



INSPIRATION Monthly

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Inside this issue:

Making The HUMAN Connection	1
How Do We Communicate With Each Other?	2
Tip of the Month: Make the Most of Networking	3
OI Resources: Communication and Networking	4
January OI Workshop Flyer	5
OI Classifieds	6

Making the HUMAN Connection

My name is Andrea Mastrobattista and I am addicted to email and instant messaging. My resolution for 2006 is to get back to the more traditional forms of communication, face-to-face and phone conversations, to establish new and deeper relationships with friends, family and business associates.

With all the methods of electronic communication available today, I have to wonder: When did I begin to chose computers over human beings?

Please understand, I am not completely discounting electronic forms of communication. Email is certainly effective in reaching a large group of people with messages such as: "Enjoy my monthly newsletter!"

People often say email is a great way to form coherent thoughts in our own time to get our point across. Well, if the person we want to get our point across to is in close proximity, why not take the time to compose our thoughts and then schedule a face-to-face conversation?

Have we given up on the HUMAN Connection in favor of the convenience and even the *comfort level* technology provides?

Perhaps that's why we dread networking. We have come to depend on electronic forms of communication to the extent that we have forgotten how to TALK to each other. Plus, since networking has statistically proven to be the most effective way to get a job, we tend to look at it as something we have to do, making it that much less appealing.

That is exactly how I *used* to feel about networking, but not anymore! It's much more than a way to promote my business or find a job. I look at networking as an opportunity to connect

with people who can enhance my life and whose lives I can help enhance. That's why I developed my latest workshop "Networking: Making the Human Connection." I hope you will join me for an evening that will show you how to make the most of each conversation and put the fun back into networking!

The workshop is on Wednesday, January 11, 2006, 7-9pm, and the rest of the details are on page 5. I'll see you there!

All the Best!
Andrea Mastrobattista
Editor, *INSPIRATION Monthly*



COMMUNICATE:
Make a
HUMAN Connection!

COMMUNICATE

Speak

Converse

Relay

Powwow

Interact

RELATE!

How Do We Communicate With Each Other?



In preparation for this month's newsletter focusing on communication and networking, I spent a great deal of time posing questions to people, either on my blog or in conversation, as to how they communicate with others and how they wish others to communicate with them. I am so glad I am I brought up this topic because it yielded some very interesting and surprising results.

I first asked: *What is your preferred way to communicate with family, friends and business associates, and why?*

For the most part, people prefer email, citing that this form of communication is "quick and easy", "cost effective" and fun because we can "communicate using words *and* pictures." There was also a response from someone who preferred email because it was the "least intrusive" form of communication.

There were those who stated that they did prefer face-to-face communication, especially with family and friends, because of that "human connection." Yet, with loved ones who live a significant distance away, the convenience of cell phones and email is understandable. It was also no surprise that cell phones, as opposed to landline phones, were specified due to the cost differential.

Then I posed the next question: *What methods of communication do you want you family, friends and business associates to use with you, and why?*

I did get one answer on the blog. But, then something interesting happened. I began to receive phone calls from various friends, from as far away as California, who said that the second question made them think and prompted them to call me.

Whether they answered the first question on the blog or not, each person who called agreed he or

she primarily used email to communicate. But when it came to answering the second question, everyone who called me said they really appreciate when people make the effort to communicate with them face-to-face, or at least by phone. As a result, each person realized if that's how he or she wanted to be communicated with, then it was important to step up to the plate and start making that same effort to maintain the "human connection" with family, friends and business associates. I, too, feel the same way as each of these people who reached out to me.

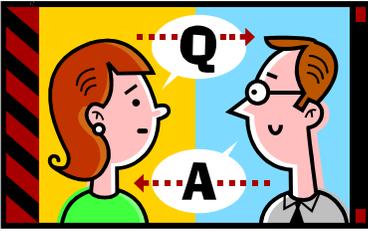
So, to my family, friends and colleagues, I will reiterate my pledge from the front page of this newsletter. I resolve to make an effort to communicate more often through face-to-face conversation and by phone to continue to strengthen my relationships with each of you.

Again, thanks to all who took the time to answer each question. You have opened my eyes to my own communication practices and, for that, I am grateful.

