Speaking Bugaboos

Here's a list that you might want to cut out and keep for the next time you give a speech. It's a list of words and phrases that shouldn't be a part of your next presentation. The list was assembled by Tony Carlson, author of *The How of Wow: A Guide to Giving a Speech That Will Positively Blow 'Em Away*.

■ **1 AM in the morning.** AM means "morning," so don't repeat yourself.

■ **All intents and purposes.** Overused. Worse, some speakers wrongly say, "all intensive purposes."

■ **At the end of the day (when all is said and done).** This is a verbal tic, rivaling a teenager's obsession with the word *like*.

■ **By.** This is often unnecessary, as in "revenues last quarter increased by 3 percent."

■ **Close proximity.** Redundant. Proximity includes the idea of closeness.

■ **Free gift.** All gifts are free; otherwise, they are not gifts.

■ **Plan ahead.** It would be silly to plan behind, wouldn't it?

■ **Surrounded on all sides.** *Surrounded* means all around you. *On all sides* is redundant.

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For more public speaking tips, check AMA's communication seminars at www.amanet.org/seminars.

The Three Cs to Resilience

BY SALVATORE R. MADDI AND DEBORAH M. KHOSHABA

Hardy attitudes—attitudes of commitment, control and challenge—give you the courage and motivation to turn stressful changes to your advantage. These three attitudes are the key to resilience and must be learned and mastered.

COMMITMENT. The attitude of commitment helps you to engage fully in work tasks and life. Your dedication influences how you cope with stressful changes in key ways. When you appraise the people and activities in your life as important to your personal satisfaction and system of meaning, and your interaction with them as worthwhile enough to pursue vigorously, you are more apt to commit and dedicate yourself to them both in will and action.

This attitude also shapes your understanding of the events around you and is the basis for evaluating situational outcomes. You ask yourself, "Do I have the interest to solve this problem?" If so, you are more apt to dedicate yourself to it. In this circumstance your attitude of commitment is high. If the opposite is true, you are more apt to deny or avoid the problem to minimize its damage to you.

CONTROL. The attitude of control enables you to take direct, hands-on action to transform changes and the problems they may cause. This attitude helps you believe that stressful changes are important and worthwhile enough to dedicate yourself to influencing them in an advantageous direction. You are likely to say, "Let me find, or develop, the resources to solve this problem."

If you don't have this attitude of control, you may question your ability to turn stressful changes around and stop trying. In the end, you will see yourself only as a victim.

CHALLENGE. The attitude of challenge lets you embrace change as a normal life process. This does not mean that you jump for joy when stressful changes come your way. Instead, you approach change as a meaningful challenge by seeing opportunity in every difficulty, rather than by seeing it the other way around.

If you are strong in the attitude of challenge, then you stay motivated

AMA Survey Results

77 % of companies in an AMA survey have crisis management plans for natural disasters.

73% have plans for technology systems failures.

65% have plans for industrial accidents.

46% have plans for terrorism.

For more results of AMA's "Crisis Management and Security Issues" survey, visit www.amanet.org/research

despite stressful changes, are especially able to learn from your disappointments to do better the next time and maintain that whatever does not kill you makes you stronger. If you lack this attitude of challenge, you see change as a sign of your inadequacy. You are overwhelmed with pain by what is happening and, depending on the nature of the situation, you may entertain ways of covering up the situation, even if that means lying about it and breaking rules.

Adapted, by permission of the publisher, from *Resilience at Work: How to Succeed No Matter What Life Throws at You* by Salvatore R. Maddi and Deborah M. Khoshaba, pp. 50-54, 62. Published by AMACOM, AMA's book division. Copyright 2005, Salvatore R. Maddi and Deborah M. Khoshaba.

For more information about this book and other AMA books, visit www.amanet.org/amacom-books

For help in developing the Three Cs mentioned here, consider AMA's management or leadership seminars: www.amanet.org

The Three Cs Practice

When you consider your own responses to workplace changes, what do you find? Does your pattern of response express the attitudes of commitment, control and challenge, or do you practice denial and avoidance?

Take a few minutes to think through the following questions to get a sense of how you handle stressful work changes now and in the past.

Commitment, Control and Challenge

1. Do you wake up in the morning excited by the thought of going to work?
2. Despite cherishing the past, do you look forward to a changing future?
3. Do you feel that your input at work makes a difference in how things turn out?
4. Do you rely on yourself to figure out how to solve problems that arise at work?
5. Do you see changes at work as bound to happen and normal?
6. Do you see both your company and yourself trying to grow and do better?

Denial and Avoidance

1. Do you feel most comfortable with clearly defined work tasks?
2. Do you feel most comfortable with little change in work task or environment?
3. To stay calm and happy, do you put work problems out of your mind?
4. Do you escape from work problems by distracting yourself with daydreams and other fun activities?
5. Does work stress you? If so, are you unsure as to why?
6. Do you work to pay your bills and nothing more?

