

# NETWORKING: BREAKING THE ICE AND FEELING COMFORTABLE WITH STRANGERS

Christoph Lemke

For CFA Society Netherlands

Wednesday, 3 December 2025 - 4.00pm + networking cocktail

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/christophlemke>



**CFA Society  
Luxembourg**

## Upcoming events:

- 10 Dec: Candriam Economic Outlook 2026
- 21 Jan: New Year's toast 2026
- 10 Feb: Social Impact = financial necessity, investment case for real estate

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The Masterclass in Private Assets equips experienced investment professionals with cutting-edge insights into private equity, debt, real estate, and infrastructure. Over two intensive days at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, you will combine academic rigor with practical case studies to strengthen your expertise and decision-making in private markets.



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- For more information please visit [www.cfasociety.nl/en/courses](http://www.cfasociety.nl/en/courses)

# OUR OBJECTIVES FOR THIS SESSION

At the end of this session, you'll be able to apply concrete tips and tricks for breaking the ice and connecting with new people.



# My story so far...



chrislemke.lux@outlook.com  
phone: +352 621 888 727  
born in 1967

Dual Nationality : citizen of  
Germany and Luxembourg  
married, 2 children

Languages spoken:  
English, German, French,  
plus some Luxembourgish,  
Estonian and Spanish



**Trilingual Learning Professional with 30+ years of experience  
and proven track record in industry, academia and consulting**

## **Independent Management Trainer and Executive Coach, Board Member CFA Society Luxembourg**

### **Areas of expertise**

Executive development, management training  
High-Potential programmes  
Executive Coaching, Career Coaching and Outplacement  
Lean Six Sigma and project management  
Organizational development and change management  
Coaching & Mentoring, Team Boosters  
High-performance culture and teams

Communication skills / People skills / “Soft skills”  
Performance management and appraisals  
Psychology, resilience and growth mindset  
Positive E-learning, blended learning, gamification  
Talent management, Employee surveys  
Training design & delivery, training of trainers  
Learning metrics and evaluations, ROI



### **Short Biography**

With 30 years of training experience and coaching qualifications including ICF accreditation, I am now operating as an independent trainer and executive coach with clients mostly in Luxembourg and other European countries. Going back chronologically, my previous position was Key Account Director at **Target Training GmbH**, where I supported clients from all sectors in designing and delivering high-impact training programs for their employees. Before that, during my **10 years SES Luxembourg** as Vice President Learning & Engagement, I ensured that 2500 SES employees in 30 locations all over the world had easy access to high-impact development tools in different formats, and could continue learning and growing throughout their careers. I also ran the High-Potential Program and led a range of training initiatives on topics like sales, leadership, productivity, company culture, employee well-being and engagement - always in collaboration with top management and HR.

Prior to joining SES in March 2013, I was **7 years with PriceWaterhouseCoopers Luxembourg**, designing, organizing and selling training seminars for PwC clients in Luxembourg on a wide variety of topics. Before that, I worked **6 years for Goodyear** in Luxembourg managing Training and Organizational Development, responsible among other things for learning and change management in the European Research Center. However, my first full-time job was with **EBS for 5 years**, a major Business School in the Baltics - first as lecturer, then as head of the language department, and finally also as Head of Organizational Development. So my work has always been about **learning, teaching, and change** - in very different settings, on a variety of topics, and with very different target groups.

I have had the chance to live and work in four different countries - Luxembourg, the US, Estonia and Luxembourg – and enjoy the international environment that Luxembourg offers, both in terms of language mix and diversity of nationalities. On a volunteer basis, I am active as a board member for CFA Society Luxembourg, promoting professional and ethical standards in the financial sector.

### **Education**

#### **1999 – now**

MBTI, Insights Discovery and SDI certified, SixSigma Blackbelt, Internal Auditor, accredited ACC coach with the International Coaching Federation, countless management/business books in print/e-book/audio, around 100 MOOC certificates and specializations on Coursera/ edX

#### **1996-1998 Master of Business Administration (MBA)**

Focus on Human Resources Management, Management techniques, Micro and Macro Economics

#### **1989-1995 MA in Political Science, State Certificate in Public Education**

MA thesis on leadership education in developing countries. Teacher certificate for German public schools.

