

## The Power of Networking

Recorded from an opening conference presentation by Jeff Peevy

I heard a story once that impacted my belief in the importance of networking. I realized the importance of networking transcends humanity and is a universal principle. The story is true and involved two species of birds, the Robin, and the Titmouse. The setting was the in the U.K., and it happened around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It all started when dairies began delivering bottles of milk to the doorsteps of homes. Since the cream rose to the top and sealed the bottles off, they did not have lids.



So, here's the story. Scientists began to observe an explosion in the Robin and Titmouse populations for no apparent reason. Researchers began to connect the dots between complaints from customers about the cream in their milk bottles being stolen and the population increase. It turns out both species of birds had learned to eat the cream from the top of the bottles, and thus the increased protein helped them multiply in greater numbers than ever before.

In response to customer complaints, dairies began putting a small tin lid over the milk bottles. This action resulted in Robin and Titmouse populations returning to traditional population levels. BUT this is not the end of the story, and in fact, the lesson from this story begins here.

Then a curious thing happened. Within two years, the Titmouse population once again exploded. Researchers were baffled at first as the Robin population remained normal. And it is here that our lesson lies.

It turns out that the Titmouse spends much of their time together in flocks, while the territorial Robin, bravely defends their established territory from each other. You see, though a few birds from each species learned to peel the tin lid back to access the cream, the territorial nature of the Robins prevented them from learning the new skill from each other, as a species, while the networking, group-loving Titmouse passed the new found knowledge and skill on to each other. Before the lid, accessing the cream was easy and didn't pose much of a challenge. Once the lid was on, it presented an entirely different challenge from the new technology of this simple lid. Simply put, it was harder.

And so here's the lesson. Just as the lid represented a new technology challenge to these birds, we face challenges from new technology every day. If you do not attend industry conferences, if you do not attend training that shares knowledge obtained from large-scale observations and experience you will never reach your full potential, professionally or even personally. Just like the Robin, I have watched people and businesses fail to grow because they stay to themselves. There's always a list of excuses, most that they feel they are too busy. These same individuals complain about the lack of profitability or can't understand how their competitors seem to do so well. Get out and network, don't be like the Robin. **Experience the power of networking!**