OPENING SPEECH

FOR

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Hello everyone! It’s a real privilege to be here and have the opportunity to communicate with all of you. I would like to thank (**Acknowledge the person who invited you to speak**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for inviting me to share some thoughts and ideas with you today. I would also like to acknowledge our guest of honor, (**Name the HR vice president**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. If ever there were a person in a position to understand the power of communication, he’s the man!! (**or woman?**) (**Turn to him/her and say**) Mr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (**or whatever is the most appropriate form of address**), as vice president of Human Resources, you are at the nexus of this company-its employees. Effective communication is a vital and critical necessity in every phase of business, and as Human Resources acts as a portal to our corporate world and within our world, clear communication and expression are non-negotiable traits that must be present. As this multi-national, cross-cultural, highly connected world in which we live gets even more culturally intertwined, the means and necessity to forge powerful bridges through clear, intentional and purposeful communication is needed more than ever.

The truth of the matter, and I think we would all agree to this, is that everything we do is a form of communication. From our personal presentation to the car we may drive and the way we choose to live our lives, there is a message conveyed that is to be received and interpreted, but today we focus on verbal communication and public speaking. Some key components of effective communication, especially in the global climate within which we all reside, are, clarity, intention, and empathy. What do I mean by those terms?

* **CLARITY**- Think about the idea you want to convey, and more importantly envision the result you want to produce. Don’t talk **AT** people; speak **WITH** them. If your message is important enough to be formulated and transmitted, then it’s important enough to be understood. Be considerate of clients, colleagues and co-workers that have had a different orientation to language, education and business techniques. Be mindful of accurate representation and make sure your audience understands your message as misinterpretation of even the simplest of syllables might inspire misunderstanding and deep conflicts.
* **INTENTION**- It is our mandate in business to “get the job done,” whatever that may mean. It is part of your job-EVERYONE’S job, to **get one’s point understood.** Our global marketplace may make that goal somewhat more challenging, but ultimately, that intention will serve you where the subtle nuances of language might fall short. Intention is a supremely powerful tool. Think about it and use it often. It just might provide the velocity your message needs to be understood.
* **EMPATHY**- When I say, “Don’t talk **AT** people, speak **WITH** them,” I mean that when communicating with others in any format, including public speaking; place yourself on the other side of the conversation. What are the words and gestures that would encourage **YOU** to understand the message if **you** were on the receiving end of the conversation?

There is a proverb that teaches us, “Deliver your words not by number but by weight.” Before we can begin to share our message with intent and accuracy, we have to understand what we want to say. As we find the words to represent our concepts, there should be an internal conversation as well. Think thoroughly and formulate your message so that it is complete and concise. Be engaging and speak as you would want to be spoken to. Consider your message, your tone, your audience and the impact you intend to make. Envision the room and the audience ten minutes after your speech has been completed. Did you speak in a manner that was understood by the audience? Have you achieved the goals you set before you began to speak? Has your audience gained wisdom and insight? (**If you want to add a little humor, you can say**) Are they still awake??? (**Wait for the laugh**) What have **YOU** learned from the experience?

As our world grows smaller and more connected, competition for distinction, effectiveness and ultimately, market share will increase on every level of business. It is the duty of each one if us to make sure we are prepared to enforce our personal and professional brands, and by being an engaging speaker with a vital message will insure your stature in the business world. Thank all of you for this opportunity!!