Trilingual Learning Professional with 30+ years of experience and a proven track record in industry, academia and consulting

# Chris Lemke



- Executive development
- Management training
- Communication skills
- People skills / “Soft skills”
- High-Potential programmes
- Performance management & appraisals
- Executive Coaching
- Career coaching and Outplacement
- Resilience and growth mindset
- Lean Six Sigma
- Project management
- E-learning, blended learning, Gamification
- Change management
- Talent management,
- Employee surveys
- Coaching & Mentoring,
- Team Boosters
- Training design & delivery,
- Training of trainers
- High-performance culture
- Learning metrics and evaluations
- Mini-MBAs



Management Trainer,  
Executive Coach, Lifelong Learner

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# Training Portfolio

- Impossible Negotiations
- Ethics for Cynics
- Networking Workshops
- Business Simulation Competition
- Increased Interpersonal Impact
- Personal Productivity
- Hollywood Leadership
- 3-Day Mini MBA
- 3-Day Talent Development Program
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- .....

Contact me on any of these topics  
to explore how I can  
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## NO-NONSENSE COACHING






- Executive Coaching
- Stepping into a new role
- Outplacement
- Career Change
- Productivity & Impact
- Imposter Syndrome, Self-Confidence, Conflict

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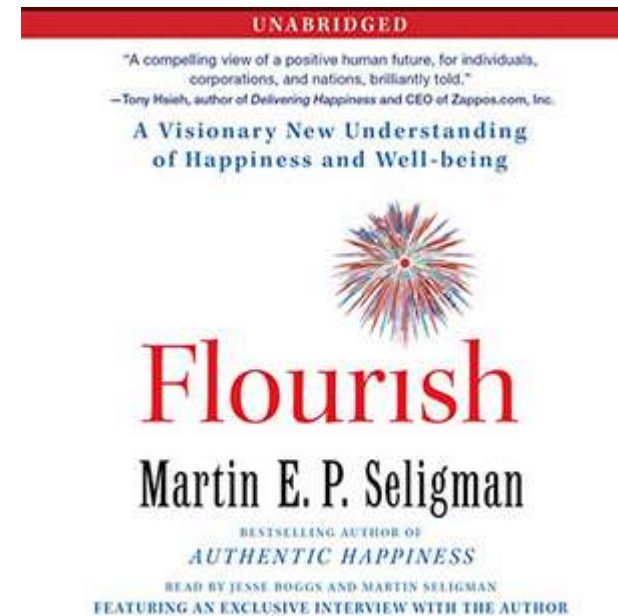
Networking is all about  
establishing a connection and  
maintaining contact.



# SELIGMAN'S MODEL OF WELL-BEING

- P -  Positive Emotion  
○ the right balance of positivity to boost our resilience
- E -  Engagement & Flow  
○ having interests and pursuits that deeply captivate us
- R -  Relationships  
○ authentic, energizing connections with others
- M -  Meaning & Purpose  
○ a sense of connection to something bigger than ourselves
- A -  Achievement & Accomplishment  
○ the belief and ability to do things that matter most to us

PERMA



It's a game.



# “THE DINNER GAME”

As a group, your task is to explore what the members of your group have in common. You can start with simple things such as birthplace, nationality, age, education, or work experience, and then move on to more complex ones such as hobbies, favorite food/music/cars/actors, travel destinations, and anything else you can think of.

Feel free to be creative, innovative, and just a little bit crazy. (by the way: features that are true for anyone, or more than 50% of the people in the room, don't count.)

