

Official Newsletter of the Andersen Alumni Association



ANDERSEN ALUMNI™

Straight Thoughts, Straight Talk

"Serving Andersen Alumni Worldwide"

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#3 – Best Firms to Work For
Consulting Magazine's 2010 List

Best Firm to Work For / Best Firm to Work With



Editorial

It is hard to believe summer is half over. Our nation just celebrated its 236th Independence Day. I spent it on the square in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The square was packed with people of diverse backgrounds and nationalities. As a band played patriotic tunes from the past the square came alive with flag waving and singing. I must admit it was a true Norman Rockwell moment that seemed to capture all that was right about our great county. With all the problems we seem to face, they all seemed to fade when so many took a few minutes to celebrate what we all have in common.

Aside from the holiday we have been busy at Andersen Alumni. We are exploring the possibility of hosting a simultaneous nationwide alumni reunion in 2013 to celebrate Andersen's founding 100 ago. These events are often cited as one of the alumnis favorite networking events. We are looking for a few more sponsors and local market leaders. If you are interested in participating in any capacity just let us know at admin@andersenalumni.com.

You may recall reading in last quarter's issue "A Road Map for Effectively Serving on Non-Profit Boards" by Randy Hain, Managing Partner of Bell Oaks Executive Search. In the Andersen Spirit of giving back we are conducting a 12 question survey of our members to determine where alumni chose to spend their time. Please see the survey link in this issue.

We continue to find ways for alumni to stay connected. You can connect to your fellow Andersen alumni via JOINING the LinkedIN Group, LIKING our Facebook Fan Page and FOLLOWING on the LinkedIN Company Page (See links at the end of the newsletter) . We want to thank all of you who participated in the Social Madness social media contest. While we did not win, we did have an overwhelming response which help us to refresh and add to our network.. We operate on a shoestring budget and this was a cost effective way to expand our reach throughout the network.

We continue to look for ways for alumni to benefit from their association with Andersen Alumni.com. We have just added Office Depot to our affinity group. We are proud that they have joined Lenovo and Liberty Mutual in offering great service and savings to Andersen Alumni.

I hope you enjoy the rest of the summer vacation season with your friends and family.

Sincerely,
Kirk Hancock

12 in 12, Twelve Quick Questions regarding Alumni Stewardship of their Time and Talent

Andersen Alumni have a rich history of giving back... Giving back not just in monetary terms but rather more importantly in terms of the most valued asset, “our time and talent, collectively our service.” With that in mind, we are conducting this survey to determine where our alumni chose to serve. To complete the survey please click through on the following URL:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/AndersenAlumni12in12Stewardship>

MULTIPLE WAYS to CONNECT

DISFLUENCIES – THE “UMMS” AND “AHHHS” OF SPEAKING

by Ed Maier, *Former Partner*

Surveys regularly cite “Public Speaking” as one of the top items people fear. Even for those who are comfortable talking in front of groups, there is a fear of using “umms” and “ahhhs” and other hesitation words -- or disfluencies. According to Dictionary.com, disfluencies are “impairment(s) of the ability to produce smooth, fluent speech; an interruption in the smooth flow of speech, as by a pause or the repetition of a [word](#) or [syllable](#)”.

In researching this topic, I found an Internet article titled “*How to Cut Crutch Words When Giving a Speech*” (by Scott H. Young – author, blogger). I found it helpful and have incorporated several of the ideas here in addition to thoughts from my personal experiences and those of other speakers and coaches. Think about these tips as you prepare your next presentation.

Practice, indeed, makes perfect – According to Wikipedia, the famous conductor and composer, Arthur Rubenstein, was approached by someone on the streets of New York. The person asked Mr. Rubenstein “How do I get to Carnegie Hall?” To which he replied: “Practice, practice, practice.” I believe this is the most important tip to help anyone remove hesitation words from their speaking habits. I listed it first, because if you don’t do anything else, do this. Your presentation should be as naturally delivered as you can make it—an extension of yourself. The more you practice your delivery, the more you will reduce disfluencies.

As a part of your practice efforts, add this. Read a comprehensive business article aloud before you practice your own material. (I personally favor *The Economist* as a good source). This helps you build confidence that you know the material and can deliver it without pauses.

