



**Speaker: “Tooting Your Own Horn”: Suzanne Ebling**

Suzanne presented an overview of best practices for “branding yourself.” Special thanks to Suzanne for the fabulous job. She has provided us with a recap of her comments, which follow:

**Branding yourself**

In the same way that many successful retailers have created a “brand” for themselves, savvy individuals develop an image of themselves based on their skills, goals and desires. The best advice is ....do not wait for an opportunity to demonstrate you own a personal brand. Instead create it and market yourself.

To start thinking and acting differently begin by looking at the many responsibilities and objectives within your job. Can you spot components that if you could improve would better reflect what you are really capable of? What things could be done better? How could you approach work differently so that you achieve your goals? Consider the following key points as strategies to assist you as you think about this.

- 1) Look for opportunities to get more done by examining your work requirements.
- 2) Stand out, what does your image portray?
- 3) Examine your attitude. Are you enthusiastic, friendly, and positive?

Every organization operates by a set of organizational politics. These are the unwritten rules to make sure you’re an insider, thought of as a key player, and widely liked. It is about understanding the culture of your company and how you can manage this to help you meet your objectives. Most people think of politics as a dirty word, consider instead how you can understand and use resources to better position your “personal brand” and better support your team.

**What are some keys to political success?**

**Look at your company’s organizational chart.** Do a power analysis beyond titles. Recognizing the real power structure will help you be successful.

**Determine who has reflective power.** Who has the ear of key players?

**Build relationships and alliances.** A network of cooperative contacts and allies. Personalize your relationships, what do you have in common? How can you make connections?

**Win the support of your boss.** Ensure that your boss is not caught unaware; there should be no surprises. Disagree in private. Always share your point of view, but chose your moment. If the input is opposed to your boss’ public statement take a moment to explain privately your concern.

**Get people to like you – develop and use your people skills.** Simple, but often overlooked. Be courteous, be nice. Don’t gossip. Be trustworthy.

**Mirror those in power.** This point generally raises concerns of diversity. While there is common sense in giving the perception that you are “one of them”...you must stay true to yourself. The real point is to make choices about what you want to mirror, and understand your impact.

**Find Mentors and build networks.** Look for a variety of mentors and coaches through your network and company. This isn’t about riding the coattails of someone; this is about asking

advice and counsel from people who have successfully navigated change. Find those with content knowledge, corporate history, and political advice.

**Listen well, gather information, and be in the know.** Pay attention to what is going on around you, even unrelated department decisions or missions can have unintended consequences on your career. Be prepared.

**Be visible.** It's easier to stay home, but company functions should be considered ways to advance yourself. Step up, step forward, and be sure you are seen.

**Be honest and demonstrate integrity.** Do not compromise your ethics. Sincerity in what you do and who you are will keep you true to your values. Don't compromise.

### **Uncover your skill set**

As a general rule we focus on what we do wrong, or can quickly summarize a list of all our faults. In developing a brand your focus should change to what are your strengths. Make a list of what you do well. Force yourself to name 10 skills that you are successful at. Then take the time to list by each skill how you demonstrate the success, and include an example. Check your facts, ask others you trust and admire. How do they see your strengths, what suggestions do they have?

After you identify your skills, look at your personality and passion. Think about what makes a great day for you...or more simply put, what makes you happy? Do you like to get into the detail, analyzing the data for answers? Do you love public speaking...do the stage lights excite you? Lastly, what does the market need? What is happening in your profession that you should incorporate in your own personal brand? Is there a demand for your contributions? Your style...your brand? Do you need to flex your brand, or market yourself to be placed in the most positive light? Only you can sort through these issues, if you spend the time to answer these questions honestly you'll find yourself poised to begin building a more clear image that reflects who you are.

Thank you for allowing me to join you on your call, it was an honor to participate with you all. Your discussion was informative and challenging. I am including my email address and phone as the group requested, enjoy your conference.

Suzanne Ebling  
VP Organizational Development  
Training, Diversity & Employment  
BONmacy's  
[S01sle@fds.com](mailto:S01sle@fds.com)  
206 506 7982