**Have fun!**



# AGENDA

1. Introduction
2. Personal and cultural differences
3. Personal style versus (business) requirements
4. Simple techniques
5. Conclusions

# WHO ARE YOU?

Find out within your groups:

1. Why the other person is here.
2. If they enjoy getting to know new people.
3. How large they would say their network is.
4. How they would define networking. .





# Debriefing:

- Easy or hard?
- Importance of mission / purpose
  - The art of conversation.

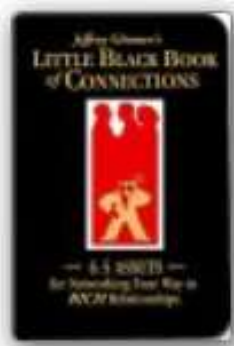
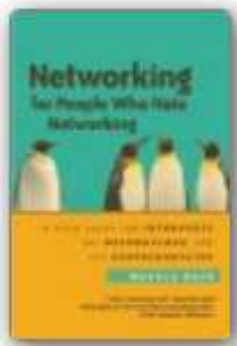
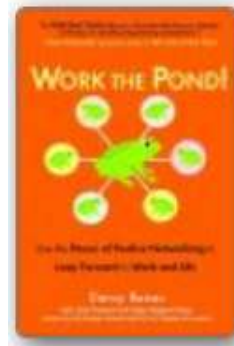
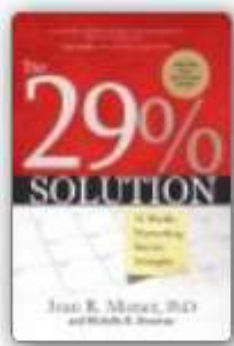
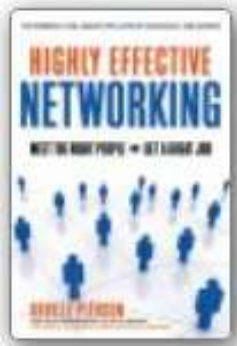
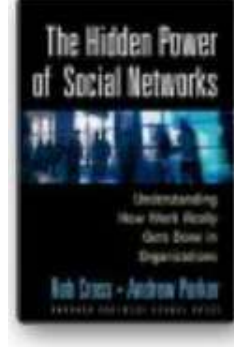
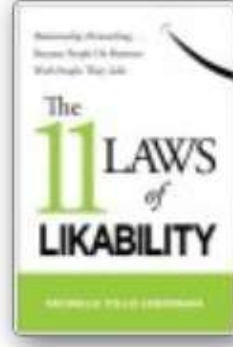
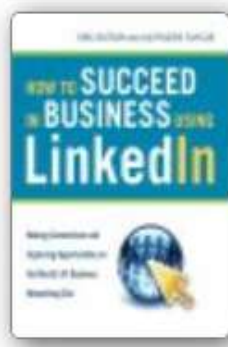
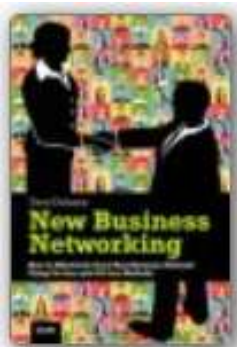
# EXERCISE

What's your 150 character summary of who you are and what you do?

1. Is it original?
2. Does it fit your style and personality?
3. Does it trigger me to ask for more?
4. Not bragging, not apologizing?

# **PART 1:**

# **Introduction**



It's a popular topic...

Have a card.  
Or a QR Code.  
Or something!



# DALE CARNEGIE FOR NETWORKING

1. Become genuinely interested in other people.
2. Smile. Begin in a friendly way.
3. Remember the name, and use the name.
4. Be a good listener. Encourage others to talk about themselves.
5. Talk in terms of the other person's interests.
6. Make the other person feel important - and do it sincerely.
7. Try honestly to see things from the other person's point of view.
8. Be sympathetic with the other person's ideas and desires. .

