

# frank talk

Many of us have had the opportunity to observe the effort, work and performance, not to mention some of the amenities, that go with being a successful Chief Executive Officer. The deluxe hotel suite, waiting jet and dinners at the finest three star Michelin restaurants are compensation for countless nights of being on the road, away from family.

You may have been impressed with the ease and skill with which they effortlessly moved throughout their day. We all have dreamed of being top power brokers, movers and shakers, dispensing directions and words of wisdom.

These top leaders are at the center of the business universe and like many, you may dream of your own career path leading to the CEO's seat, complete with corner office and floor-to-ceiling windows. However, before you take off for destination CEO, it is important to realize there are basic skill sets you must master to be the type of leader you've envisioned.

## Public Speaking

A great CEO must be a great communicator, one who helps people visualize their dreams and communicate their vision.

Your team, customers and partners should always relish those times you take the floor and inspire them to achieve greatness; not dread one more aimless lecture. Being a fine orator requires practice, patience and study. Don't shrink away from speaking at functions. Embrace the microphone and use it to paint pictures for your audience that motivate and call them to action.

Work with a public speaking professional who can study your current level of performance and guide you along a clearer communication path. Watch yourself on video, and track your progress, identifying areas for improvement.

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by Frank Brady



## A Path To Success

*master the art of being a skilled CEO*

*"Don't tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and let them surprise you with their results."*

—George S. Patton

### Think Before Talking

Clear, concise and thoughtful communication is always the goal. Some of the loudest reprimands I have ever experienced have been long moments of sheer silence. Fewer words expressed with pinpoint accuracy capture a listening audience.

### Do The Right Thing

There are no shades of gray when it comes to ethics. You are either ethical or you are not. Switching between the two will not gain the confidence of the people you lead. Realize that the people you lead take their cues from you. Like it or not, the CEO is the ultimate role model in an organization.

### Be Confident

Have a strong belief in yourself and it will inspire others who look up to you as their leader. Confidence

motivates. It evolves through study and experience. Confidence should never be confused with arrogance.

*"The leadership instinct you are born with is the backbone. You develop the funny bone and the wishbone that go with it."*

—Elaine Agather

### A Level Attitude

Being open to good dialogue with your team builds trust and confidence. Challenge but don't threaten. Listen but don't scold. Encourage but don't push.

### Accept Responsibility

We all lose in any battle where the war isn't over until we assign the blame. A CEO accepts responsibility when things don't go as planned and uses it as a teaching experience. Motivate your team and let them know you have their back. Building team confidence has to be the goal of any good organization.

### Communicate Your Vision

Vision is defined as having a strategy to achieve your goal. Creating a vision is the primary responsibility of the CEO and can never really be delegated. A CEO who can't define and communicate his or her vision condemns their followers to a business life without purpose, without direction and without job satisfaction. Great CEOs know where they are going and invite others to help them get there.

*"The very essence of leadership is that you have to have vision. You can't blow an uncertain trumpet."*

—Theodore M. Hesburgh

### Ask Questions, Listen Thoughtfully For Answers

Real learning takes place in the question and answer section of any good presentation. Until that point, the presenter is communicating what he or she believes the audience wants to know. The question and answer section cuts to the core of what the audience wants to know and learn. Listening thoughtfully to insightful, focused questions helps identify areas of miscommunication, focuses the discussion and enables a good CEO to clear away cluttered thinking to quickly arrive at the point of effective decision making.

### Bring Others Along

The desire to bring others along with you is the defining mark of a great CEO. It is a sign of respect and appreciation for your employees' efforts and builds confidence in your partnership.

Being a great CEO doesn't come just by putting in time at a company. It comes from years of planning, hard work and study. Don't waste a minute. The job is waiting just for you.

Frank Brady has more than 30 years of experience in the gourmet housewares business as founder and CEO of Brady Marketing, a San Francisco-based sales and marketing company.