

Pack This if You're Attending a Conference

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October 2005

"I was born as a child and graduated from.....followed by eight years with" And so begins the dreaded personal introduction as we proceed around the table at a workshop, a class, meeting, cocktail party or other potential network of people. Taking control of your brand message is essential when helping others to know who you are and what you produce, whether you're inside an organization or especially if you're an independent consultant.

You need a Positioning Statement packed along with your laptop, folio and business cards when attending a conference, party, meeting or any place your professional capabilities may be of interest to others. Your Positioning Statement is what you say in an introduction or when someone asks you to "Tell me a little about your work."

Composing a good positioning statement starts with the premise that;

- you not trying to tell them *everything* about you
- you're not reciting your resume
- you have some insight into your listeners interests or needs

.....and you're positioning only the key facts about you to match this listeners interests.

What to include? Try these component parts:

1. **Your professional label.** This is not your job title. Stay closer to a profession label ("executive development professional") than a title "Team leader for succession planning".
2. Mention your three or four **areas of strong competence.** "I've had over 15 years of experience in executive recruitment, compensation planning, and management coaching." You specifically left out work you've done in training design and standup delivery because you know this listener's company has targeted needs for development and is not doing any global development through training.
3. Describe your best **results.** "I really enjoy the kind of results I've seen with the mid-sized firms I've helped to assess leadership bench strength. I'm uniquely able to help senior owner/founder individuals hand over control to upcoming leaders because I can translate the development needs and readiness data into practical plans for their firm. Your listener works for mid-sized law firm that has the three founder/partners that are seen as having "stayed too long at the party". Oh yeah, this listener understands what you just said.
4. Hint at **how experienced** you are. "I've worked with a number of professional services firms such as engineering, legal and medical LPCs and corporations both here and in Seattle and Chicago. In fact I'm currently in the middle of an interesting project involving leadership assessment with a former client from Seattle." Give geographic and cultural aspects of diversity in your experience as well as types of companies you consulted with.

There are a lot more career management tools and methods essential to Career Self-Reliance. Attend the Career Self-Reliance Workshop at the ASTD-Cascadia Chapter Regional Conference and "engage, learn, succeed".