

COMMUNICATE UP THE CORPORATE LADDER

**How to Succeed in Business
with Clarity and Confidence**

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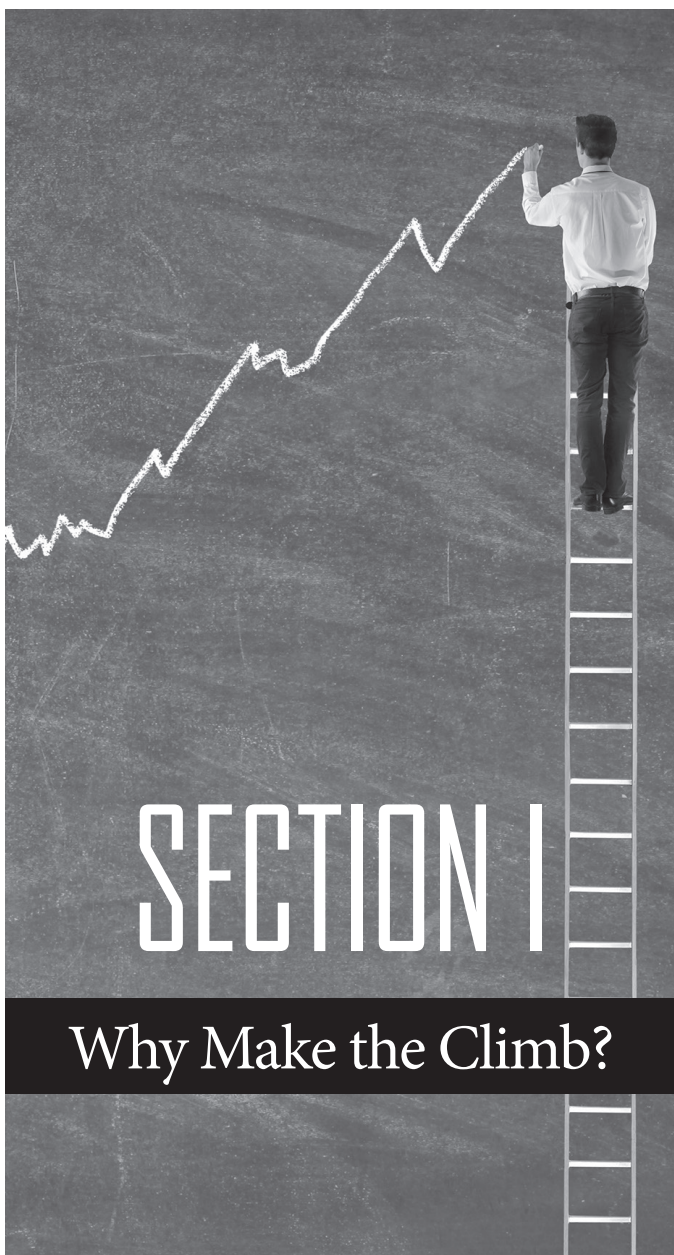


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SECTION I

Why Make the Climb?

CHAPTER 1

Are You Stuck on the Corporate Ladder?

You are highly talented, well-educated, and successful; however, you are just not moving up in your career as you had hoped.

If you are lucky, you have your annual review. Perhaps you are told your communication skills are holding you back. Almost daily I receive a telephone call where I am told of the employees who cannot be promoted or are not moving up the ladder because of their communication skills. For those who have been lucky enough to receive the feedback, you know what to do. Find the right training that will make the difference so you can continue the corporate rise. If you have not been lucky enough to be told you need to improve your communication skills, let this book be your motivation to take action.

My friend Jennifer is a bright young woman in the field of finance. She has a tendency, like many young

professionals, to speak in vocal mannerisms that are common with young girls in college. She frequently presents with upspeak, which is the tendency to end sentences with an upward inflection, characteristic of one asking a question. Additionally, she uses many filler words, such as “like” and “you know,” which can often be distracting to the listener. She did not seem to be aware of these speech habits until finally, one day this year, her boss suggested that she seek the help of a speech professional. She said she knew just the person.

Here is how to recognize the signs that your communication skills may be holding you back:

- Are people frequently asking you to repeat what you just said?
- Are people asking you to speak up because they have difficulty hearing you?
- Are you seeing looks of confusion on your listeners’ faces?
- Are promotions passing you by?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, consider how often this is happening. If it is happening at least once a day, you don’t need to wait for a trusted colleague or manager to advise you. You need to take action now.

Your situation is not unusual. There are many like you. The good news is that there are great resources for you. The time is now to begin the work to improve your communication skills. If you don't, it will be very difficult to move up the ladder.

Here are a few recent stories that show the impact of this training on one's professional success. These are all true stories based on actual clients of Corporate Speech Solutions, but the names have been changed in order to maintain the anonymity of our clients.

Irina, one of our non-native English-speaking clients, was working with one of my trainers to improve her clarity and confidence. During one of her sessions, Irina informed the trainer that her company asked her to do a presentation at the White House. Yes, *the* White House on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, DC where the President of the United States lives. Since overall confidence was a concern, we worked together as a team to prepare her for this momentous event. There were more than twenty presentations that day, and Irina was informed that hers was among the best presentations of the day.

Bill and Antoine, two senior executives from the same national consulting firm, contacted our company. They did not know each other, and they were located in different states, but in two months

they would be facing an important interview with a panel of partners from around the country at a meeting to be held in Chicago. This meeting would determine whether or not they would become partners in their firm. Each of them had attended the same meeting the previous year and for different reasons did not get the promotion. Bill needed to work on his body language and his verbal delivery, and Antoine needed additional work on reducing anxiety while forming answers to challenging questions on the spot. Our team worked with them individually (Antoine in person and Bill via Skype) and prepared them for this important meeting. Thanks to their determination, they both received the promotion.

Judith, an articulate attorney who lacked confidence in her presentation skills, came to us at a turning point in her career. She was nominated to be a New York City judge but had to testify about her qualifications before a panel of fifteen judges. Through our training to improve her non-verbal communication skills, plus helping her to craft the right answers under pressure and deliver them in a confident and concise manner, she received the judicial appointment.

These are just a few of our hundreds of stories of clients who have successfully advanced their careers. This book is designed to give you the tools

to succeed in your career by building clarity and confidence.

If you're reading this book, you most likely recognize that strong communication skills are essential to a successful career.

Several years ago I wrote an article for an online magazine. It provided information and techniques designed to improve business communication skills in the workplace. In the article, I referred to a technique (included in this book) designed to help reduce one's rate of speech. This article resurfaces from time to time. The only way I know that it is recycled is because when it does, I receive an e-mail—usually one, maybe two—requesting help in reducing one's rate of speech. Last week, the very first week of the new year, the article apparently was published online. I immediately received over one hundred e-mails in twenty-four hours. I share this because the message is clear: strong communication skills are directly related to your business success and more and more professionals are recognizing that fact. Learning to speak clearly and to communicate your thoughts and ideas in a confident, concise, and masterful manner is one of the most essential elements of professional achievement. However, as simplistic as it may seem, communicating effectively in a professional environment is a skill that is developed over time.

In this book I will break down the many factors that contribute to strong communication in the workplace and guide you through how to use each aspect to your advantage. You'll learn strategies for a variety of skills, from improving the quality of your speech itself to using communication to navigate tricky professional situations. Along the way you'll find helpful tips and exercises for practice in order to build confidence in your business communication skills.