

## Connecting Over the Holidays

We are approaching the holiday season, and this offers the opportunity to improve my connections with my network. I can select different holiday cards or identify another media and begin to write a personal note to those I work with, respect, or other ways have connected with. I can write five or so notes evening while listening to the news, or whatever. In this way I can easily write personal notes to at least 100 of my network friends, neighbors, associates and contacts.

Writing a personal note to each allows me to reconnect with those I have not been in touch with for some time; with others, to pick up where we left off in our contacts, and for new contacts, begin to turn these contacts into connections. What I need to remind myself is that “networking” is a life skill, one we use daily. In our day to day “networking” we reach out, and ask for assistance, information or referrals for any number of reasons. Yet, when it comes to looking for a new position in an organization, we personalize, and hold information to ourselves. There is the ego bit, too, that we don’t like to be seen as asking for help. At the same time, we ask after our friends, professional associates, and neighbors. Hopefully this interest in others is legitimate; and perhaps an offer is made to assist in some manner. This is the initiation of a networking scenario and should be followed. I never should ask for something without first seeing what I can do for those I am contacting.

When making this contact it is reasonable for all that I know what it is I want to do, have some ideas of the types of organizations that use my skills, abilities and interests, all so I can include this information in the second half of my note to each of my contacts.

If I have not already developed the information I should include in my notes, then that is my first step. I need this for all of my sound bites, for my introductions, and in my networking events. I can also use this same information when I attend career fairs. The more I use these pieces of information the more comfortable I am in offering the information.

And, as we move forward with our career, we can help others with this same approach. The bottom line in all of this is, “will I keep up my network once I have stepped into a new position?”

My questions to you are: 1. Will you take the time now, to turn your contacts into connections and your connections into advocates? And, 2. When was the last time you received a personal note from a friend, rather than an email, tweet or other electronic vehicle? When you did, remember the good feeling you had. And yes, this message is much the same as last year, just a bit earlier to suggest more time to help promote oneself, reasonably and fairly.

Have some wonderful holidays, may they be joyful, rewarding and safe.

Jim Ditt

“It is our attitude at the beginning of a difficult task which, more than anything else, will affect its successful outcome.” ... William James