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“Great Public Speaking Skills Increase Company's Bottom Line”

By Mary Anne Dorward

As a corporate CEO, you may not think you need public speaking training, but I guarantee you that your front-line sales staff does. They also need basic corporate etiquette skills. I recently worked with a highly successful international company that is the industry leader in its field.

Their CEO knew in order to retain their competitive advantage, they needed to always think ahead and be proactive in their approach. He hired me because he wanted to design a public speaking program to both assess and educate their top regional sales managers.

While their salespeople looked great as they entered the room in their suits and ties, from that point on, it was all down hill. Their top sales managers were under prepared and their sales presentations were not at all strategic or creative, poorly constructed and grammatically incorrect.

They had no idea how to properly walk into a corporate boardroom, give a great speech or effectively close the sale. Their social style was far too casual in terms of corporate etiquette and in some cases would have been considered quite rude. The sales people were embarrassed as they knew that they were clearly busted and could no longer hide behind the lie of “ Oh yeah, it went great.” In fact, their performances were absolutely terrible and we all knew it.

So what did we do?

You might say if their company is already number one in their industry, so what if their public speaking skills are not so hot? Their company is making a ton of money. They must be doing something right if they are on top. And you would be correct in one sense. Their company was doing well if you looked at the numbers. The salespeople out in the field were confidently reporting to management that “everything was fine” and supposedly demonstrating that fact by bringing in an acceptable amount of new business.

However, the top sales managers in the workshop told a different story. They admitted to “winging it” most of the time and that they really had no idea how to deliver a good speech or how to properly address a boardroom, especially if both men and women were present. Not only that, they all admitted they had no idea how to craft a convincing or strategic speech and relied mostly on their charm, good looks, and previously built business relationships to get them through. Most importantly, they all admitted that they were scared.

They were each afraid to admit to their boss how poor their speaking, writing, and



etiquette skills really were. They were even afraid to ask for help for fear of revealing their incompetence and possibly losing their jobs. The entire top-ranked sales team felt stuck between a rock and a hard place.

I am happy to report that the leaders of this successful company are now investing in the public speaking training and corporate etiquette skills of their people. They know that to retain their competitive edge, they need to invest in the skills of their staff.

Every salesperson only gets one chance to make that first impression for your company and every company is only one customer away from being out of business. You cannot afford to lose a single sale. A steady stream of poor sales performance by your staff and your company will suffer.

A well-prepared and executed speech is money in the bank. Good public speaking and corporate etiquette skills positively affect every company's bottom line. Guaranteed.

In the next issue: The impact of poor etiquette on your bottom line.