Another technique in practice is to record your presentation, listen to it and pay attention to the places in which you use disfluencies. Think about what might have caused the disfluency and remove it.

You can also incorporate reward and punishment in your practice sessions. Rehearse your presentation. Every time you “umm” or “ahhh”, discipline yourself to start over. If this becomes too challenging, break your presentation down in sections. Apply this technique to each section. When you successfully complete an “umm-less” section, recognize it and reward yourself.

Don't be afraid of over-preparation. Know your material inside-out. Knowledge builds confidence. Confidence eliminates nervousness.

Finally, don't assume that practice is only necessary for formal, audience-facing presentations. Presentations at regular meetings also benefit from your efforts to rehearse the delivery of key points.

Ban Disfluencies from All Conversations – I believe this is the second most important suggestion. Eliminate “umms” and “ahhhs” from all conversations – even those with friends and family. The more aware you are of their existence in each and every conversation, the more you will build the habit to eliminate them.

Catch Your Breath - When you feel an “ahhh” coming on, take a deep breath. Silence and pauses are useful presentation techniques; don't be afraid to employ them judiciously.

Count – Rehearse with colleagues, friends or relatives. Ask them to observe your practice sessions and to count the amount of times you utter an “umm” or “ahhh”. During the delivery of your presentations, ask a colleague to count them for you. Also ask them if they notice any particular sections of your presentation in which you do this more often than others. You should even ask a trusted colleague to serve as your counter during regular business meetings. Once again, the greater your awareness level of using disfluencies, the more you will focus on eliminating them.

I've been told that one of the premier speaker training organizations, *Toastmasters*, uses an interesting technique. As members give their presentations, “crutch” words heard by the audience are emphasized by someone dropping a coin in a tin can. You certainly can't do this in a live presentation, but it can be used in a practice session.

Pauses and Silence – When you rehearse, take appropriate opportunities to pause. This may be at the end of a key point, sentence or phrase. Make note of places in which you

think a pause is appropriate; when you get to that portion, pause, be silent and count five seconds – “one one thousand, two one thousand, three one thousand, four one thousand, five one thousand”. Silence is your friend. Learn to use it. If you find yourself “stuck”, take a moment of pause and quiet; you can look around the room at your audience. While you are doing this your brain will be going a gazillion miles an hour to recover from your “stuck” point. Silence, truly, is golden and a second or two is not a lifetime.

Highlight – If you use a prepared speech or comprehensive notes, underline or highlight key words and phrases; or, put them in ALL CAPS. This technique helps you understand where to slow down and emphasize an individual word. When you slow down to emphasize words, this reduces the temptation to inject disfluencies.

Enthusiasm - Show an appropriate level of enthusiasm for your communication. Have sufficient confidence in your own ability to deliver a formal presentation or run a meeting. If you are enthusiastic and show some emotion in your presentation, it is easier to avoid use of “umms” and “ahhhs”.

Work Extra Hard on the Hard Stuff – Every presentation has a beginning, middle and end--even informal ones. Make sure you practice your introductions and final thoughts or conclusions sufficiently so that you can repeat them consistently. If there are complex sections of your presentation, first try to reduce the complexity to help your audience understand. But if complexity must be delivered, practice it until you can do so effortlessly.

Plan and Organize Your Notes – Use a comfortable medium for your notes -- prepared outline, note cards, copies of Power Point slides, iPad, etc. Organize them in a fashion that allows you comfort in delivery, but also provides you with the appropriate anchors if you get stuck.

Focus on Quality – If you have to provide large volumes of information, consider supplementing your speech with detailed notes or slides for the audience to take with them. Your presentation should be about quality, not quantity. Some of the best speakers posit that a great presentation makes no more than three major points. Don’t try to take fifteen minutes of material and expand it to a one hour presentation. Doing so almost guarantees you will fill your presentation with “umm`s” and “ahhh`s”.

Don’t Apologize – if you make a mistake in your presentation, or you use an inadvertent “umm” or “ahhh”, don’t stop and apologize. This can distract your audience’s train of thought and, worst case, throw you off yours.