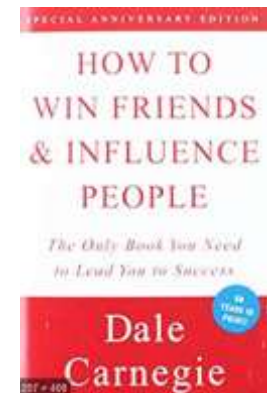
1936

Dale Carnegie



**Born** Dale Harbison Carnagey  
November 24, 1888  
Maryville, Missouri, U.S.

**Died** November 1, 1955 (aged 66)  
Forest Hills, New York, U.S.



STARTING conversations  
And  
ENDING conversations  
- gracefully.

## **PART 2:**

# **Personal Differences**

# ***THE MBTI DIMENSIONS E - I***

## ***HOW YOU ARE ENERGISED***

### **Extraversion:**

Preference to draw your energy from the world around you, from “doing” from involvement in external events and contact with people

- Attuned to external environment
- Prefer to talk through problems
- Learn best through doing or discussing
- Breadth of interests
- Tend to speak and act first, reflect later (act-reflect-act)

### **Introversion:**

Preference to draw your energy from your internal world, through quiet reflection, focusing on your inner thoughts or ideas.

- Drawn to contemplation in inner world
- Prefer to think through problems
- Learn best by reflection, mental practice
- Depth of interests
- Tend to reflect before acting or speaking (reflect-act-reflect)

## **How do you see yourself ?**

## Networking advice for **introverts**:

Relax.

Practice.

Use techniques.

Apply your listening skills.

Be yourself.

Open up....



## Networking advice for **extraverts**:

Apply your contact skills.

Be yourself.

Tune in.

Shut up...

# OTHER PERSONAL FACTORS

AFFECTING YOU AND THE OTHER PERSON

Self-confidence.

(Current) energy level.

Mood.

Recent experiences.

What's on your mind...

# Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

6

## Power Distance Index (PDI)

High: Acceptance of a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification.

Low: People strive to equalize the distribution of power and demand justification for inequalities of power.

**PDI**

## Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV)

Individualism: As a preference for a loosely-knit social framework

Collectivism: Tightly-knit framework in society.

**IDV**

## Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS)

Masculinity: Preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material rewards for success.

Femininity: Stands for a preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life.

**MAS**

## Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)

High: Maintains rigid codes of belief and behavior and are intolerant of unorthodox behavior and ideas.

Low: Societies maintain a more relaxed attitude in which practice counts more than principles.

**UAI**

## Long Term Orientation versus Short Term Normative Orientation (LTO)

High: Pragmatic approach, they encourage thrift and efforts in modern education as a way to prepare for the future.

Low: Societies prefer to maintain time-honored traditions and norms while viewing societal change with suspicion.

**LTO**

## Indulgence versus Restraint (IND)

Indulgence: Societies that allow relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun.

Restraint: Societies that suppress gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms.

**IND**

@anaisabelsofer  
Skyword 2015

<http://www.skyword.com/contentstandard/>

Source: <http://geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html>

Situational approach works best.

Some universal ingredients:

Respect  
Attention  
Credibility  
Empathy...

Be intentional about your circles:

LinkedIn

[Chrislemke.lux@outlook.com](mailto:Chrislemke.lux@outlook.com)

+3526218882727

WhatsApp



# Trust

is a necessary condition for

**Openness,**

**Vulnerability,**

**and Sharing**

WRONG WRONG WRONG

**Openness,  
Vulnerability,  
and Sharing**  
is a necessary condition for  
**Trust**

## **PART 3:**

# **Personal style versus business requirements**

Know yourself.

And know your mission.

# BENEFITS OF NETWORKING FOR THE ORGANISATION:

1. Connections improve communication.
2. Connections improve cooperation.
3. Networking boosts individual learning.
4. Networking boosts **organisational learning**.
5. Internal links increase well-being and sense of belonging.
6. External links increase **sales, reputation...**

# BENEFITS OF NETWORKING FOR THE INDIVIDUAL:

1. Connections improve communication.
2. Connections improve cooperation.
3. Networking boosts individual learning.
4. Networking boosts **career opportunities**.
5. Internal links increase well-being and sense of belonging.
6. External links increase **professional status and effectiveness...**

**JUST DO IT.**



Your phone is your enemy.  
(Think foe-n")

"In the future, people will be living miserable little lives,  
caught up in a delusional fictional world,  
wasting their life away staring at small illuminated screens,  
constantly swiping and typing."



