
Networking Ahead for Your Career

Create a Networking Roadmap and Your Defining Paragraph



Special Presentation to
Women of LDC and the *Connecting Women Forum*
with Kathy McAfee, America's Marketing Motivator

Create Your Defining Paragraph

The defining paragraph can be used in many different ways, including as your elevator pitch at networking events, sharing your expertise with company leaders, showcasing your talents on your LinkedIn profile summary, or in a job interview when they ask the general question, “Tell me about yourself...”

This exercise is very helpful step to help you shape your personal leadership brand is the Defining Paragraph. Created by my business coach Mark LeBlanc, the defining paragraph is a powerful way to position yourself quickly and effectively.

The Template

The Defining Paragraph has a very simple structure with only 7 parts.

1. Your name
2. Your organization, profession, industry or personal brand
3. P – The defining statement for your primary area of responsibility or expertise
4. S – The defining statement for your secondary area of responsibility or expertise
5. Credibility statement (only one needed). Start with the phrase, “*In fact, I...*”
6. Value statement – what is the *real* value of your work? List up to four outcomes/results. Start with the phrase, “*As a result of my work...*”
7. Add a personal statement – share more of who you are in this defining statement. Start with phrase, “*On a personal note...*”

Source: Mark Leblanc, www.SmallBusinessSuccess.com

Here’s an example of an imperfect draft of my defining paragraph

My name is Kathy McAfee and I am known as *America’s Marketing Motivator*.

Training and talent development is my primary focus. As an executive presentation coach, I work with corporate professionals who want to *stop global boring* by reducing their PowerPoint emissions and become more powerful presenters.

I also have expertise in marketing and new business development. I coach people in professional services industries who want to increase their sphere of influence through strategic connections and high value marketing activities, such as blogging for business.

In fact, my blog, named after my book *Networking Ahead for Business*, won the *2014 Best Blog of the Year* by the *Women World Awards*. I’m committed to helping people rethink networking, not as an event or activity, but as a strategy for life.

As a result of my work, business professionals are able to more confidently communicate their ideas, enhance their individual effectiveness, and enjoy more robust careers and businesses.

On a personal note, I’m an ovarian cancer survivor, and feel grateful to have a new lease on life.

AMERICA’S MARKETING MOTIVATOR 

Exercise: Write your own Defining Paragraph

Template

1. Your name
2. Your company name
3. P - The defining statement for your primary area of responsibility or expertise
4. S - The defining statement for your secondary area of responsibility or expertise
5. Credibility statement (only one needed). Start with the phrase, "*In fact, I....*"
6. Value statement – what is the real value of your work? List up to four outcomes/results. Start with the phrase, "*As a result of my work....*"
7. Add a personal statement – bring out more of who you are to create a personal connection. Start with the phrase, "*On a personal note....*"

Create an “imperfect draft” by filling in the blanks:

1. My name is _____ and I *run/serve/am known as* _____
2. at/in _____ (Company, organization, profession, industry).
3. _____ is the primary focus of my work (primary area of expertise).
4. As a _____, I also *lead/support/run/excel at* _____ (secondary area of expertise).
5. In fact, I _____ (credibility statement).
6. As a result of my work, _____

_____ (list up to 4 outcomes from your work).
7. On a personal note, I _____.

Next Steps: Practice sharing this “imperfect draft” of your Defining Paragraph with a partner. Use vocal intonation to appropriate to each situation (networking, job interview, phone conversation, etc.). Ask for feedback. Make changes. Get comfortable with it. Understand the 7 part structure and you’ll find it easier to remember what you want to say to position yourself in any situation

Networking Roadmap

Develop a three-month Networking Action Plan to help progress your career and life.

Your Name: _____ **Start Date:** _____ **End Date:** _____ (3 months from now)

Goal Statement: What do you hope to accomplish in your career over the next 12 months? What does success look like to you? Be specific.

Networking Strategies: How will you accomplish this career goal? What relationship-building strategies do you plan to utilize? (see page 2 for ideas)

Action Plan: What specific actions and networking activities will you implement over the next three months? (See examples on pages 4-6)

Accountability: Who will help you stay on track with your networking action plan? Who will be your accountability buddy? How will you keep this networking roadmap visible to ensure you stay on track?

- Your signature: _____
- Accountability Buddy's signature: _____
- When/how will you work together to help coach and encourage each other?

