

Career-Enhancing Programs
April 2009
Hosted by Dave Opton,
founder and CEO, ExecuNet

- 4/9 — **FREE PROGRAM FOR MEMBERS** —
Overcoming Procrastination —
Linda Dominguez
- 4/16 — **MarketOne: Land a Top C-Level Role This
Year!** — Karen Armon
- 4/23 — **FREE PROGRAM FOR MEMBERS** —
Onboarding Q&A — George Bradt
- 4/30 — **Accelerating Your C-Level Transition** —
Linda Dominguez

Networking Meetings in Your Area
April 2009
Hosted by ExecuNet Facilitators

- 4/7 — **Greensboro** — John O'Connor
- 4/7 — **San Diego/Carlsbad** — Mark James
- 4/8 — **Stamford** — Linda Van Valkenburgh
- 4/8 — **Toronto Sr. Executive Roundtable** —
Martin Buckland
- 4/8 — **Cleveland Sr. Executive Roundtable** —
Rick Taylor
- 4/9 — **Atlanta** — J. Patrick Haly
- 4/9 — **Los Angeles** — Eileen Hupp
- 4/10 — **Tampa Bay** — Gina Potito
- 4/13 — **Detroit** — Marge Larsen
- 4/13 — **Miami/Hollywood** — Jeannette Kraar
- 4/13 — **Boston** — Marg Balcom
- 4/14 — **Orlando** — Catherine Coates & Mike Murray
- 4/14 — **Boulder** — Karen Armon
- 4/14 — **Phoenix** — Fred Coon
- 4/15 — **Hartford/New Haven** — Paul Mathews
- 4/15 — **Charlotte** — Merton Marsh & Michael Hall
- 4/15 — **Chicago** — Melody Camp
- 4/15 — **Portland** — Jean Walker
- 4/15 — **Raleigh/Durham** — Stuart Levine
- 4/16 — **Palo Alto** — Bobbie LaPorte & Linda Holroyd
- 4/16 — **Seattle Sr. Executive Roundtable** —
Susan Stringer
- 4/16 — **Vienna/Tysons Corner, VA** — Peter McCarthy
- 4/16 — **Columbia, MD** — Ed Loucks
- 4/16 — **Minneapolis** — John Wetzel & Barbara Johnson
- 4/16 — **Indianapolis** — Romona Camarata
- 4/16 — **Louisville** — Thom Crimans & Cathy Fyock
- 4/16 — **Pittsburgh/Cranberry Township** —
Donna Korenich
- 4/17 — **Parsippany** — Linsey Levine
- 4/21 — **Wilmington** — Rick Hays
- 4/21 — **Vienna/Tysons Corner, VA Sr. Executive
Roundtable** — Peter McCarthy
- 4/21 — **Houston** — Sharon Anglin
- 4/21 — **Irvine (Orange County)** — Mark James
- 4/21 — **Seattle** — Susan Stringer
- 4/21 — **Cleveland** — Rick Taylor
- 4/22 — **Toronto** — Martin Buckland
- 4/22 — **Denver** — Karen Armon
- 4/23 — **White Plains** — Linsey Levine
- 4/23 — **Atlanta Sr. Executive Roundtable** —
J. Patrick Haly
- 4/23 — **Columbus** — Janine Moon
- 4/23 — **Sacramento** — Linda Dominguez &
Joe Verandas

Reserve your space! Call Member Services
at 800-637-3126 or visit ExecuNet.com

Insider Insight

Peanut Butter's Business Lesson: Managing Sticky Situations

By David Grossman

In the last three months, we have experienced one of the largest food recalls this country has ever seen due to one tiny food — the peanut.

More than 2,100 processed and packaged foods containing peanuts or peanut paste have been recalled in the wake of a Salmonella outbreak. More than 660 people became ill and infection may have contributed to nine deaths through potentially tainted peanut products from the Peanut Corporation of America.

While contamination is no new issue for the food industry, what made this situation so horrific, and ultimately avoidable, was the poor judgment and actions allegedly taken by the company.

Yet, the situation reminds us that every company, no matter the industry, deals with difficult problems and issues each day. What should corporate leaders do when something goes wrong?

Let's be clear — sound communications cannot make up for poor decision-making. However, when leaders do become aware of issues, they should follow these actions:

Gather the Facts

Understand the situation, its components, results and future implications as much as possible. Figure out what you know; what you don't know; what you need to find out; and what are myths and rumors that abound.

Tell the Truth

There is no substitute for this. While you should work with your communications team on what information you will be sharing, whatever you share needs to be the unadulterated truth.

Plan Your Communications

With the exception in the case of FCC and/or regulatory requirements, all communication should be executed from the “inside out.” Employees should be communicated to first and foremost, followed by outside audiences.

Build Communication Skill

No matter how successful the leader, there is one common truth — communication is a learned skill. When crisis situations arise, those leaders who have taken the time to build that skill beforehand are far more successful than those learning “on the fly.” To drive effective communications, leaders must:

- Have a platform that outlines their core messages and actions.
- Be visible, open, honest, trustworthy and candid.
- Be consistent.
- Communicate frequently.
- Understand that everything they say and do communicates.
- Answer questions employees have.
- Be engaged in developing and planning their communications.
- Engage their communications team as a business partner.
- Ask employees for their input and use it.

These are the qualities of what I call a “leader**communicator**,” an individual who realizes that most problems in business today lie in the absence of real communication. As a result, they're able to create shared meaning and move people to action. ■

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