



Liz on Leadership

Do You Participate, Contribute, Connect and Advise?

As the leader of your organization, it can be all too easy to be consumed with the everyday internal activities and operations of your team, department or company. Yet maintaining a strong connection to the world beyond your own four walls is essential for building industry recognition, unleashing creativity, igniting innovation and driving market leadership.

In my work with Fortune 500 executives, we explore ways to increase connectivity and accelerate success by becoming involved with boards, participating in trade associations, attending key partner conferences and actively contributing to industry publications and events.

I like to practice what I preach. I am a longstanding member of the American Psychological Association, a new member of the advisory board for *Life Science Leader* magazine and I have, for years, been an active member of the Society for the Advancement of Consulting (SAC). In these ways, I stay connected to my clients and abreast of industry trends, while continually learning and sharing best practices with the most sophisticated and successful consultants in the world.

Earlier this month, I had the opportunity to offer advice to the readers of *Life Science Leader* and contributed to SAC's press release on politics in the workplace. In case you missed either, here are some excerpts with links to the original publications:

Read the original: [Ask the Expert - Life Science Leader](#)

What's The Fastest Route To Creating A High-Performing Team?

1. Be crystal clear about what you are trying to achieve...

2. Make sure you've got the right people in the right roles doing the right things...
3. Get your people talking to each other...

Read the original: [Harshly Opposing Political Views in the Workplace Offer New Challenge for American Organizations: SAC Press Release, April 1, 2017](#)

Strong Leadership is Critical

Liz Bywater, PhD, leadership expert and author of the forthcoming book, *Slow Down to Speed Up*, notes "My most successful clients actively foster diversity of thought and robust discussion within their organizations. But in today's hot political climate, discourse can quickly turn ugly. Coworkers may take fiercely disparate positions on passionately held topics and the tenor of discussion can undermine productive discourse. Worse, it can damage relationships and weaken the spirit of collaboration."

Says Dr. Bywater, "Leaders have to deal directly with this. Rather than avoid or ignore the tension, they must be proactive, bold and directive with their employees. No matter how intense the topic, discussion among colleagues is always to remain thoughtful, respectful and professional. Great leaders clearly set the expectation, practice what they preach, and hold people to account."

View the full release [here](#).

Here's the takeaway: If you find yourself insufficiently connected to the world of your clients, competitors, colleagues and industry experts, it's time to branch out. Find one organization, event or publication and get involved. Participate, advise, attend, contribute. Become a thought leader. You, along with your team, company and customers will be far better for it.

Did you miss my last newsletter?

Three Great Reasons to Build Bridges

Last week, our local high school hosted 25 French high school students. We personally hosted a soft-spoken, polite 15-year-old boy named Corentin. The other 24 teens were dispersed among an array of local families. The exchange is part of a new program, run by our high school language department, designed to give French students a firsthand experience of life in America. Next year, the American kids will travel to France.

Throughout the week, the French and American students spent a great deal of time together. They attended classes, went on field trips to Philadelphia, Princeton and Amish country, played laser tag, ate burgers, cheesesteaks and Italian Ice, and wrapped up the week with pizza and a bonfire at a local student's home. Day by day, the French kids improved their English skills and the Americans began to converse in French. They shared freely of themselves and rapidly learned about one another's families, schools, foods, favorite activities and political points of view. Most importantly, they formed fast friendships, building bridges and creating bonds to last a lifetime.

It doesn't take much to build a bridge: just a measure of openness and curiosity, the willingness to share ideas and an eagerness to try new things. And the benefits can be profound. Here are three great reasons to build bridges in your organization:

1. **Innovation accelerates.** In my work with executives in organizations large and small, it's a consistent finding: isolation breeds stagnation, connection feeds innovation. When employees talk to one another across levels, departments, regions and business units, ideas flow, creativity surges and the discovery of your next great innovation is only a matter of time.
2. **Results improve.** When a company lacks effective and open team dialogue, fails to foster the "cross-pollination" of ideas, or lacks adequate connections to industry and customers, results invariably suffer. The best outcomes arise in the context of multi-directional communication among a diversity of stakeholders. It is under these conditions that successes can be replicated and repetitive mistakes avoided—as success in one area becomes the catalyst for a thriving organization.
3. **The future shines brighter.** When you build connections across your organization, you uncover opportunities for growth. You discover talent. You identify successors and learn how to prepare top candidates for the roles of tomorrow. And, above all, you create a culture of trust, robust debate and deep commitment—essential stuff for maximizing today's outcomes and forging the path to a remarkable tomorrow.

About Dr. Liz

Dr. Liz Bywater has been called a one-of-a-kind leadership expert. Working at the intersection of business and psychology, she brings together pragmatic experience, advising top executives across the Fortune 500, with an advanced degree in Psychology and a dynamic personal style to inspire, engage and counsel her clients.

For more than a decade, top global organizations have requested Liz's help in resolving issues such as creating extraordinary client relationships, increasing market persuasion, and driving productive collaborations in an increasingly complex world.

Liz advises senior leaders at some of the world's most successful companies, including Johnson & Johnson, Nike, Thomson Reuters, Bristol-Myers Squibb, AmeriSourceBergen and more. She uses her expertise in human behavior to drive commercial success. She helps her clients propel innovation, exert influence and lead their organizations through change.

A thought leader in organizational excellence, Liz provides expert commentary for such publications as the Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Fast Company and USA Today. She is on the editorial advisory board for *Life Science Leader* magazine and is a featured expert on such radio broadcasts as CBS Philadelphia's *Philadelphia Agenda* with Brad Segall and *Woman of the Week* with Marilyn Russell.

Liz earned her PhD in Psychology at the Derner Institute for Advanced

Psychological Studies at Adelphi University. Her undergraduate degree is from Cornell University, where she graduated Phi Beta Kappa and Cum Laude. She is a longstanding member of the American Psychological Association and the Society for the Advancement of Consulting. She lives in scenic Bucks County, PA, with her husband and two teenage children. Stay tuned for Liz's forthcoming book, ***Slow Down to Speed Up!*** (Business Expert Press, Fall 2017).

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