

## WOMEN AT WORK

# Resolve to own immense power of public speaking

## JACKIE DIBELLA

Public speaking is not rocket science.

But rocket science may be simpler to learn because it relies on fixed formulas and predictable physical laws and conditions.

Public speaking is the art of effectively interacting with people to convey a specific message. Little is less predictable than interaction between people.

The good news? While public speaking can be painful and frustrating, it is also an enjoyable and magnetic discipline.

Public speaking expertise is one of the most valuable assets a business professional can have. Good verbal skills are essential to success in every component of the work environment.

One facet often overlooked is that good public speaking also requires listening carefully — whenever we're attempting to influence a group, we must be attuned to the messages they are sending back.

The National Association of Colleges and Employers is the leading source of information

on employment for college graduates. Their 2007 Job Outlook Survey reports that communication skills are the most important skill for job candidates to possess. It is tied with honesty and integrity as the most important quality for the candidate. Employers consistently rank the ability to communicate above technical



DiBella

knowledge when deciding whom to hire and whom to promote.

This is equally true no matter how specialized the field or how technical the position.

Aristotle, the Father of Rhetoric, said: "Bashfulness is an ornament to youth, but a reproach to old age!"

Youthful bashfulness communicates an expression of innocence and is rewarded by charmed parents, aunts and uncles.

As we mature, however, continuing bashful behavior can inhibit personal growth and

## Share a topic

This column is written by members of the Rochester Women's Network, whose focus is to help women connect, grow and succeed. For more information, go to [www.rwn.org](http://www.rwn.org).

may actually prevent us from achieving our goals.

When we speak, we must convey confidence in ourselves and our message — no matter how nervous we may be. It is important to convince your listeners that both you and your message are important and worth hearing. Use that attitude to determine how to best deliver the message.

In *Rhetoric*, Aristotle explains how to be a successful public speaker. The speaker's job is to convince the listener to believe in the speaker and the speaker's message. The speaker must begin by setting the mood that will enable the listener to decide that the message is correct and worthy of adoption.

Sales professionals often employ a three-part plan:

- Tell the audience what you're going to tell them.

- Provide the details.
- Then review what you told them.

This three-point program is useful as you prepare for your talk.

The first part should be an executive summary of your message. Be sure to communicate to the listener what you want them to do with the message.

The second step provides specifics of your message.

The third step provides an opportunity to review your message and reiterate what you want the audience to do as a result of your message.

It is guaranteed that at some time in a professional's career, public speaking will be required. Books and courses on public speaking abound.

Resolve to hone your skills and practice them to perfection this year. □

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