

IS NOW REALLY THE TIME TO HIRE A PROFESSIONAL SPEAKER?

Since the events of September 11th and the economy slipping into recession, many organizations have been faced with deep budget cuts. Given the current financial hardships and wide spread layoffs, some managers are questioning whether they should continue to invest in bringing professional speakers into their organizations.

A "Far Side" cartoon by Gary Larson aptly makes the point. Standing in his tent, a king is putting on his armor, sword and shield for battle. His attendant has just told him that there is a salesman waiting to see him. To this he responds with great bluster, "Can't you see I'm busy, tell him to go away. I'm going into battle!" Meanwhile, standing just outside the tent is the salesman beside a large crate labeled, "MACHINE GUN".

How often do we, like that king, fail to understand that the urgent frequently overshadows the truly important? Today many organizations, from corporate to government and nonprofit are struggling in a severe budget squeeze. Thus, cutting costs becomes our battlefield. But what about the war? Have you ever heard the expression, "Winning the battle, but losing the war?" It is very apropos for many organizations today.

Professional speakers fill a very real and critical gap, especially in the tough economic times we now face, further clouded by the advent of an unexpected war of a kind we have never before fought. The darker the future, the greater the need to instill hope in our people and to provide them with the cutting edge knowledge and tools they require to get the job done when faced with diminished manpower and other resources.

To quote Torre Blomgren, of FREEDOM SPEAKERS & TRAINERS in Madison, Wisconsin: "The advantage a professional speaker has over an individual within an organization is that the speaker works with many different organizations in complimentary as well as widely divergent industries. They have what can be called a "Top View." Integrating the issues, problems and opportunities they see across these organizations endows them with a broader and dispassionate perspective, an ability to see the forest for the trees."

Professional speakers offer a unique perspective as an outsider to the organization as well as extensive background encompassing many types of organizations and perspectives. Blomgren continues: "The other responsibility of a professional speaker is to show people how to rise above their challenges and grow. A trained professional does this through their ability to advise, lead and motivate. The professional speaker is a seasoned communicator, who functions on the platform and in conference rooms across continents. Furthermore, the audience, whether a corporate boardroom with senior executives or an auditorium filled with employees, has no pre-set relationship to the speaker which facilitates learning."

Professional speakers help organizations to adjust much more quickly to a new environment. They assist the organization's leadership in empowering its people to again become victors over circumstance. Experienced speakers are far more than mere motivators. Demonstrating leadership and sound judgment, they help their audiences to think strategically through difficult issues and to take action based upon solid information and understanding. They also present a message of hope and possibility, yet one that is grounded in the reality of the situation. Bringing a professional speaker into your organization in this time of crises is a clear statement of your organization's commitment to its people and confidence in our nation and economy.



John Di Frances is an internationally recognized expert on Strategic Business Issues. His professional career spans thirty years of global corporate, nonprofit, academic and government agency experience in senior executive and industry leadership positions. John advises senior executives globally and is a prominent professional speaker. Since 1983 he has served as the Managing Partner of DI FRANCES & ASSOCIATES, LLC.