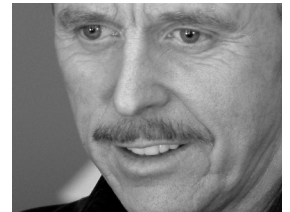


COMMANDING PRESENCE

Article by John Plank, Seminar Leader – ICAO Executive Program – Leadership Series

How well do you speak?

How do excellent speaking skills benefit an accountant?
What are the consequences of being a poor speaker?



John Plank

We asked 1500 accountants, lawyers and executives in Canada, the U.S. and the U.K.

We picked the top three responses in each category - here they are.

Benefits of Being an Excellent Speaker

1. Respect

You have worked hard to achieve your qualifications, and you have skill, experience and integrity. But the most successful accountants are those who are able to verbally communicate important qualifications. It's not fair, but being good at what you do is not enough. To be highly respected, you need to be able to speak well.

2. Persuasion

You have to persuade clients that you should work for them - you also have to persuade them continuously throughout the relationship. Excellent speaking skills are essential.

3. Career Advancement

Working hard, long hours is something you may be used to, but are you getting the recognition you deserve? When you can speak well you will raise your visibility and increase your value within your organization. The bonus is that improving your speaking ability is the single best way to develop your self-confidence.

Consequences of Poor Speaking

1. Being Underestimated

Our 1500 professionals chose this as one of the most serious consequences of poor speaking ability. Poor speakers are not credited with having the same level of professional ability as their colleagues who are better speakers.

2. Perceived as less intelligent

People who do not speak well are often perceived as being less intelligent. This certainly seems unfair but is none-the-less true, as our survey showed.

3. Unfulfilled Potential

This was rated as a serious consequence of poor speaking skills. Tragically, professionals who believe they cannot become good speakers often achieve success much later in their careers.

So what can we do about it?

The good news is that everyone can improve their speaking ability, substantially and permanently. Most people in the accounting profession prefer to use reading and writing to communicate, but that does not mean that they can't become good speakers. A few simple practices, such as reading aloud for a few minutes every day, recording your voice and getting some communication skills training will produce a huge improvement in your speaking ability and in your self confidence.

Simple practices and professional coaching can turn a good speaker into an excellent speaker.

For more information about this Leadership Series Program, visit:

<http://www.icao.on.ca/PD/PDExecutiveDev/CommandingPresence/1016page9107.aspx> or
<http://www.commandingpresence.com>