

The BDPA Connection

BDPA and YOU

*Reflections and
thought-provoking
insight of BDPA's
relevance and importance
to your career . . . regardless
of your chosen profession.*

**Why The Future Belongs to
BDPA and YOU!**

BDPA and YOU

by [Henry Ford](#)

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Venue: Information Exchange Meeting Agenda
Topic: The BDPA Connection
Presented By: Henry Ford
Date/Time: Tuesday, August 16, 2011 - 6:30 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.
Location: Dolan Center, John Carroll University ([Directions](#))

ABOUT THIS PRESENTATION

Although *The BDPA Connection* is tailored specifically for members and prospective members of BDPA, the contents of the presentation transcend any single organization. The benefits of active involvement in organizations or causes greater than one's current circumstance is documented in *The Power of Association*, using the concepts detailed in that book.

I urge you to carefully consider the contents of this presentation, and how it might apply to your personal and professional development. Whether you have a burning passion for technology, or absolutely no interest at all, there is something on the following pages for you.

THANK YOU for downloading this presentation, and please contact me with any comments or questions.

Best Regards,
Henry Ford at successisyou@yahoo.com

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I Don't Know What Your Goals Are, But . . . I Know MY Story (continued)

I don't know what your goals are, I don't know what your dreams are, but I know my story.

Everyone has a story and the good news is that we can learn from it, grow from it, use it to help someone, and most importantly help to write its future chapters.

My purpose here today is to reenact a portion of my adult life as it relates to my careers and to BDPA. And yes I said "careers" plural, because while in years past, career change was possible, today it is expected!

My career in Information Systems began in 1968, back when it was called "*Data Processing*," and not long after it was referred to as "*Tab*" or the "*Tabulating Department*." The work area was full of antiques such as keypunch machines, card sorters, and these things called interpreters, machines that people kept unplugging and plugging wires into to get different results.

As the only African American in the department in a company with a less than 5% minority representation, I was anxious to do well, because it felt as though nearly everyone was watching me, and many of them were!

I became proficient at COBOL programming, card sorting, and because I could type, I often keypunched my own programs, many times running circles around those waiting

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for someone else to do the upfront work. I was, in my mind, on my way up the corporate ladder.

Fast forwarding some 15 plus years, I was still *in my mind*, on my way up the corporate ladder (*still on the bottom rung, but well compensated*). The early 1980's introduced me to two life changing realities, one was Reaganomics, the other was BDPA.

Just as President Reagan was firing Air Traffic Controllers and setting the stage for turning back worker rights (*a move which continues to this day*), I was being introduced to an organization which would teach, empower and inspire me through the last half of my first career and launch me into a new career. That organization was and is BDPA Cleveland.

The results of my joining and becoming involved in the BDPA Cleveland Chapter convinced me that regardless of what happens around you and to you, there is power, purpose and potential in becoming involved in something bigger than yourself. By now you are likely asking what I am referring to, and what are some specifics.

When I joined BDPA, I knew how to write COBOL programs, and I assume I could still perform my previous jobs, those of Clerk-Typist and Lift Truck Operator. Despite good pay, and in fact, in part because of good pay, I was a virtual prisoner

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to my then current employment. My employer kept me because I was knowledgeable of my work environment and relatively cheap, and I kept my employer because I had neither the skills nor the belief that I could do anymore than I was already doing. It was a convenient arrangement that allowed those I worked for to slowly nibble away at benefits, while I became more focused and pre-occupied on my eventual retirement date.

So what part did BDPA have in the changes that began to occur?

By becoming a BDPA Member I began to network with others, thereby expanding my world beyond my workplace cubicle.

By performing various functions within BDPA I learned:

- Marketing
- Membership Management
- Publicity

By gaining some proficiency in and realizing an interest in the above areas, I was encouraged to return to school and obtain a degree in Business & Communications.

By attending national conferences I was exposed to others, including Les Brown, who became instrumental in my eventual career change.

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By presenting at national conferences, I gained additional exposure, allowing me to speak in various parts of the country.

