

# IBD'S 10 SECRETS TO SUCCESS

Investor's Business Daily has spent years analyzing leaders and successful people in all walks of life. Most have 10 traits that, when combined, can turn dreams into reality. Each day, we highlight one.

**9 DEAL AND COMMUNICATE WITH PEOPLE EFFECTIVELY:** No person is an island. Learn to understand and motivate others.

## Be A Voice Of Authority

**9** You might be the most competent employee in your firm. But if you don't convey that competence when it counts — in meetings, reports and memos — you'll limit your corporate climb.

Higher-ups don't always see your golden moments on the job, notes communications coach Dianna Booher. "But they do see what you write and listen to what you say. They judge your competence by how you communicate key aspects of your job — not simply how you perform," Booher told IBD.

The trick, she says, is to align words with deeds. For starters:

**■ Recommend — don't report.** Every presentation's an opportunity to demonstrate your skill. "Say, for example, you're a middle manager asked to prepare a fact-finding report. The worst thing you can do is just present the facts," she stressed.

"Instead, put facts in context. Offer recommendations and alternatives. Use the presentation as a vehicle to demonstrate leadership," said Booher, author of the just-released book, "The Voice of Authority."

**■ Keep e-mails short and sweet.** "Start with the punch line — your major point — and summarize that in your subject line," Booher said. "Save pleasantries for the end — like a warm handshake at the end of a brief chat."

**■ Know their concerns.** When delivering your message, anticipate the reaction among listeners.

If communicating bad news, start with the topic.

"Then segue into the negative news, supporting it with reasons, not excuses," Booher said. "Zero in on the person's concerns" and underscore the positives.

Say your marketing unit needs a

company status report immediately. Yet it can't be delivered until mid-July.

She suggested listing the reasons this way: "Key facts won't be released until the end of the second quarter, and the firm would open itself up to liabilities if it released sensitive data before then. Also, much of the information would be incomplete if it were issued now."

Then move to the positives: "Stress that the report, as delivered in mid-July, will be comprehensive, complete with forward-looking statements through 2008," she said.

**■ Make your facts tell a story.** Ronald Reagan became known as the "great communicator" in part because of his State of the Union messages.

He'd illustrate key points with stories about people in the audience — whether ordinary citizens or war heroes.

"And after the speech, the points that people remembered were the ones attached to those stories," said Booher, who heads Booher Consultants in Grapevine, Texas.

The key is to make a personal connection, notes performance coach Les Giblin.

**■ Be passionate.** Executives admire passion and enthusiasm in other leaders, "but often they themselves don't want to be too over the top," Booher said.

A number of those execs are her clients.

"When they see themselves on tape, they realize they're not even close to being over the top — they're rather dry and low key."

She then launches their makeover with this message:

"Without passion, you can't gain trust. You can't lead effectively."

**Cord Cooper**