

Mastering the Art of Effective Communication

Not every aspiring entrepreneur or business owner is born with the gift of gab. For some, it takes several taste tests of shoe leather to recognize the need to sharpen their public speaking skills. The basic ability to communicate with clarity to groups and individuals is a crucial skill that no business owner should leave home, or a former job working for someone else, without.

If you've got a head for business, but lack speaking savvy, then a Toastmasters club may be just what you need to untangle your tongue. Toastmasters groups across the nation have been helping professionals of every field master the art of public speaking since its first club opened in October of 1924, in the basement of a YMCA in Santa Ana, CA. Since then, Toastmasters clubs have formed throughout the U.S. and gone global, hosting about 10,500 clubs in approximately 90 countries, according to the Toastmasters International (TI) website.

Guests are encouraged to shop around to find a group where they feel most comfortable. While most members tend to stick with on "home" group, it is an open membership organization and those who choose to can join more than one club. This is especially advantageous for those who do a lot of traveling.

Those who are frequent flyers to international destinations can find a club in almost any country across the globe, including: Argentina, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Japan, Mexico and Zimbabwe to name a few. A complete listing

of participating countries can be found on the TI website.

A looming fear that lurks in the minds of anyone who has to speak to a group is staring down the double-barreled shotgun of a question they can't answer. Marjorie Kennedy, a 20-year veteran of Toastmasters, says that when you get stunned by a stumper, honest is the best policy. "What I found out was that when you don't know the answer, admit you don't know it, get the name and telephone number of the person who asked and get back with them when you find the answer. Once I did that, I lost my fear of being confronted with those types of questions," she says.

A dedicated Toastmaster, Kennedy is a member of five clubs in the Pensacola, Florida area, has served as educational vice president for two clubs, and ran for international director and won. If you had asked her when she first joined, she says she never would have dreamed she possessed the potential to pursue such lofty goals. "It has given me the confidence and courage to go for things I'd never have thought of before... Other toastmasters, however, see things in us that we perhaps cannot see."

As with anything, what a person gets out of it is directly proportional to what they put in. "I think Toastmasters is the most cost-effective, self development tool that anyone can use," says Kennedy. For more information about Toastmasters International log on to www.toastmasters.org.

Do You Know?

- In March of this year, Capital Development Services reported that the number of millionaires will triple by 2013 due to inheritances.
- The city of Istanbul, Turkey, one of the largest cities in Europe, is on two different continents, Europe and Asia.
- Gold is the most malleable and ductile of all metals. A cube of it about 2.5 inches on edge can be beaten out to cover an entire football field.
- The International Herald Tribune reported in July of 2004 that the number of Americans that are millionaires rose by 14 percent that year. At that time, one out of every 128 Americans was a millionaire.
- There are hundreds of SUNBELT Business Advisors Offices around the World.



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States Legally Restricting Cell Phone Use . . . *While You Are Driving*

Safety experts have said for a long time that dialing while driving and chatting on a cell phone can be a deadly distraction. Now, states across the United States are scrambling to impose restrictions on cell phone use by drivers.

At present, twenty-six states and the District of Columbia have written legislation on the issue, mostly since 2003. This year, other legislatures are tackling the subject, and two states have passed laws on it.

The move toward legislation reflects the rising concern these devices are contributing to an increase in auto crashes. "Ten years ago hardly anybody had cell phones," says Matt Sundeen, who tracks the issue for the National Conference of State Legislatures. Today, with the numbers of cell phone users soaring, "there's been a greater push in the state legislatures on this issue."

In states without laws, a number of municipalities have passed their own local restrictions. For example, Shelby Township in Michigan has an ordinance that makes it a civil violation to drive and use a cell phone. Now, after a fatal car crash in Macomb County in February, the state legislature is considering a law.

While no state has banned talking on a cell phone while driving, Connecticut, New Jersey, New



York and Washington, D.C., have the most restrictive laws: Except in emergencies, motorists in those states can use cell phones only with hands-free devices, such as earpieces. Restrictions vary across other states. Some prohibit teenagers, bus drivers and drivers with learning permits from using cell phones -- even with earpieces, Mr. Sundeen says.

Proponents of laws restricting cell phone use by drivers say the devices increasingly pose a safety threat. In 2004, Michigan recorded 1,021 crashes -- including five fatal accidents -- in which cell phone use was cited as a factor, according to the State Police's Office of Highway Safety Planning. A year earlier, there were 879 cell phone-related crashes, three of which were fatal.