To score your answers, give yourself one point for each time you answered "True" to a question. In order to see your attitudinal approach to stressful changes and conflicts, total your scores for each set of six questions. Which set gave you the highest score? Do you need to build up your attitudes of commitment, control and challenge?

Longest-tenured workers feel slighted by their bosses, organizations

Longer-term employees are far less positive about several aspects of their work experience compared to colleagues hired within the past two years, according to a survey by Mercer Human Resource Consulting. Ominously, the survey finds that the dissatisfaction of the longest-tenured workers is aimed at both their bosses and overall company management.

Only 53% of workers on the job 15 years or more told Mercer they agreed that "employees in my organization are treated with dignity and respect regardless of their position and background." In contrast, 75% of the newer workers agreed with the statement.

Less than half (49%) of the longest-tenured workers agree with the statement: "Managers in my organization demonstrate concern for the well-being of employees." That compares with 66% for employees who have been on the job two years or less.

According to Rod Fralicx, PhD, a principal in Mercer's St. Louis office, a "satis-faction gap" did not always exist between veteran staffers and the newer workers. "In the past, employee satisfaction levels would tend to start strong, drop steadily until about the 10- to 12-year marker, and then climb until they reached the level of the most recent hires. That's no longer the case and that shift has implications for many organizations."

The *2005 What's Working*™ survey, conducted by Mercer in the first quarter of this year, reflects the thinking of a representative sample of workers employed by more than 800 organizations across the US.

The survey did find short- and long-term employees agreeing in some areas—having similar levels of pride in working for the organization and having their work give them a feeling of personal accomplishment—but C-suite executives will take little comfort from some of the other findings:

■ Only 44% of the employees who have been on the job 15 years or more agreed that "my manager does a good job of setting work objectives."

■ Fewer than six in ten (58%) of the longer-term workers agreed that their manager "encourages open and honest two-way communication."

■ When asked if their manager "supports flexible working arrangements," only 35% of the veteran staffers said yes.

Dr. Fralicx thinks the problem of longest-tenured employees feeling slighted is rarely addressed and often confused with the much more visible, but different, debate over what to do about older workers.

According to Dr. Fralicx, companies with unhappy longer-term employees risk being branded as organizations where loyalty does not matter. "These employees have paid their dues and now may feel slighted by their boss and by upper management. And a lot of these people are wondering just how committed the company is to them, and in return, how committed they still are to the company."

For insights on keeping long-term employees motivated, register for AMA's supervisory seminars.

Cultures of Innovation BY MARK VICKERS

The 21st century is fast becoming the Age of Innovation. Not only do businesses see innovation as becoming more important, they're getting more ambitious about the types of innovation they're pursuing. The problem is, innovation can't just be mandated from the top. Companies have the difficult task of forming internal cultures of innovation.

A 2005 HRI survey, conducted in partnership with the American Management Association, found that respondents believe that over the next 10 years fostering creativity and innovation will become one of the important competencies for business leaders. Another survey, this one conducted by The Conference Board, indicates that companies want to increase the proportion of their innovations that are "breakthrough" (leading to whole new products) or "disruptive" (creating whole new markets), as opposed to incremental.

Such research findings indicate that many business leaders are keenly aware of the competitive challenges facing them. They can see the handwriting on the wall as nations such as China and India educate massive numbers of engineers and technicians. Last year, for example, China graduated 325,000 engineers, five times as many as did the U.S. The impact on innovation will likely be huge. "My prediction would be that in 20 years' time, India and China will both be responsible for more patents than the U.S.," states Bruce Lehman, former commissioner of the U.S. patent office, in *The Economist*.

But seeing the handwriting on the wall is one thing; knowing what to do about it is another. Multinationals based in the U.S. and Europe can and will tap into the Asian workforce to help boost their R&D efforts. Yet, this creates its own set of problems. As Chinese and Indian workers gain skills by working for multinationals or via outsourcing arrangements, they become more likely to start their own enterprises and then compete with their original employers or clients.

So, to stay innovative over the long haul and stay ahead of both current and future competitors, today's leaders must be able to establish cultures of innovation within their businesses. While there are no set formulas, there do seem to be certain common characteristics for cultures of innovation.

First, such cultures support communication and collaboration. If employees can easily communicate across business units, for example, they're much more likely to develop good ideas. Of course, real help and collaboration are also needed. Writing in *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, learning and development professional Laird McLean states, "In organizations where organizational support is minimal, there is unlikely to be a productive exchange of ideas. There may be no mechanism for finding expertise within the organization." Likewise, innovation is hindered if people simply don't have the time or inclination to aid one another in innovation projects.

In general, teams and work groups are critical to cultures of innovation, though not all work groups are created equal. They're most likely to be innovative when they're able to integrate people with diverse perspectives and when they give people the opportunities and time to effectively swap ideas.

In cultures of innovation, leaders clarify goals but they don't micromanage. They support, encourage and recognize achievement. They make sure that workers and teams have enough time and money to get the job done.

Cultures of innovation also value intelligent risk-taking, not just successful outcomes.