Seek Reduction, Not Elimination – focus on reducing the number of disfluencies you use. When you have reached substantial improvement, most others will think you have eliminated them altogether. If you strive for total elimination, you might lose focus on your delivery and this can botch up your presentation.

Look for Outside Help – Consider joining *Toastmasters*, or a similar organization. *Toastmasters* is one of the best organizations to help improve speaking skills. They have chapters all over the world. In fact, in some large organizations, internal *Toastmasters* programs are offered. They help improve speaking style in all areas, not just disfluencies. They also help with the finer points of presenting -- such as gestures, tone of voice, body language and content. By working on all of these skills, you will have the confidence to speak in front of any audience.

Disfluencies do not have to be a way of life. If they are an issue for you, you can deal with them by following any of the simple steps I have outlined. Try them. Build confidence. Speak eloquently.

As always, I am interested in your thoughts about my message. Please write me at ed@thinkstraighttalkstraight.com with your comments.

From “C” to Shining “C” by John Blumberg *is an Andersen Alumni and a full-time professional speaker and author who speaks with organizations who want to strengthen their core values and turn their people into better leaders. You can learn more about John at www.keynoteconcepts.com*

Being successful at communication ultimately has little to do with skills. It has everything to do with connection. Skills are simply a set of tools that, when put in the right hands (better yet, in the right mindset), can be useful. But they aren't the end-all some would have you believe.

It is an over-used quote, but one which holds endless truth: *They don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.* They also don't care "how" you deliver what you know ... unless they know you care!

Organizations expend extensive resources in time and money to better position their people to negotiate, communicate ... and sometimes, unfortunately, to directly or indirectly manipulate. It seems, in both internal and external relationships, we would be far better off spending those same resources in helping people more genuinely connect and more deeply care.

Anyone can fend-off your slick skills.

In fact, your polished skills can often be a turn-off when they appear to have no real grounding. It is much harder to deny your care and desire to connect. It can't be fake. It has to come from a place that is real.

This is much harder to teach than it is to model. People know it when they see it in a leader ... and then it tends to go viral. Communication skills are much easier to teach, but

they are far less potent unless they are planted in the fertile soil of care and a desire for connection.

Care and connection are not skills. They are an outgrowth.

Care and a desire for connection are the fruit of a keen awareness of our personal core values ... especially when our values are coupled with a deep understanding of how they connect to organizational values. This systemic connection of values sets the stage for an incredible foundation from which solid communication skills can flourish.

Communication skills such as strong eye contact, good energy, strong and varied vocal animation, along with thoughtful pauses shouldn't be the drivers to create a sense of connection. *It is the other way around!* Our genuine care and desire for connection will naturally bring each of these communication skills to life.

I am in solid support of teaching skills. Fertile soil cannot produce without the seeds being planted. Communication skills are these seeds. And they become exponentially more valuable when planted in the rich soil of care and desire for connection. Yet, we have to till the soil before we plant the skills.

Most won't.

Many would prefer the quick fix of just honing a mechanical skill in the hopes it might appear genuine. Those days are over. Customers, clients, employees and followers usually see directly through that sheer.

Care and connection come only from your core.

Think about the last time you were with a friend, a client, a work colleague, or a family member for whom you really care and with whom you have a natural connection. Regardless of the level of your communication skills, my bet would be, you had little trouble communicating!

Ultimately, we should eliminate "communication skills" workshops ... merging the content into a different kind of experience. We would be better served by discovering how much we care and from there developing our "connection skills."

My hunch is that we wouldn't only be better served ... *but we would serve better.*

We may be surprised in just how some incredible communication skills would naturally follow! Life is more than a series of transactions ... and communication is certainly more than a set of skills.

Ironically, our desire to connect will eventually be overshadowed by our ongoing natural ability to do so. It will have less to do with whom you're with and more to do with who

you have become. It is there you will have moved from "c" to shining "c" ... from communication to a shining connection!