Because I enjoyed success at speaking, I took the next logical step by becoming an author, a step forward made easier by the marketing and publicity knowledge gained as a BDPA Chairperson and in other capacities.

In 1994, several years after speaking at BDPA National Conference Workshops, I released my first book entitled *Success is YOU*, and some time later, released my second book entitled *The Power of Association*. Both books acknowledge the very important role of BDPA membership and involvement in my careers and my life.

During the years that followed I have spoken in various parts of the country, and on board cruise ships in both the Atlanta and Pacific. In 2004 I was blessed to share my message with an audience in Sydney, Australia, an audience that included a delegation from China. The words of *The Power of Association* are even shared on the continent of Africa, where the United Nations has selected the book as a resource manual on volunteerism. Each time I have an opportunity, I share a relevant part of my story in an attempt to encourage others to join with the organization that is an integral part of my past, present and future.

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Where Do We Go From Here?

How To Maintain and Improve The Skills For Today's Workplace and Gain The Skills For Tomorrow's Opportunities

- Continue Education & Training
- Network With Peers & Others
- Maximize The Use of Technology
- Share (Give & Receive) Expertise
- Remain Knowledgeable and Current of the Rapidly Changing Business World
- Gain Access to a Knowledge Base of Information System Leaders
- Become Connected to Top Corporate Leaders and Decision Makers
- Join and Become Actively Involved in an Organization that has Historically Promoted and Participated in All of The Above!

***"Today is the tomorrow
that you didn't prepare for yesterday."***

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Where Do We Go From Here? (continued)

The Power of Synergism

A power that defies mathematical calculation is the power of synergism, where in simply stated terms “*One Plus One Equals Three*” and in practice, very often it equals even more.

Many attempts have been made to describe the near magic phenomenon of synergy, with its ability to take the best from two or more individuals and apply the properties of multiplication instead of addition.

In his book *7 Principles of Highly Effective Leadership*, author Stephen Covey wrote of synergy “*It catalyzes, unifies and unleashes the greatest powers within people.*”

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Where Do We Go From Here? (continued)

How To Become What You Have Never Been

Over the years I have been blessed to work with and be exposed to many who inspire by example. Among those is Lucius Lewis, Cleveland area businessman, entrepreneur, author, speaker, trainer and much more. In his workshop series *A Better Way of Taking care of You*, Lucius states that *“The challenge is to focus on your dreams, goals, and objectives while simultaneously remaining open and flexible to new ideas for improvement.”*

To become what you have never been will most likely require that you do something you have never done, such as becoming actively involved in something you have never been involved in.

None of us possess the ability to know what lies beyond our present circumstances. Much of

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my success has blindsided me when I was looking in another direction for it. The truth is that preparation, persistence and as Lucius Lewis describes “*remaining open and flexible to new ideas*” greatly increases the likelihood that when opportunity blindsides you, you will be in a position to pick yourself up, dust yourself off, take your bows, and step into your new found success.

I was not educated to become an Information System Professional. When I entered the field I didn't know what a programmer was, but I had developed strong skills in math and logic. I did not plan to become a speaker. Being in the nineteenth percentile in persuasive ability was against me, but stumbling into a room at a BDPA Conference and hearing Les Brown, convinced me to tell my aptitude to “*go sit down and shut up!*”

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The truth is, you have the capacity to become more than you ever thought possible, but only to the extent that you dare to dream or allow new information and challenges to flow into your life.

Once again, becoming actively involved in something greater than yourself will position you to receive input from sources put here to inform you, to empower you, to open doors for you. Despite what loving parents or a mate might have told you, *you don't have all the answers*. Some answers to your unlimited future lie in that person or opportunity that is just on the other side of your next obstacle or challenge!

The Importance of Who You May Become

The importance of who you may become is to me almost sacred ground. It literally frightens

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me when I venture into this area. It frightens me that my words may fail to impart the importance of who you may become and what it may mean to the world. It frightens me that my words may establish in your mind some type of “*upper limit*” that you might settle for as your ultimate goal. Let me share now this disclaimer: *I have not a clue to who you might become.* Of all that I do not know, this is near the top of the list. What I am certain of is that no one else has that answer either. Your limitations are between you and God.