## **PART 4:**

# **Simple Techniques**

**Imagine you are at a conference.  
Someone stands next to you during the coffee break.  
How do you start the conversation?**

Opening Lines?



Start with a question:

Inoffensive  
Respectful  
Natural  
Relevant



Look for common ground:

Start with the obvious.  
Volunteer information.  
Invite comparison.



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Triple-A conversations:

**Answer**

**Add**

**Ask back**



If necessary: just  
pretend they asked...



# Open Questions !

Example:

“Where do you work?”

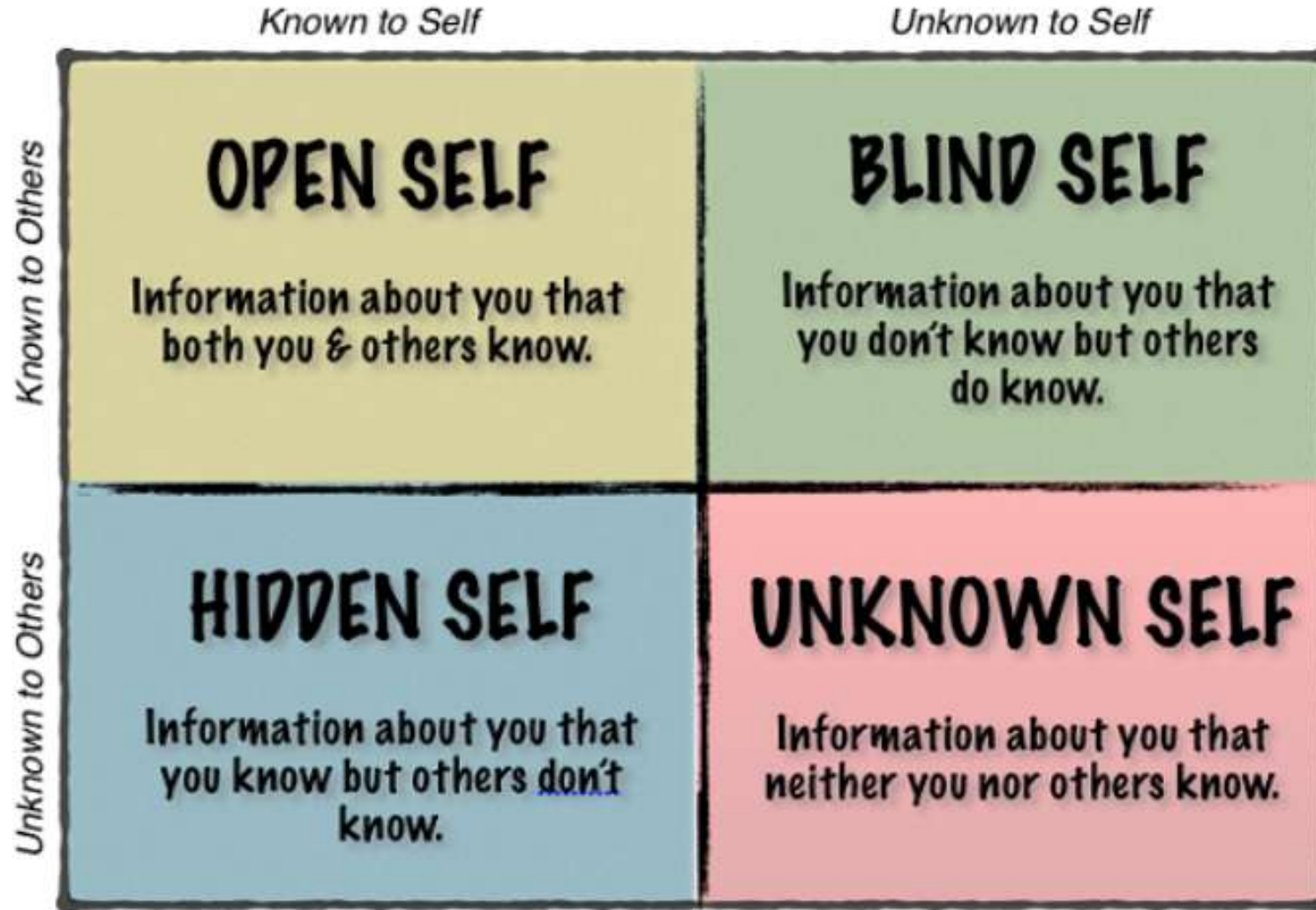
vs

“What’s your job like?”



# **ADVOCACY VS INQUIRY**

Really fascinating conversations:  
The Johari window





## A

- Describe the last pet you owned
- What was your high school like?
- Who is your favorite actor?

## B

- What is your greatest accomplishment, and why?
- When did you last sing to yourself? To someone else?
- Is there something you've always dreamed of doing? Why haven't you done it?

## Truly Interesting Questions

1. Given the choice of anyone in the world, whom would you want as a dinner guest?
2. Would you like to be famous? In what way?
3. What's your favorite movie and why?
4. What would constitute a "perfect" day for you?
5. When did you last sing to yourself? To someone else?
6. If you were able to live to the age of 90 and retain either the mind or body of a 30-year-old for the last 60 years of your life, which would you want?
7. Your house, containing everything you own, catches fire. After saving your loved ones and pets, you have time to safely make a final dash to save any one item. What would it be? Why?
8. For what in your life do you feel most grateful?
9. Complete this sentence: "I wish I had someone with whom I could share ..."
10. If you could change anything about the way you were raised, what would it be?

### The Experimental Generation of Interpersonal Closeness: A Procedure and Some Preliminary Findings

Arthur Aron  
*State University of New York at Stony Brook*

Edward Melinat  