Lawrence J. Ellison,
founder and CEO of Oracle Corporation for 25 years earned \$706,077,000 in 2001 after exercising 23 million stock options that were granted to him ten years earlier. Assuming a 40-hour workweek, this is the equivalent of almost \$340,000 an hour.

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Another Satisfied Client!

"I discovered that all roads led to Sunbelt Business Brokers."

Larry O-Brian

The U.S. Bureau of

Labor Statistics reports that the average person working 45 hours per week earns 44 percent more than someone who works 40 hours.

Business Behemoth's and Records They Set

Years ago, the Coca-Cola company ran a commercial about teaching the world to sing in perfect harmony while having a coke and a smile. Looks like the company ultimately got its wish. According to a study released by AC Nielson, Coca-Cola is now the largest global brand in the world based on sales. In 2002, the company made more than \$19 billion. Coca-Cola is sold and sipped in 30 countries, representing 90 percent of the world's domestic product.

In 2001, Wal-Mart officially became the largest retail firm in the world. The Bentonville, Ark.-based company posted revenues of \$191,329 million that year and generated \$6,295 in profits. In April of 2002, the retailing giant's \$219,812 million in revenues made it the largest corporation by revenues in the world, according to the Guinness Book of World Records. The one-stop shopping big-box exceeded Exxon Mobil in revenues, last year's largest moneymaker, by almost \$30 billion. Wal-Mart also holds the record for being the largest employer in the U.S., with more than one million employees.

While Wal-Mart may have the most employees in the United States, it has yet to break an India-based company's world record set in 1997. According to Guinness, Indian Railways employs 1,583,614 people, more than any other commercial or utility enterprise.

Bottom Line Drives Push to GO GREEN

Oil prices recently reached a record high of \$72 a barrel and continued turmoil in the Middle East suggests no end in sight to surges in prices. Up until recently, efforts to harness an alternative fuel source were lackluster at best and touted mostly by environmentalists.

Now, everyone is getting hit where it hurts, right square in the wallet. The pain and punishment at the pump has generate an immense public outcry across the world, and especially now in the United States. Recently passed incentives offered by Congress and the threat rising oil prices poses for the bottom line, has prompted automakers to take the first steps toward weaning off of oil by integrating more flex fuel cars, those that use a combination of 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline, into their product lines.

Although Henry Ford planned to fuel his early cars with ethanol, we didn't see the first flex fuel vehicles until

the mid-1990s. Today, there are over 5 million flexible fuel vehicles that can run on either E85 or gasoline. That number will grow dramatically very soon, thanks to a big push by General Motors and other automakers.

While General Motors believes that the ultimate solution to reducing the U.S.'s dependence on oil is hydrogen-powered fuel-cell vehicles, it sees ethanol and hybrids as viable ways to reduce oil consumption right now. Other automakers -- including Chrysler, Ford, Mercedes-Benz and Nissan -- have also made commitments to flexible fuel vehicles and the ethanol infrastructure.

Not all automakers, however, are ready to jump on the ethanol bandwagon. E85 is one of many alternative fuels that Toyota is considering, but it has no current plans to produce flexible fuel vehicles for sale in the U.S. Honda does not offer any E85 vehicles in the U.S. either, but it supports blends of E10 in gasoline.

Go Global/Act Local

Greg Kells – Ottawa, Canada

(45 degrees latitude and 75 degrees longitude)



Match Made in Heaven

Dave Clarke was in no great hurry to sell his bustling Belleville/Kingston Dry cleaning business when I met with him, but I had a client looking for just such a business. The dry cleaning business was a successful family operation founded by Dave's father-in-law many year ago, and while he was in no rush to sell it, most of his energy was spent on Magic Wardrobe...his brainchild. Essentially an ATM for the dry cleaning business, the automated machine – a totally unattended robotic system, is put into office buildings, parking garages, grocery stores, etc.

While the initial buyer for the dry cleaning business didn't work out, a new one was located that fit the bill perfectly. And Dave had this to say about the process. "Sunbelt pre-screened all potential buyers and didn't bother me unless they had someone serious. The plant and the four dry cleaning stores were sold as a package. I was so pleased with the professional approach and impressed with Sunbelt's process."

Greg Kells is president of Sunbelt Business Brokers Inc. Canada with a staff of 15 in Ottawa and franchises across the country.

SUNBELT – Who We Are

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