



The Pequot Academy takes on Public Enemy Number One

By Dan Weaver

We're afraid of it more than heights, death, or bad dogs. According to the Book of Lists, Public Speaking is America's greatest fear factor. The Pequot Academy is on a crusade to help tongue tied team members sharpen presentation skills and actually enjoy being center stage.

Lisa Berry, Director of Organizational Development and Training, conducted an extensive search to find the right executive coach to work with our Vice Presidents and, at the same time, mentor her Pequot Academy Manager Chris Mihailides, who would eventually bring this important program to directors, managers and supervisors. The directive to move forward with

this program came straight from John O'Brien. "He has been extremely supportive of quality training," offers Chris.

Enter Millie Grenough, a once shy nun-turned-International Workshop Presenter who went from battling stage fright to belting out songs in nightclubs, to becoming a highly sought after keynote speaker inspiring thousands of CEOs, athletes, attorneys, performing artists, and others. She's taught everywhere from halfway houses and prisons to Yale and the Universidad de Salamanca; in Barcelona. She is now President of Grenough LCC, a New Haven based Coaching/Training Organization.

"Millie and I hit it off right away," says Lisa. "She has the ability to appeal to

many different types of people and getting them out of their comfort zones." Millie's philosophy is a simple one. "The two Key Questions - always - to ask yourself: Who am I? What am I here for?" That's the heart of everything in life, including speeches." She was impressed by the willingness of John O'Brien and all of the VPs, who had "the humility to try out new things and to show their vulnerabilities, and strengths, in front of each other." She enjoyed working with Chris who "knows how to give great support and knows when to take the lead."

The group's final assignment was a four-minute presentation on any topic they were passionate about. They ranged from "How to Skydive" to "Putting Your Pants On Fast if You're a Fireman" to "Winning at Wrestling". What was Chris's favorite? "Without question, it was John O'Brien's. I won't give it away, but I bet if you ask him, he'll be happy to share the scenario with you!"

Millie and Chris received rave reviews from the executives. "They let me know that through the training they not only developed their speaking confidence, they also build a stronger team spirit," confides Millie. VP of Communications Jani Cummings and a class participant, was one of the satisfied customers. "We had some lions with butterflies who are now roaring!" For Chris, it was one of his greatest experiences in his more than 10 years at Foxwoods.

Next up? Chris has been charged with the task of bringing the Presentation Skills program throughout Foxwoods. "Let's face it, communication is one of our biggest challenges," he states. "If each of us can make efforts to improve the ways in

which we communicate, imagine what an impact it could have on every member of our organization."

Lisa notes that all of us are in Sales and Marketing here at Foxwoods on some level and that few of us have the innate ability to do this well. "The classes will provide skills, resources, practice and the feedback to develop and deliver affective presentations to any audience."

Chris knows that sales world well; before joining our team he had a successful run at Kraft Foodservice and Foxwoods was one of his customers. His work now is primarily managing the training needs of the organization; alongside Lisa he works with departments to define their needs, set up training curriculum, and design and deliver classes.

Does Chris ever get nervous before a presentation? "Of course. Even as a trainer you still get butterflies the first time you deliver a presentation. A tip from Millie for success when presenting, 'you need to get your butterflies in formation.'"

Be sure to check foxnet.org for a complete list of Pequot Academy classes that are being offered. Visit Millie on her website www.oasisintheoverwhelm.com



Millie Grenough