Mark Vickers is senior analyst and editor for The Human Resource Institute. Printed by permission of HRI (www.hrinstitute.info).

Cultivate Your Top Talent

Focus on your top performers, says Dr. Susan Bethanis, president of Mariposa Leadership, Inc. and author of the book *Leadership Chronicles of a Corporate Sage.* Don't let your problem employees zap your energy or your attention.

Bethanis believes that today's executives and managers need to pay more attention to their high talent. Otherwise, they will be under-utilizing or misaligning their organizations' top performers. To get the best return on investment from your human capital, she says, "it's vital to identify individual success, and critical to develop the skills and knowledge that build on their particular strengths. If leaders want to affect their bottom line positively and want to see their employees working at the top of their game, then they need to start paying attention to their staff members' innate talents and nurture them over time.

Bethanis has the following advice to cultivate top talent:

■ **Reverse your focus.** Most of the time we spend too much time on the "bottom 10 percent."

■ **Like Jack Welch, Bethanis says, we must "differentiate" talent.** Identify who is ranked high, middle and low, then make sure each group gets appropriate coaching and development time.

■ **Don't be afraid to change job descriptions or switch people's positions.** Be sure the tasks you give are related to the unique talents and strengths of the individual.

■ **When giving praise, be as detailed and specific as possible.** Reinforce positive behavior that makes the individual stand out and delegate tasks that accentuate those strengths.

Here's what you'll find on the
AMA Members-only Website www.amamember.org

SELF-ASSESSMENT

"Do I Delegate Enough?" If you have trouble entrusting work to others, take this short self-assessment, "Do I Delegate Enough?" from AMA's new seminar "Delegation Boot Camp," to see if you need to relinquish some control.

LEADERSHIP

Growing Beyond the Paycheck: Creating Teamwork on the Job. Effective leaders recognize that the most dedicated teams are motivated by more than a paycheck; they go the extra mile only when their work is truly meaningful.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

From the Mouths of Babes: Get Everything You Want by Learning How to Negotiate Like a Child. A smart, funny new book, *How to Negotiate Like a Child*, teaches you how to use the tried and true techniques of childhood.

HR/TRAINING

I Heard It Through the Grapevine. The latest research highlights the grapevine's significance in today's organizations and outlines ways leaders can harness its power to communicate more effectively with employees.

MANAGEMENT

From Crisis to Control: Four Tips for Strategic Project Management. A successful project management system may require that a significant organizational cultural change take place.

Book of the Month:
The Career Troubleshooter: Tips and Tools for Overcoming the 21 Most Common Challenges to Success, by Sherrie Gong Taguchi (AMACOM, 2006). Over the course of her 18-year career as a manager and recruiter, Taguchi realized that many professionals face the same career and workplace problems. In her new book she identifies 21 career challenges, along with strategies and resources to solve them.

For more information about this book and AMACOM's extensive catalog of business titles, visit www.amanet.org/books.
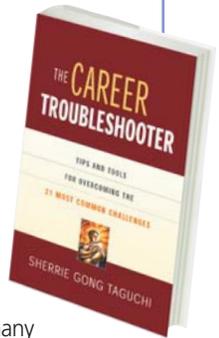
AMA Conferences/Special Events Calendar

JANUARY 9 WEBCAST • AMA/HRI Ethics Survey Results. The results of an AMA/Human Resource Institute Ethics Study will be discussed by AMA President and CEO Edward T. Reilly and HRI Executive Director Jay Jamrog during this Webcast. Free.

JANUARY 26 AUDIO CONFERENCE • Management Customers as Long-Term Investments. Audio Conference with author Sunil Gupta, whose expertise lies in the areas of marketing strategy, customer management, pricing and analytical decision making.

FEBRUARY 2 AUDIO CONFERENCE • Mastering the Complex Sale. With Jeff Thull, this audio conference is for those who specialize in the business-to-business transactions that involve multiple decisions made by multiple people from multiple perspectives. Thull uses "The Prime Process"—a diagnostic, customer-centered approach that clearly sets you apart from your competition and positions you with respect and credibility as a valued and trusted advisor.

FEBRUARY 8-9 LOS ANGELES, CA • The Employee of the Future. AMA hosts this conference during HR-LA Week. Hear thought leaders discuss the changing dynamics of the workforce and global competition and how HR executives need to be positioned as key players in developing both short- and long-term strategies for a growth-driven organization.

MARCH 3 WEBCAST • AMA/HRI Innovation Survey Results. The January 2006 results of an AMA/Human Resource Institute survey will be discussed by AMA President and CEO Edward T. Reilly and HRI Executive Director Jay Jamrog. Free.

APRIL 24-26, TORONTO, ON • 7th Administrative Professionals Conference. Join Kate Davis, Conference Host, at our 7th Administrative Professionals Conference, April 25-26, 2006, Hilton, Toronto. Register now and take advantage of our Early Bird Registration.

For details and to register for any AMA event, go to www.amanet.org or call 1-800-262-9699.

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