

7 Actionable Speaking Adjustments That Immediately Improve Your Team's Effectiveness!

(Excerpts from *The Speaking Guide—for On and Off the Job.*)

- ➔ **Get rid of negative chatter in 5 minutes: Identify 3 scenarios when your team may use negative words. Then equip them with well-crafted, positive responses.**

Customer says: "I was thinking of buying this car but I'm concerned it only gets 17 miles to the gallon."

Instead of: "Yeah it's not the best, but we have great financing!"

Have your team ready to say: "Hey for a car this powerful and this solid, it's amazing that it gets 17! Seriously other cars like it get half that!"

- ➔ **Save everyone time by instructing your entire team to consistently deliver all essential information upfront.**

INSTEAD OF THIS:

Employer emails admin: "Hey I got that report, let's review it tomorrow; it's pretty important."

Admin: "Sure."

Employer: "How about at 1:15."

Admin: "I can't then. But I can at 8:45."

Employer: "8:45 a.m. or p.m.?"

Admin: "Oh, a.m. I can work early."

Employer: "I can't come in early tomorrow. Oh wait, or do you mean by Zoom?"

Admin: "No, I meant in-person. Do I need to bring anything with me?"

Employer: "Yes, have the notes with you."

Admin: "Notes from all our past surveys, or just this week's? And how is today after regular hours?"

Employer: "You mean 5 p.m.? And just notes from this week."

Say this: "Hey, I got that report. Let's review it tomorrow. Either in my office at 8:45 a.m. or 2:15 p.m. or by Zoom at 5:30 p.m. using my usual Zoom link.

Whenever we meet, please have the notes from last week ready to discuss. Thanks."

This only takes 30 seconds longer to write, saving both parties significantly more time than that.

- ➔ **Better clarify your words – especially when hearing is challenging, such as a loud conference, poor videoconference quality, and so on:**

- Speak the first word of each sentence slowly.
- Speak keywords slowly — especially company names, people's names, brand names, and words that are difficult to pronounce.
- Leave longer pauses between sentences to: breathe comfortably (no nervous-sounding gasping here), organize your thoughts, and give your audience time to jot down notes and absorb your message.

➔ **Better engage your audience. Shift the focus from you to them. This simple adjustment will ultimately lead to more sales and enhanced productivity.**

Instead of: *"I think you should get the premium plan."*

Say: *"The premium plan seems best for you."*

Instead of: *"I have two openings, Monday at 3 and 5."*

Say: *"Hi you can choose from two openings, Monday at 3 and 5."*

Instead of: *"Hey please give me some feedback."*

Say: *"Feedback from you would be amazing, thank you!"*

Instead of: *"I have private conference rooms you can use."*

Say: *"You're welcome to use our private conference rooms!"*

➔ **Avoid blowing opportunities because you sound like a dud: Have every team member rehearse responses to important questions they know they'll be asked.**

A potential partner says: *"Hi, good to meet you, so tell me about your business?"*

Instead of: *"Oh yeah we uh, well we do X, and ya' know we also..."*

Say: *"Hi I'm glad you asked. At X company, we provide X..."*

➔ **Avoid alienating customers and colleagues: Take just 10 minutes to compile a list of words and phrases they may find off-putting. Share this list with your entire team to ensure everyone avoids them...**

For example: Religious words. Politics. Profanity. Money. Personal stories and struggles. Gossip. Downers. Criticism of competitors. Expressions such as "No problem."

Customer says: *"Hey your site wouldn't let me update my profile!"*

Instead of: *"Oh God, sorry about that!"* (Some people dislike religious expressions)

Say: *"Oh sorry about that!"*

Customer says: *"I appreciate you helping me."*

Instead of: *"No problem."* (This implies it would have otherwise been a problem.)

Say: *"Hey it was my pleasure, I'm glad you found it helpful!"*

➔ **Stay positive and keep everyone doing their thing!**

Instead of: *"Boss, it's too much, I'll make mistakes – you've gotta get rid of some!"*

Say: *"Hi Boss, please prioritize which ones you want done well."*

Instead of: *"Karen, please finish this last-minute report."*

Say: *"Karen, you've done such a great job on these last-minute reports – I'd love to give you this one. It's a lot, so I'll be sure to extend other projects you're on!"*

Instead of: *"Gosh, you've got to stop tapping your pen – it's driving me nuts!"*

Say: *"Hey if tapping helps you concentrate, I'd love to get you an extra mouse pad to put under it."*

Instead of: *"Hey, this article is missing the addendum."*

Say: *"Hi please add the addendum to the article."*

Instead of: *"Do not hesitate to call me with any problems."*

Say: *"Please feel welcome to call me with any questions."*

Instead of: *"What are you doing? Stop! You won't be able to get it done that way."*

Say: *"Hey I'd love to show you an easier way to do this!"*