

# Service a way to speed up job search

**By Jill Jedlowski**

*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

Posted Tuesday, March 06, 2007

The popularity of speed dating, minus the romance, has hit the local business scene.

SpeedNetworking skidded into DuPage County a few months ago as the Chicago-based company launched its expansion into the suburbs.

The program is soon to return, with events scheduled for Thursday and April 19. Both are from 5 to 7:30 p.m. at The DuPage Club in Oakbrook Terrace.

The appeal of SpeedNetworking is that it eliminates the mundane chit-chat and cuts right to the chase, according to company creators. Think of it as high-speed, maximum efficiency networking, said Glory Borgeson, who coordinates SpeedNetworking's suburban tour.

Registrants take part in a fast-paced chat circuit that allows for five-minute conversations between pairings. Then, it's on to the next round.

SpeedNetworking relies on software, powered by a company called eXtreme Networking, that matches users based on what field professionals they want most to meet. Profiles are determined when clients sign up. Attendees have included bankers, insurance salesmen, computer programmers, Web designers, Realtors and more.

The result? Refined, streamlined networking that links users with a higher number of useful business contacts than traditional networking would yield in two weeks, company officials said.

"You actually get to select industries you want to meet," said SpeedNetworking President Michael Slater.

Sessions cost about \$50.

Participants can expect to meet at least 10 new contacts. The company guarantees it.

To make the most of a SpeedNetworking experience, Borgeson recommends going into the conversations knowing exactly what you want. Offer up what qualities define a good business lead for you personally. Jot down notes on a business card to follow up on or to pass along to a colleague.

Jeff Sophian, a managing partner at Northfield-based Business Owners Advisory Group, said he finds the format refreshing because it is controlled more than a typical chamber of commerce mixer.

Not only has SpeedNetworking led him to one of his best clients, but it also weeds out the people he does not want to meet.

And he's excited about the expansion into the suburbs, which is more convenient for him as opposed to trekking into the city.

"I like these events. They're working for us," Sophian said. "It's working well enough for me to keep going back."

SpeedNetworking usually takes place in a private room in a restaurant or similar facility, Slater said. Any place with a "business ambiance" and rectangular tables will do. Round tables are taboo for networking, he said.

"You've got to get close to people," Slater said.

The venture began in Chicago in 2001. With steadily increasing interest, the time finally has come to dip into the suburbs. The company has its eye on the Northern suburbs as well.

For more information or to register for an event, visit [www.speednetworking.com](http://www.speednetworking.com) or call Borgeson at (630) 653-0992.