As a follow-on footnote, watch this recent episode of John Blumberg's JOHN-TV titled CONNECTED. This very short 1-minute video is brief, but might keep you thinking for the rest of the day! See <http://bit.ly/LxcOng>

The Top Three Hiring Myths of 2012

by Dan Erling, is the president / CEO of Accountants One and author of [MATCH: A Systematic, Sane Process for Hiring the Right Person Every Time](#), was released in December 2010 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. He has been a trusted hiring advisor to more than a thousand companies since starting as an Executive Recruiter in 1998.

Economic uncertainties, high unemployment, lack of access to cash – all are realities of 2012. These realities have a big part in the creation of three hiring myths that I am going to briefly explore in the following article.

Myth #1 – Hiring the right person is easy in today's market.

With the national unemployment rate above 8% there are many that believe that hiring today is akin to shooting fish in a barrel. After all, a higher unemployment rate should mean more qualified candidates for your job. Rather, hiring the right person is just as hard as it has ever been.

The idea that advertising a job with a laundry list of skills will produce your ideal candidate is simply not founded. While there are many unemployed people in today's market, these large numbers can cause confusion in the identification process. Whittling down a pool of 500 candidates to 3 finalists is a Herculean task.

The difficulties of hiring the right person in today's market is further compounded by a lack of candidates actively exploring the market. Under normal economic conditions currently employed potential candidates were comparatively unafraid of a job change. In today's market the average employed candidate is sticking with their current role.

A recent example of this myth playing itself out happened when the CEO of a small company was looking for a new controller. Armed with a list of over 20 "must haves" (manufacturing experience, mid-sized company exposure, MAS90 computer expertise, comfort in dealing with a private equity firm, a catalyst executive management style, etc. etc.), the CEO delegated the task of hiring this critical role to an administrative assistant with directions to post the job on a job board and collect resumes. This CEO's frustration was high when 6 months into this "search" there was not one single qualified candidate in the pool.

Unfortunately the need for a systematic hiring plan directed by the leadership team is necessary for an effective and thorough talent search today, just as it was 5 years ago.

Myth #2 – Culture isn't important in today's hiring market.

Over the long recession many of us had to batten down the hatches. We learned to get more done with less. But now things are getting better. We can afford to add to our teams. We need skills and we need them today. In our rush to acquire that help we can't forget that culture is more important than technical skills for the long-term success of our organizations.

Even if we can't afford to take the time to hire based on culture, there are ways to minimize the potential for damage. For example, using contractors to solve short-term problems is an excellent way to protect an organization from long-term damage by hiring the wrong cultural fit.

An instance of this myth negatively impacting an organization happened recently when a CPA firm partner and friend needed to add to her audit team. Before 2007 this CPA firm had done a great deal of audit work in the Atlanta building industry. After years of cost cutting strategies needed to survive the "great recession" a series of new clients led to a need for new audit staff.

Without evaluating culture, this CPA firm hired an auditor with great pedigree and 7 years of audit experience in the building industry. Within two weeks the standing audit team was complaining about this highly talented auditor. Certainly there was nothing wrong with the work that this new employee was doing, the problem was one of culture – this was a team dedicated to teamwork, and here was an auditor that liked the spotlight.

For instance, on an engagement where several auditors were working on a project, this new employee stepped in front of the team and took credit for meeting a tough deadline. A seemingly minor detail, but 180 degrees from the philosophy so coveted by management and embraced by the team.

For years the partners had worked with the team to create a culture of teamwork. The tradition of a Friday "pizza debrief" had been established to allow any available team members to come together and share their thoughts on teamwork. Years of active discussions had created an environment that was geared around discussions of how to work together more effectively. One of the results of this tradition was great feedback from the team.

Therefore, when the new auditor was out in the field on this particular Friday the team let management know their dissatisfaction. The new auditor was clearly viewed as a threat to the culture management had worked so long to develop. Management promised coaching for this new employee.

Unfortunately the coaching could not change the essence of this competitive individual and within two months the partners recognized that a mishire had occurred. A large severance, outplacement services, and lots of introductions to other firms in a similar

space cost the CPA firm a great deal of money as they worked very hard to ensure an ethical transition. Fortunately, they did find the auditor a home with a firm in a similar space where internal competition was part of the corporate culture and where this auditor was able to help the firm succeed.

As much as they needed the technical skills in this improving market, they realized that they could not sacrifice their culture for technical skills.

