



Hello!  
We hope you enjoy our  
May issue.

 **Go for it! Quote**

*"When written in Chinese, the word 'crisis' is composed of two characters. One represents danger and the other represents opportunity."*  
- John F. Kennedy

 **Pass it on**

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## You are the CEO of YOU

I have a client – let's call her Kate – who during a recent weekly call told me that her organization announced it will be reorganizing and her position is being eliminated. Her organization had not given any prior indication that there were issues or that there was the potential for anyone to lose their jobs – so she felt blindsided.



Kate was experiencing a full gamut of emotions from shock and fear all the way to anger. She felt her loyalty to the organization had been betrayed.

Faced with this crisis in her life, Kate could have easily sunk into a feeling of defeat and kept to herself, avoiding her friends and colleagues out of a feeling of some sort of embarrassment or devastated personal pride. But soon Kate realized that she couldn't take this decision personally – nearly 50 other employees received the news at the same time. She needed to look beyond what she felt the organization had done to her and move on. So Kate took action.

After shaking off the initial shock of the announcement, she decided she wasn't going to be a "victim" and wait to see what happens next. She knew she had to take action. During our weekly calls over the last 16-months, Kate and I had worked together to create her "Strengths Chart", so she had that right at her fingertips when this crisis occurred. She realized she had many marketable skills, and that if her organization no longer needed her services, it was up to her to market her services elsewhere. Kate took on a "free agent" mentality. She started calling friends and colleagues and telling them she needed help getting the word out that she was now in the job market again (after nearly 13 years).

It wasn't long and Kate got a call from a recruiter in a totally different industry. Kate's "network" had gotten to work. Because of her reputation, character and integrity – well known in her own industry – within days Kate was being wooed for this other opportunity.

Will she change industries to take that job? Probably not, but that's not the point of this story. Kate demonstrated some really valuable lessons here about how to navigate through crisis and turn it into opportunity – and it all revolves around taking action.

Kate's lesson doesn't begin with the layoff. It begins long before that, when she consistently put time and effort into these key promotional activities:

### **Networking**

Kate cultivated a strong network of people who know, like and trust her and are aware of her strengths and capabilities. In her professional network she puts slightly more focus on people with the most influence in her industry, but she realizes that to reach far and wide she needs to put effort into all of her professional relationships.

But what if you haven't been focused on "networking"? I recommend that my clients work on meeting other professional people via industry meetings or through their local Chamber of Commerce, etc.

I encourage my clients to begin by first listening to the people in their potential network and thus learning as much as possible about them personally, their business, their industry, their goals and their challenges.

I challenge my clients to understand that they have one mouth and two ears - and to use them proportionately. I challenge my clients to listen and understand the "story" of the others in their potential network long before they ever begin to tell their own story.

I challenge my clients to learn a way to bring something of value to each individual in their potential network whether a business lead, a trade magazine article or connection with another professional, etc. I encourage my clients to bring that thing of value to the potential relationship without ever an expectation of anything in return. My personal experience has taught me that people will not open up or trust you until they know how much you care. Be first to bring something to the relationship.

You never know who someone will know, or where someone will end up years down the line. A network requires "work". In the long run it will pay off.

### **Promotion**

Kate kept in touch with colleagues and friends both within her organization and outside her organization. She knew that in order to get noticed for promotions and other opportunities, she needed to "advertise" and "promote" her achievements as they happen inside and outside her organization. She did so professionally and with grace and humility.

I recommend that when a client feels "uncomfortable" about a little self-promotion to think of it instead as "marketing". We have all experienced those who spend a great deal of time telling us all about their achievements, their new car, how their daughter or son is a "straight A student", etc., and that's NOT what I'm encouraging anyone to do. Do not be a braggart. On the other hand, I challenge you to think of ways to professionally "market" your skill set within your organization and within your network. Be subtle, but direct. Be gracious and humble, but assertive. I encourage you to not be afraid to start your own "Strengths Chart", as I did with Kate over a year ago, so that you have that right at your fingertips if ever the need arises.

I am encouraging you to let others in your organization know when you've met a goal or have completed professional development training, etc., by offering your services to help them achieve their goal or development objective.

Send your supervisor an e-mail offering to talk with others on your team about the professional development class you took and just completed, and how it can help them and the organization be successful. Find a way to bring things of value to your team and to your team leader – much the same way as I recommended when networking. Be visible. Be seen as a team player. Be seen as valuable.

### **Taking Action**

I run into so many people who are feeling frustrated, trapped and powerless to effect change in their own lives. It's easy to get comfortable – even complacent – and forget to market ourselves and network with others. Who's going to tell the rest of the world about your achievements, about the new skills you've developed, or about how you've grown as a leader? If you're not marketing yourself – then who is? If you don't, then you may have to settle for the boss never noticing you, or not getting the promotion, or not being prepared when a professional crisis blindsides you.

The truth is that self-promotion and networking are key business activities at any stage – whether you are self-employed, employed by an organization, working or out of work. No matter your position or profession, you are always the CEO of **YOU**. Networking and promotion are all about planting seeds. In a crisis, those seeds are the opportunities that can carry you through.

### **Making a Commitment**

What are you willing to commit to getting done in the next month, by the time you open up your copy of June's newsletter? Make that promise to yourself, and if you really want to achieve it, commit it to someone else as well.

Would you like to sit down with me for a few minutes and get started on your daily, weekly and monthly actions? Visit my website today to send me a message and we'll coordinate a time that works best for both of us to focus on what's best for you.

### **Keeping the Main Thing the Main Thing. Go For It!**



For over 15 years, Mark Ford has been assisting top level executives and business leaders increase individual and organizational performance, as well as improve communication, leadership and motivation.

As a successful coach, speaker, trainer and consultant, Mark empowers his clients to be the heroes of their own lives, find their true path, define their own success, live with passion, and make this life count.

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