*California Graduate School of Family Psychology*

Elaine N. Aron  
*State University of New York at Stony Brook*

Robert Darrin Vallone  
*University of California, Santa Cruz*

Renee J. Bator  
*Arizona State University*

## Truly Interesting Questions

11. Summarize your life story in 2 minutes - as much detail as possible...
12. If you could wake up tomorrow having gained any one quality or ability, what would it be?
13. If a crystal ball could tell you the truth about yourself, your life, the future or anything else, what would you want to know?
14. Is there something that you've dreamed of doing for a long time? Why haven't you done it?
15. What is the greatest accomplishment of your life?
16. What do you value most in a friendship?
17. What is your most treasured memory?
18. What's the secret of your success?
19. What do you miss most about your childhood.?
20. What does friendship mean to you?

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How do you follow up?  
How do you keep in touch?

# **PART 5:**

## **Conclusions**

Become genuinely  
interested  
in other people.





It's a game.



If you are sitting all evening  
next to an extremely boring  
person, it's all your fault.





# BONUS EXERCISE

## High Speed networking

At the sound of the signal, approach someone you do not know.

- Exchange short introductions
- Find a point in common / something to follow up on
- And exchange business cards.

# BONUS EXERCISE

## Facilitate Networking

Think of three close contacts you have

- How would you introduce them to someone else?
- Prepare the two sentence introduction
  1. Is it original?
  2. Does it trigger me to ask for more?

**QUESTIONS ?**



**COMMENTS ?**



**OBSERVATIONS ?**

# TRAINING PORTFOLIO

- Impossible Negotiations
- Ethics for Cynics
- Networking Workshops
- Business Simulation Competition
- Increased Interpersonal Impact
- Personal Productivity
- Hollywood Leadership
- 3-Day Mini MBA
- 3-Day Talent Development Program
- Career Skills Series
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