

Leverage Relationships for International Growth

"Did you sell your software in Hong Kong?" my assistant asked, as she pulled the CD from the FedEx envelope.

"Not that I know of." My tone was rather sarcastic, knowing how often authors "get published" in foreign countries without their knowledge because of copyright violations.

"Well, this sure looks like your ModelOffice CD. Maybe they sold rights there and forgot to tell you. Oh, wait. There's a note attached." She read the Post-It note aloud: "Thought you'd like to know that I just bought this on the streets of Hong Kong for \$3. Sorry about this. I was in your audience last year at SHRM." I didn't recognize the signature.

Upon closer examination of the accompanying brochure, it soon became apparent that a knockoff of my CD that sold for \$49 at Best Buy and Office Depot was indeed selling for \$3 half way around the world." And I'd found out quite by accident.

This incident once again reinforced the value of relationships—particularly relationships speakers can leverage when working beyond borders. All I had to do was hand over the contact information to my producer to prosecute.

Relationships have left a rewarding, if surprising, path in my career. Take these

examples: Dr. Palan was in my audience in the early 1990s, and invited me to tour Malaysia and speak to key clients there. Those early trips gave me international experience, useful in my area of expertise (communication) when I'm often asked how writing and speaking principles vary from culture to culture.

Then, Andre Winninga, CEO of Hospitality Solutions, visited my trade-

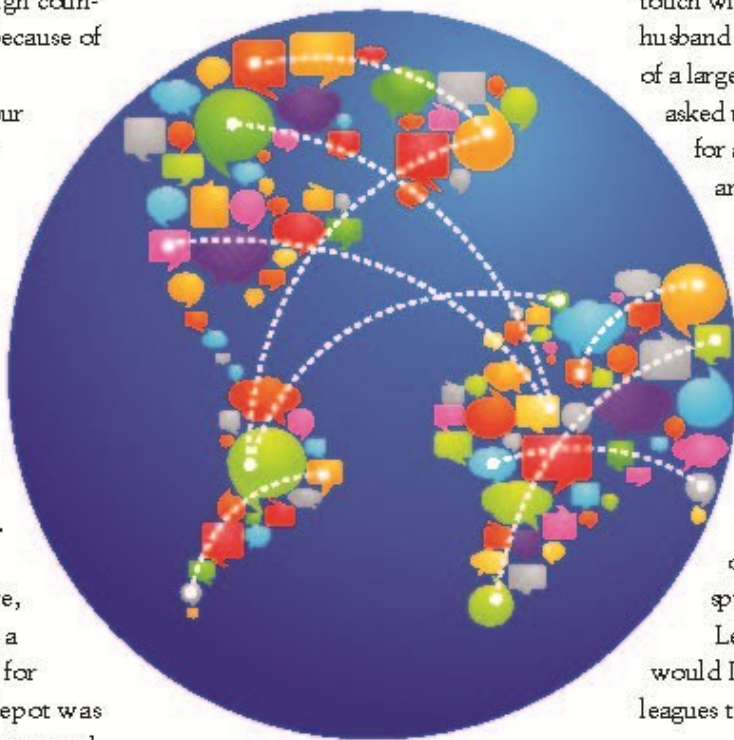
show booth in the United States and asked about licensing some of my programs for Europe. That led to trips to other countries to train instructors.

of the prestige of the international conference and the relationships of high-profile committee members, the conference and I, as keynoter, received press coverage all over South America—along with my book titles.

AMR in the United States asked my company to develop a custom training program for its internal trainers to present to foreign airline personnel. We stayed in touch with the client. Ten years later, the husband of one of those trainers, the CEO of a large consulting company in Kuwait, asked us to send trainers to Kuwait for an eight-day assignment—and another the following year.

Relationships and business have also jumped tracks. By that, I mean that I started the relationship offering a training program, which led to a keynote, which led to coaching an executive, which led to a large consulting project, which rolled back into training offered by my consultants, which spun off another few keynotes.

Leveraging relationships: What would I ever do without friends and colleagues to help?



show booth in the United States and asked about licensing some of my programs for Europe. That led to trips to other countries to train instructors.

Dr. Luiz Leite had been in my ASTD audiences several times in the United States. When he returned to Brazil and needed a keynoter for the International Conarh Conference, he called. Because



Dianna Booher, MA, CSP, CPAE works with organizations to increase productivity and improve effectiveness through better communication: oral,

written, interpersonal and cross-functional. She's the author of 45 books, published in 23 countries, in 18 languages. Her latest are The Voice of Authority and Booher's Rules of Grammar. Visit www.Booher.com