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The Barriers That Stop Most People Presenting In Public & How To Overcome Them

By Maria Davies

Gerald R. Ford said "If I went back to college again, I'd concentrate on two areas: learning to write and learning to speak before an audience. Nothing in life is more important than the ability to communicate effectively."

It's the number one skill that's guaranteed to position you head and shoulders above the competition, yet it's frequently overlooked, according to female speaker, Patricia Fripp.

My own take on having the ability to speak well in public is that it's probably the single most powerful thing you can learn to do that gives you the ammunition to say "If I can do that, I can do anything".

If you've ever marvelled at the abilities of a great presenter, the clever use of words to draw pictures, the confidence and charisma that exudes from the platform and the awe in which they are held, you'll agree with the above statements.

So why is it that when it comes to attending training courses, presentation skills are not the automatic first port of call? Could it be to do with that oft quoted (probably misquoted) statistic that speaking in public is feared more than death? Let's not go into an examination of quite how ridiculous that would be if it were true. After all, how many of you would really swap places with the guy in the coffin if you were asked to speak at a funeral?

There's no doubt that public presenting can get the old palms sweating, but given the benefits you'll get when you know you can do it well, it really shouldn't stop you. Let's examine the causes of nerves so you lay your fears to rest and get this most important of abilities added to your arsenal of talents, shall we?

First, examine why you're nervous. There's always a reason for nerves so examine what the reasons are so you can deal with the cause and go a long way to eliminating the symptom. Note that I say "go a long way to eliminating", the chances are that you'll always feel some nervousness which is when you need to remember that nerves are your friends because they keep your senses sharp & show that you want to do well.

The Barriers That Stop Most People Presenting In Public How To Overcome Them

Even seasoned performers suffer from stage fright, some had it so bad they could barely perform. Fortunately, the thought is usually worse than the task. Once you get started, you'll often find that your nervousness will disappear. I liken it to knowing that you're about to tackle a drive round London's Hyde Park Corner or Paris's Arc de Triomphe in rush hour. Thinking about it really freaks you out but when you're in the middle of it, you're too busy concentrating on not hitting anyone that it's only afterwards you get to think "Wow, I made it in one piece."

Some of the most common reasons I've found for people suffering from nerves are these:

–Worry about forgetting what you're going to say –Worry that the audience will think you're a fraud
–Worry about saying the wrong thing and offending somebody –Worry that someone will ask a question to which you don't know the answer –Worry that you'll get a dry mouth or get tongue tied –Worry that you'll finish too soon or run long

Some of the less common ones I've heard were "I'm worried in case there's a fire alarm halfway through my talk" and "I'm worried that the hem on my trousers will unravel in front of everyone whilst I'm speaking."

I could dismiss all these as "silly" or "invalid" and tell you that none of them will ever happen, but the fact is that they often will. (Yes, even the trouser hem thing's happened to me!). Looking down the list, you can see that there's a lot you can do to avoid these situations occurring: being well prepared, stating your qualifications in your introduction, knowing your subject matter inside and out, timing yourself several times during rehearsals, and so on (sorry, I don't have a magic bean to disable fire bells during speeches).

But so what if any of them still come to pass? What's the worst that can happen? Well it's not life or death, you know. You have to learn to keep your fears in perspective. And remember, the audience wants you to succeed. Nobody enjoys a bad speech.

Do what you can to be prepared and don't let fear of speaking stop you from gaining that most revered of all skills, the one that will impact every area of your personal and business life. Give yourself the very best opportunity of succeeding and you'll find the rewards are massive.

Maria Davies is the UK's most successful female sales presenter who trains others to overcome their public speaking fears and use presentation skills to increase the audience share for their product or service by around 91%. Find out more about forthcoming seminars, worldwide e-trainings or speaker bookings at

<http://www.laddersofsuccess.com>

Creating Unlimited Belief for Success!

By Richard Gorham

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What's holding your team back from experiencing "breakout performance"?

It may be those Old beliefs and Personal Insecurities (aka: conceptual barriers)?

Conceptual barriers are the barriers that are right behind the eyes, DEEP within the brain. "Beliefs" which were planted at a very young age and re-enforced over a long period of time – which is why they are so hard to "dislodge".

Use the following exercise to help your team members identify their limiting beliefs and feelings. Then explain how those beliefs and feelings directly impact (positively and negatively) their bottom-line results.

Before we proceed, keep the following quote in mind – it's a powerful reminder of why it is so important to complete sales management activities.

"Successful people DO, what unsuccessful people are not willing to do."
– Unknown

Here are the Four Steps to Overcome Conceptual Barriers:

Step One – Uncover Negative Self-Talk

Ask the employee to tell you what he or she "least" enjoys about each step of the sales management process. Follow up by asking how that particular aspect of the process makes the employee feel.

For example:

- Prospecting/Cold Calling – (feels like I am intruding)
- Asking for the Business – (feels like I am being pushy)
- Cross-Selling/Up-Selling – (feels like I am taking advantage)
- Assumptive Closing – (feels like I am being presumptuous)

Step Two – Identify Beliefs that are the root source of negative feelings toward sales management practices.

Go back to our prior examples of Old Beliefs that get in the way of our progress in the sales management process:

- Don't talk to strangers
- It is impolite to talk about money
- Never interrupt important people

- Wait to be asked

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Help the employee understand and be aware of why it is that they may feel the way they do.

Employees should understand that they feel the way they do for a reason. Once they understand this it can be much easier for them to make a decision to overcome their old belief(s).

Step Three – Turn Limiting Beliefs into Unlimited Possibility!

Illustrate the following to your employee so they can clearly see how their beliefs and feelings ultimately "pre-determine" their outcome.

On one hand:

Positive Beliefs » Positive Feelings » Actions » Positive Results

And on the other hand:

Limiting Beliefs » Negative Feelings » Inaction » Negative Results

So based on the preceding, it's obvious which hand offers the most value – correct?

Step Four – CHOOSE a path together!

Obviously, if an employee is unwilling to work to overcome conceptual barriers, then you should agree that a sales position is not the right fit.

You should either find a more suitable role for the person, or part ways so he/she may pursue a more rewarding opportunity somewhere else.

Let's assume however that the employee seeks to overcome their conceptual barriers and is willing to take ownership of their plan for improvement.

As the leader, you have an important role to play in your employee overcoming their limiting beliefs. You are responsible for supporting the employee in three key areas. Once again, they are:

- TEACH – lead by example, reinforce positive actions and behaviors
- COACH – help to improve technique, debrief progress, track results, ensure employee stays on task
- EXPECT – inspect what you expect, hold yourself and your employee accountable for continued improvement and increased results.

In conclusion, ask yourself the following question.

Can you name one person who is a top performer that:

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- believed he wouldn't be successful?
- feels she shouldn't be successful?
- does not take the actions necessary for her to become successful?

The answer to each question? "Of course not!" Right?

So by default we must agree that in order for anyone to be successful, he/she must understand what is holding him or her back.

Then, she must be willing to work to overcome obstacles, and choose to proactively follow a corrective action plan.

Finally, he must "execute" the plan.

Through this process he will build new beliefs that will enable him to discard that old and tired, limiting belief.

Richard Gorham is the founder and President of Leadership–Tools, Inc. His web site, <http://www.leadership–tools.com> is dedicated to providing free tools and resources for today's aspiring leaders. Offering high–quality tools in the areas of Business Planning, Leadership Development, Customer Service, Sales Management and Team Building.



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