With all the challenges of today’s world, I do not have a clue what you can potentially bring to the world. In addition, your importance does not have to impact the world in some dramatic and overwhelming fashion. In fact, you only need to touch one life to make a difference. It may be written that someone whose life you impact will be the one to impact many others.

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Also, consider that the world called him a poor boy from East 87th and Cedar Avenue, but he answered to Jesse Owens. The world called her crippled, but she answered to Wilma Rudolph. The world called her a mere seamstress, but she answered to Rosa Parks. The world called him blind, but he answers to Stevie Wonder. The world questioned his religion and his citizenship, but he answers to President Barack Obama.

So it doesn't matter what you are called, it matters who you answer to. It doesn't matter who you are, it matters who you can become.

At the risk of being redundant, the best likelihood of changing your life and impacting others is when you embrace education, when you seek cutting edge training, when you connect with others of similar mindsets, when you become involved in something bigger than yourself, when you are challenged by and

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Where Do We Go From Here? (continued)

respond to those opportunities disguised as obstacles with your *absolute very best!*

The Wisdom to Understand, The Faith to Believe, The Courage to Act

All things not under our control, those things we like to refer to as circumstances, will happen or not happen, and they can become our stumbling blocks or our stepping stones. No amount of reading, listening or observing someone else's story can move one to action. Everyone writes their own life story based upon what they understand, their level of faith, and their willingness and courage to act. I have shared my story with the hope that you will see the value of my BDPA experience, and be able to realize possibilities for your career and life.

At the time I joined BDPA, the world was not so dependent upon technology as it is today. In

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the mid 1980's, except for those working in Information Systems, knowledge of technology was a "*nice to have.*" Today that knowledge, along with the need to be on the cutting edge of change is no longer "*nice to have,*" but has moved into the category of "*painful to do without,*" and is rapidly approaching "*needed in order to survive.*"

I could write indefinitely sharing examples, but I believe now is your time, a time to consider whether you believe BDPA involvement can add value to your career and your life. Certainly you can decide tomorrow, or wait until the children graduate, or until the weather breaks, or until you meet someone who is more supportive of your goals. The truth is that *now is the time.* The truth is that whatever opportunities await you subscribe to the age old words heard in the game of Hide-n-Seek, "*Ready or Not, Here I Come!*"

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YOUR Action Plan

The Title ***YOUR Action Plan*** means that whether you accept it, delay it, or ignore it, it is still YOURS! This is the Framework of YOUR Life Story.

RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS:

If you are not a BDPA Member, [JOIN NOW!](#)

If you are an INACTIVE BDPA Member

Get in touch with the contact person in your local chapter and plan to attend the next meeting of your local chapter.

If you are an **ACTIVE** BDPA Member

Consider what additional challenges might enhance your Resume and increase your marketability.

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Inspiration / References / Contact Information

- 7 Habits of Highly Effective Leadership [Stephen A. Covey](#) -
- A Better Way of Taking Care of You [Lucius L. Lewis](#) -
- Be The Best [Harvey Alston](#) -
- Noble & Associates Consulting, Inc [Sandra Noble](#) -
- Seeds of Success [DeLores Pressley](#) -
- Speaking for a Living Workshop [Les Brown](#) -
- Success is YOU [Henry Ford](#) -
- The Power of Association [Henry Ford](#) -
- United Nations Volunteerism Manual [The United Nations](#) -

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT BDPA: [Northeast Ohio](#) - [Other Chapters](#) -

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A FEW VALID CONCLUSIONS

The need for information is Increasing

The use of technology is increasing

The requirement to be knowledgeable in more areas and the need to become specialists are both increasing

OUR CHALLENGE

To increase our access to resources and opportunities that expand our knowledge base and our connections to resources
In the field of Information Systems

YOUR MOST VIABLE SOLUTION

Membership and Active Involvement
in BDPA

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