Networking actions that can help advance your career

1. **Make a list of everyone you know** (i.e., people already in your network.) Download the My World Exercise™ at <http://www.americasmarketingmotivator.com/my-world/>
2. **Identify your Centers of Influence.** Identify the existing relationships that are most important to you. Who are your go-to people? Who cares about you? Who is in a position to help further your career?
3. **Reclaim and reactivate your lost connections.** Use social media to find past colleagues, college connections, and friends who you knew but have lost touch with.
4. **Ask for warm introductions.** If you're uncomfortable with 'cold calling,' ask someone you already know to facilitate an introduction for you to a person of influence. Do this for others.
5. **Develop your follow-up system.** Be the one to initiate the follow-up in order to develop the new connections into relationships over time. Be disciplined and personalized.
6. **Never eat alone.** Leverage lunch in the company cafeteria as an opportunity to meet new people and establish new connections. Have courage to sit with people you don't know. Invite new people to have lunch with you.
7. **Conduct a networking experiment.** Set a goal to have lunch with a high-level person in the organization. Figure out who can help you and how long it will take to make this happen.
8. **Perfect your elevator pitch.** Know how you will introduce yourself. Learn to position yourself in 30 seconds or less. Tap into your personal brand.
9. **Develop your digital presence.** Develop your LinkedIn profile. Upload a professional photograph and take the time to complete your online profile. Read and comply with your company's social media policy. Remember that everything you post online is permanent and public.

10. **Invite people to join your online network.** Every day/week, send invitations to people you know or would like to know to join your online network. Increase your acceptance rates by always sending personal messages to people, inviting them connect with you on LinkedIn or other social media sites. Do not use the LinkedIn default invitation copy.

11. **Showcase your thought leadership.** Share articles of interest and other helpful resources with the people in your network. Distribute through social media or physical mailing.

12. **Volunteer to work on special projects and community outreach.** Raise your hand to lead or support different initiatives that interest you at your organization or in the community. Join a nonprofit board of directors. Devote your personal time and energy to this mission-oriented work. Get to know the people involved who share your passion.

13. **Leverage recreational activities to meet new people.** Join intramural sports teams at your organization. Work out at your company's gym. Get to know your colleagues outside of the "suit/tie environment."

14. **Attend networking events held outside of the company.** Attend events held by your local chamber of commerce, professional associations, alumni groups, etc. Introduce yourself to the leaders of these groups. Ask them to introduce you to important people in the association. Find ways to help them, too.

15. **Network at professional/industry conferences.** Prepare a networking game plan in advance of attending the conference (including planned follow-up actions). If you go with peers, be sure to adopt the "divide and conquer" strategy so that you can meet new people.

16. **Initiate.** Don't wait to be asked. If you see a problem and have an idea on how it might be solved, step forward.

About Your Instructor

Kathy McAfee is **America's Marketing Motivator**, a professional speaker and executive presentation coach whose mission is to help business and organizational leaders more effectively use their talent, energy, and influence to create positive changes in the world.



Thousands of executives and entrepreneurs have gained invaluable lessons from Kathy's company, Kmc Brand Innovation, LLC. Since 2005, Kathy has delivered hundreds of workshops, presentations and coaching sessions that have made professionals of all disciplines more confident, credible and valuable leaders.

She is the author of the book ***Networking Ahead for Business***. She is working on her second book, ***Stop Global Boring: Reduce your PowerPoint emissions to become a more powerful presenter***. Her award-winning blog *Elevate: Take Your Talent to the Next Level* is published weekly to help professionals reach their fullest potential.

In her role as **Executive Presentation Coach**, she helps clients increase their confidence, credibility, and influence by reducing their PowerPoint dependency to better engage their audiences and move them to action. A certified Master Practitioner of Neuro Linguistic Programming or NLP and certified Blind Spots Profile Coach, Kathy helps her clients to clear their limiting beliefs and use more effective strategies to realize their full leadership potential.

Over the past 30 years, Kathy has held numerous corporate leadership positions, bringing marketing success to major companies such as Levi Strauss & Co., Maybelline, Southcorp Wines of Australia and ADVO, where she served as Vice President of Marketing Services. Living and working in England for three years, she led European marketing initiatives for an international vision care company.

A graduate of Stanford University in Economics, Kathy is a member of the National Speakers Association, a board member for the YWCA of the Hartford Region, and a member of Soroptimist International of the Americas. She is an ovarian cancer survivor and holds a second degree black belt in the martial art of Tae Kwon Do. Kathy and her husband Byron reside in Connecticut.

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For more helpful workbooks, templates and programs, visit Kathy's Open Vault resource at <http://www.americasmotivator.com/vault-landing-page/>