils
18. Share your Market, Product, Industry Expertise however you can
19. Speak at Professional Meetings of interest to your target audience
20. Write articles in journals your target audience would read
21. Put yourself in shoes of client's professionals. Attend the trade shows, seminars and conferences they attend. Read the trade journals they read
22. Enhance your knowledge/expertise of target client or employer by scheduling informational meetings with people in your field of interest

Build Your Professional Network

Good Sources Of Contacts

- ABA Lawyer Profiles
- Alumni (law & undergraduate, sports leagues, sorority/fraternity)
- Bar Association Committees, Meetings, Leadership
- Business and Personal Relationships
- Clients
- Clubs (church men's or women's, book reading)
- Co-Workers, colleagues
- Entrepreneurial Financing Networks (referrals to corporations with need for legal counsel)
- Lawyer to Lawyer Network
- Networking Organizations focused on industry of target
- SBA / SCORE (retired senior executives offer free counseling to small businesses)
- Speeches at Professional Meetings and Writing Articles
- Volunteering at Non-Profits
- Trade Shows focused on industry of target

Organizations To Help Develop Contacts

- AMERICAN CORPORATE COUNSEL ASSOCIATION (ACC) www.acca.org
- AMERICAN MARKETING ASSOCIATION www.marketingpower.com
- CHICAGO COUNSEL ON PLANNED GIVING www.chicagocpcg.org
- CHICAGOLAND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE www.chicagolandchamber.org
- DECALOGUE SOCIETY www.decaloguesociety.com
- EXECUTIVE NETWORKING GROUP www.engchgo.org
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- LEGAL MARKETING ASSOCIATION (LMA) www.legalmarketing.org
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