I will continue to post questions on my blog, but don't be surprised if you receive a random phone call or visit from me so that I can I ask you the questions on a more personal level! It's all about maintaining our HUMAN CONNECTION!



Tip of the Month: Make the Most of Networking



This is the time of year when people generally start networking again in full force. We've had a couple weeks' break, since net-

working is not usually done *formally* over the holidays.

So, by the first week of January, people resume their job searches or promoting their businesses. But networking can be used to do more than find a new job or market a business.

Networking has traditionally and primarily been thought of as an exchange of business cards. What has been missing for a while now is the personal aspect. *Effective* networking is about building business *and* personal relationships.

Also, networking does not have to be a chore. If you look at it from the standpoint of meeting and forming multi-dimensional business and personal relationships, rather than trading one-dimensional slips of paper, your ideas about networking will shift toward the positive. But, just in case you need some more help making networking a worthwhile and fun experience, here are some tips for you:

Be Yourself. Often, when networking, we project images that are not true to our selves. While it is vital to put our best foot forward, it is also equally important to be who we are so as not to give the wrong impression. One might hear, "She gives a great first impression. But her second impression . . . Hmm." So let your second impression be just as good, if not better, than your first. Be yourself!

Don't Be Afraid to Make Mistakes. Do you want to know where many mistakes are made while networking? During our "elevator speeches." We've each got 20 or 30 seconds to sum up who we are and the benefits we can offer as business people *and* human beings. It doesn't get much more nerve

wracking than that! We get nervous, stumble over our words, say the wrong thing and not say all that we wanted to before our time is up. Okay, that was the negative. Here's the positive. First, we ALL make mistakes during our elevator speeches. The beauty of it is most networking events occur weekly, bi-weekly or monthly. So think of your first few speeches as rehearsals. Although these events have their "regulars", there are always new people to listen to what you have to say! Plus, I'll bet those "regulars" making their own mistakes will be listening for the improvements you make each week to use in their own presentations.

Bring on the Humor. Say that you totally screwed up your elevator speech and you want to crawl under the nearest table. Do just the opposite. Laugh it off! Sometimes the perfect way to diffuse an awkward situation like that is to be the first one to laugh at yourself. Not only will it garner you respect for not taking yourself too seriously, it might also be a great conversation starter for those who have made similar mistakes and can now feel comfortable sharing their embarrassing moments.

Find Unique Places to Network. Fortunately, there are a variety of places to network these days. Not only is there a "comfort factor" in networking with people who have the same interests as you, it also gives you something to talk about. For example, I tend to network at book stores, the gym, and, of course, my own workshops. Another great idea I recently heard is to hold a game party. Who says you can't network over a game of Scrabble or Texas Hold 'Em? So find an activity that interests you, go to an event or hold your own gathering!

These are just a few ideas for spicing up your networking experiences. To discover more and do some networking yourself, attend my next workshop, "Networking: Making the HUMAN Connection", on Wednesday, January 11, 7-9pm. For more details, turn to page 5, or visit my website, OperationINSPIRATION.com!

OI's Resources: Communication & Networking



If the prospects of opening up the lines of communication and enhancing your networking skills still seem daunting to you, here are a few resources to help you.

ORGANIZATIONS

Business and Professional Woman (BPW). As some of you know, I am a member and Communications Chairperson of BPW Bernardsville. The credo of this organization is Women Helping Women, and they live up to it, I can assure you. When I joined BPW, I was a novice at networking and a reluctant participant in the process. Well, in a nurturing environment such as this, I flourished as I honed my networking skills. For more information, you can visit the national website—bpwusa.org, my local website—bpwbernardsville.org, or contact me at OpINSPIRATION@aol.com!

YMCA. I am embarrassed to admit that I have had a great local YMCA available to me all my life and I have only discovered its vast resources in the past few years. The “Y” is a fantastic place for all members of your family to find activities they enjoy and to meet new friends and business associates. Go to YMCA.net to find a “Y” near you!

YOUR LOCAL LIBRARY

Your local library is not just a place to find great books, magazines and newspapers. It's also a place where organizations and clubs in your community tend to gather to network, and the great thing about meetings held at libraries is that are usually FREE. So, check out the bulletin board, website or newsletter for your local library to find an activity or organization that interests you.

YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER

Another valuable resource is your local newspaper. Each newspaper, big or small, has a section, usually titled *Community Calendar* or *Community Living*, that lists the activities in your town or city on a weekly basis. Included in each listing is a description of the activity and/or organization with contact information so that you can find out more about whatever piques your interest.

WEBSITE

craigslist. craigslist.org is a great web resource for finding activities and groups in your area with whom you can network. Find your geographic area in the list of links on the right side of the page, click on it, then browse the categories on the left side of the page to find one that suits you.

A BRAINSTORMING EVENT

I am *thisclose* to scheduling my first bunch of FREE BRAINSTORMING EVENTS for those who are interested in meeting like-minded, supportive people to share their thoughts and brainstorm for ideas to help enhance each other's lives. I am working with a couple of different venues right now to coordinate scheduling.

The initial idea is to hold these sessions once a month, wherein each participant will have the opportunity to share their goals, plus any roadblocks they are facing, and receive ideas from the group as to how to make their dreams and goals happen.

If you are interested, please email OpINSPIRATION@aol.com to let me know your availability. Perhaps we can get several brainstorming events going so that you can chose one based on your location and availability! I will publish details of upcoming brainstorming sessions on the website, [Op-erationINSPIRATION.com](http://OperationINSPIRATION.com), and in future newsletters!

Living an INSPIRING Life!

We've been taught that the more business cards we distribute and collect at a networking meeting, the better. Well, once collected, this pile of cards often just sits in a desk drawer gathering dust. Truly, the forgotten part of networking is making the HUMAN connection. If you are conducting a job search, promoting you business or simply looking to meet people who will enrich your life, attend this workshop to learn valuable techniques for creating positive and meaningful networking encounters.

Join the next workshop,
Networking: Making the HUMAN Connection
on Wednesday, January 11, 7-9pm!

Admission: \$30 per workshop
Includes Program and Refreshments

To register and learn more, go to OperationINSPIRATION.com!


Operation
INSPIRATION



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The workshops will be held at the St. Elizabeth's School Cafeteria of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, 30 Seney Drive, Bernardsville, NJ, 7-9pm, on the second Wednesday of each month (except where noted with an asterisk). The dates and workshop topics are as follows:

**December 7, 2005—Taking the First Step Toward Your INSPIRING Life*
January 11, 2006—Networking: The HUMAN Connection
February 8, 2006—The Power of Brainstorming
March 8, 2006—Transforming Negative Energy Into Positive Energy
April 12, 2006—Facing Your Fears
May 10, 2006—Go on a Journey of Discovery
**June 7, 2006—Create the Roadmap to Your INSPIRING Life*
July 12, 2006—Integrate Your New Goals Into Your Life
August 9, 2006—A New Evening of Brainstorming

**Inclement weather dates for January-March 2006 will be the third Wednesday of those months.



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For more information, call:
(908)766-6050

Operation INSPIRATION

Beyond Limits . . .
Beyond Expectations . . .
Beyond Your Imagination!

We're on the Web at
[OperationINSPIRATION.com!](http://OperationINSPIRATION.com)

Operation INSPIRATION (OI) was established for the purpose of helping people to discover, achieve and live their most fulfilling and inspiring lives. This goal is accomplished through a series of workshops and seminars, including:

Living an Inspiring Life
Facing Your Fears
Discovering the Career Meant for You
Staying Motivated as You Build Your Business
Staying Motivated Throughout Your Job Search

To accommodate various scheduling needs, these workshops and seminars are provided in one-hour, two-hour, half-day, full-day and two-day formats.

OI also provides a website with boundless resources for anyone needing inspiration. Please visit our website at [OperationINSPIRATION.com!](http://OperationINSPIRATION.com)

Operation INSPIRATION Classifieds

The Operation INSPIRATION newsletter is a great way to spread the word about your business!

One Newsletter: \$10
Three Newsletters: \$25
Ten Newsletters: \$50

To place a business card ad like the ones below,
contact Andrea Mastrobattista
at OpINSPIRATION@aol.com or (908)766-6050.



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Providing Focus for your Personal Brand