Myth #3 – We don't have the budget for talent.

Bad news -- the world has changed. The equations that led to business success 5 years ago must be refined and in some cases rebuilt. Assuming that your current talent is capable of negotiating this new world is a dangerous assumption. It takes an incredibly savvy team to manage the new reality.

Worse news – your competition is figuring out how to acquire talent. Even with cash at a premium, they are finding creative ways to recruit talent. Here are some ways that organizations are approaching this need for talent with a depleted budget:

- Part-Time Contractors – there are excellent resources available in this area. For example, we have recently assisted several companies hire part-time CFOs. These CFOs have “been there / done that” throughout their career and are willing to work 1 to 3 days per week at very reasonable rates. We have seen the same scenario with bookkeepers, controllers, and positions across the business spectrum.
- Employees compensated based upon ROI – in this scenario, companies with a lack of cash are paying employees a small base salary with clear goals. If those goals are reached then management is paying bonuses. This methodology has often been used in the world of sales, but recently we have seen organizations use this approach with a litany of roles – from programmer to CFO. Word of caution – be very clear with the incentive package here – write down the agreement in a formal contract.
- Temporary salary decreases to make way for new talent – believe it or not I have successfully worked with several companies as they have gone down this road. The key is that management must participate at the same level (or a deeper level) as the employees. In other words, management must make the same sacrifice as the front line employees. Further, communication is a must – employees generally want their company to succeed and if they fully understand the need for a short-term sacrifice to accomplish this, then you might be surprised with their willingness to take a short-term salary cut.
- Top Grading – the business terrain has transformed. Companies must strategically look at their talent and decide if their current talent is capable of winning in this new world. I have seen companies replace five average performing employees

with two exceptional performers leading to payroll cost savings AND improved competitive advantage. These are tough decisions, but they can be handled with ethics and grace.

I hope this myth busting overview brings you value. We are experiencing a slowly improving economy that we believe will continue to improve. I'd like nothing better than to have brought some value to the readers of this Andersen Alumni newsletter by reminding us all of some fundamental truths that continue to dictate success during these times.

While our Country Faces a Financial Crisis—We can make a difference in our Families Financial literacy- *THREE CUPS* makes it as easy as 1 ... 2 3!!



Written by Andersen Alumus Tony Townsley, Three Cups teaches values and the value of money and can change the direction of your child's life. Tony worked from 1984 to 1988 in Andersen's Indianapolis office.

Three Cups, a new children's book based on a true story, has the potential to do just that. The story is sweet, heartwarming and even offers a valuable lesson in handling money. It is based upon the allowance system used by Tony and Susan Townsley. The message seems especially meaningful today as families struggle in difficult economic times.

Mark St. Germain retells the story of the present a boy received from his parents for his fifth birthday... a present, his parents explained, that would "take him on many

adventures.” As he proceeds to unwrap 3 old coffee cups from his family’s kitchen cabinet, he is at first disappointed and confused. But then his parents give him the second part of his gift — his first weekly allowance — and the adventure begins! His parents help him divide his allowance into 3 cups — one for saving, one for spending, and one to use towards a charity of his choice. As the weeks go on, the cups fill and it’s time to put the money from each cup to use. The money in the saving cup gets deposited in the bank “to keep it safe” and “make it grow.” The money in the spending cup eventually pays for a new baseball glove and a present for his little sister. At first, he has a hard time figuring out what to do with the money collected in the charity cup, because, he thought, “there were so many people who needed help,” and his charity cup was “so small.” But his parents assured him there were “a hundred things,” and even “a hundred times a hundred things,” that he could do with the money. He settled on buying eight cans of soup for his school’s food drive, and helped his teacher make deliveries to needy families. As the boy grows, so does the amount of his allowance, and the money placed in each cup. And, then, when he’s old enough to work, he continues the tradition, helping to pay for his own college and helping many more people through charity.

The lessons in *Three Cups* are simple and easy for both parents and children to understand.

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY PROJECT/ECONOMICS FOR CHILDREN

Overall, *Three Cups* is a great introduction to managing money for the entire family. The book concludes with a parent's guide, filled with suggestions on how families can implement their own version of three cups.

