

SALES STAR



The Voice of Effective Communication: Dianna Booher

[By Mary Waldron]

Communications consultant Dianna Booher is changing the way professionals everywhere interact. Recognizing a tremendous need in the business world many years ago, Booher set out to create and share powerful programs that help salespeople, and other professionals, get their messages across in all forms of communication.

Years ago, Booher was teaching a novel-writing course at a local university when she noticed that she had quite a large class. Could they all be writing novels? When she approached her students, asking about what types of novels they were working on and if she could help, she learned that most of them were not even there to work on books.

"They said, 'No, I need help on the job.' They were lawyers, salespeople, and engineers saying, 'I need help!'" said Booher.

Gauging that there was probably a huge market for her specialty, Booher launched her communication consulting company, Booher Consultants, in 1980. Since then, Booher and her team have worked to implement her dynamic communication techniques and principles at companies—mostly Fortune 500 companies—throughout the world.

Booher provides consultation to her clients regarding all outlets of business communication. Whether they need to sell ideas at internal meetings or develop moving briefs or proposals, Booher specializes in assisting professionals with improving all of their communication methods and tactics for sales presentations, developing winning sales proposals, crafting their messages, facilitating client meetings, and strategic writing.

One of the main ideas Booher and her team teach salespeople is to start with the bottom line rather than rattling on about themselves and their companies. Salespeople sometimes forget that they are pitching to clients, not themselves.

"They're not interested in you," said Booher. "They're interested in them and what your

product or service can do for them."



If you can "intrigue" clients by explaining how you can help them and their organizations, *then* you can tell them more about your company and its credentials. The primary objective of the salesperson should be to explain how he or she can help the company at hand make money or achieve some type of success.

Booher also offers salespeople advice on how to draft their ideas in print. Many salespeople write like they think, scribbling ideas down as they come and never organizing them later. Booher suggests that developing an overview of your main idea and adding supporting details afterward is a more organized way to draft copy that communicates clearly.

Regarding writing thank-you notes after meetings, Booher advises that it's better to use the opportunity to answer any of the buyer's questions that may not have been answered in the meeting. Instead of sending a fluffy little email that many people might

Q. What do you do for fun?

A. I love just laying out by the pool and reading a great book; we have a very tropical backyard.

Q. What CD is in your CD player right now?

A. I actually don't listen to CDs. I let my husband choose.

Q. What is the last magazine you read?

A. *Publishers Weekly*, and I like to read *TIME*.

Q. What is your favorite TV show?

A. I would have to say *The O'Reilly Factor*. I love the debates.

Q. Who is your role model?

A. I have no one role model. I would have to say my parents. They've always taught me what is important in life: always the family, not the business.

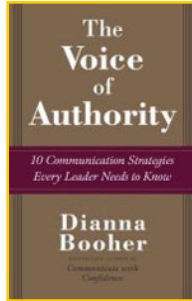
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roll their eyes at and delete, send a follow-up email that happens to have a brief "It was great meeting with you today" at the end. "At the end" is the key phrase, because if you thank the person at the beginning of the email, you have to thank him or her again at the end, too, which can make you seem repetitive.

During the past 25 years of her career, Booher has written a variety of books on all forms of communication, sales, and personal development-about 43, to be exact-and she has gained bestselling status as an author. Some of her most groundbreaking releases are *From Contact to Contract*, *Communicate With Confidence!: How to Say It Right the First Time and Every Time*, and *Speak With Confidence: Powerful Presentations That Inform, Inspire and Persuade*.

Booher's latest book was released last June, and it's titled *The Voice of Authority: 10 Communication Strategies Every Leader Needs to Know*. In this book, Booher discusses guidelines for professionals in organizations to follow in order to share information more freely within their companies. If you are leading any group within an organization, this book tells you

how to convey information to your team. On the other hand, the book also addresses how to use that information to help yourself as an individual.



Booher's "mentors" are a strange bunch: "anyone who has been in the public eye." Why? "Because the way I've learned speaking skills is by watching and analyzing those who have been effective and those who have been very ineffective," she said. "I never took a speaking class."

"Watch people," said Booher. "There's opportunity on the Internet and on TV. There's always some pundit on TV. Look at their word choice, style of delivery, and pausing and pacing."

Booher believes anyone can teach himself or herself how to speak effectively if he or she

takes the time to analyze what other people are doing and apply what works.

Booher's trainers have delivered her teachings to hundreds of organizations around the world, spreading her messages to six continents. Booher has appeared on and in various media outlets, such as *Good Morning America*, CNN, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *USA Today*. Some of her clients include IBM, Lockheed Martin, JP Morgan Chase, Frito-Lay, NASA, and Deloitte & Touche.

On the Net

Booher Consultants
www.booher.com/index.html

The Voice of Authority: 10 Communication Strategies Every Leader Needs to Know
www.amazon.com/Voice-Authority-Communication-Strategies-Leader/dp/0071486690

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