LOVE MY GRANDCHILD

Imagine your life all over again with a clear and simple money management system in place at the tender age of 5... *how might your life be different today?* This book taps into the insight and ultimate responsibility of parenting and grand parenting to the future success and happiness of today's children.

With the *Three Cups* system, the amount of the allowance that parents give isn't important. It's what they can afford and what works for their family. Children can learn from this system and maybe parents can learn from their children, too.


Besides a quick and thoughtful read, *Three Cups* also has a parents' guide that offers tips on how to use the concept with children.

Three Cups teaches it is not how much money you have that is important, but how to use the money wisely that you do have.

The book is available at most retailers and on Amazon at:

http://www.amazon.com/Three-Cups-Tony-Townsley/dp/1400317495/ref=tmm_hrd_title_0

Andersen Alumni Benefits

For the most up to date listing of Alumni Benefits consider “Following” Andersen Alumni on Linked IN  and look up Products and Services

Lenovo

Andersen Alumni Association has partnered with Lenovo to provide discounted savings on Lenovo Product Purchases.

The month of July brings exceptional deals on desktops and laptops. Lenovo has a system for every budget and every need. July brings great deals on systems built for the way you work. Save an additional 10% off E530, 20% off T530 ThinkPad, Consumer K, Q, and H Series Desktops and A, B and C Series All In One's // A1 Tablet \$179 // S2109 22911NU \$268, 22911PU \$289, 22911QU \$299 // U310 \$569 use eCouponbg USXJULY2012 at checkout and save. Go to <http://www.lenovo.com/andersen>

Liberty Mutual

Andersen Alumni Association has partnered with Liberty Mutual, the nation’s fifth-largest auto and home insurer. Through Liberty Mutual’s Group Savings Plus® program, Andersen alumni may save up to 10 percent on their auto insurance and 5 percent on their home, condo or renters insurance*. That can be hundreds of dollars back in your pocket. Plus Liberty Mutual offers their customers who have both auto and home policies an attractive added multi-policy discount.

In addition to discounts, Group Savings Plus® offers Andersen Alumni:

- The freedom to purchase insurance the way you want: through a personal sales representative at more than 400 offices countrywide, a toll-free telesales center, or online.
- Convenient payment by automatic checking account deduction or direct billing to your home
- 24-hour toll-free claims service
- 24-hour emergency roadside assistance
- 24-hour homeowner emergency repair service
- Outstanding customer service from a local office, or from Liberty Mutual’s J.D. Powers and Associates-certified call centers.

To find out how much you can save, call 1-800-835-0894 or Click on www.libertymutual.com/andersen

Office Depot

Andersen Alumni Association has partnered with Office Depot to provide discounted savings on Office Depot Product Purchases.

http://www.officedepot.com/?cm_mmc=Affiliates_-a8kTmEI8bEw_-3_-27778_1

Pure Web Development

Did you know that 84% of Americans have cell phones? Huge numbers now use mobile phones to get online instead of desktop computers and by 2012 smart phones are set to outpace sales of desktop computers. Currently all major American carriers are providing 3G and in some instances 4G connections at speeds up to 12Mbps.

The way we access the internet is evolving and it is vital that your web presence and the way you present your products/services/information online adjusts with it. Now is a perfect time to get your website into the hands of these new internet users or maybe just enhance it with a custom application for use on the iPhone or Android phones.

Contact us today and find out if your website is mobile ready and what it would take to get it there. Special pricing will be extended to all Andersen Alumni members!

Phone 404-921-0090 or email: sales@purewebdevelopment.com

Social Media: Association's LinkedIn Group (Join) and Company (Follow) and Facebook Fan Page (Like)

Social Media is a great way for us to stay connected. To request the Association Status be added to your Linked in Profile click on the following URL to JOIN:

<http://www.linkedin.com/e/gis/38306/6E0CB25BC94E>

Additionally you can "FOLLOW" the Association by clicking on the following URL:

http://www.linkedin.com/company/andersen-alumni-association?trk=tabs_biz_home

To "JOIN" our new fan page simply click on the following:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Andersen-Alumni/182112725168442>

