

THE EXCHANGE

This issue's featured subject is "Handling The Unknown."

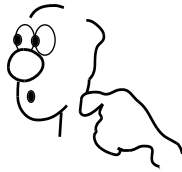
GIVING A SUCCESSFUL IMPROMPTU TALK

You enter a meeting or function with a casual approach. Nothing is required of you other than your attendance. Then the unexpected happens: your boss asks you to give "just a few words" about a project you are working on. As your palms begin to sweat and a lump grows in your throat, you realize that you are unprepared.

Some people make their lives very crowded with unnecessary preparation for "just in case" situations like this. Those are usually the people who found themselves with their mouths hanging open at a previous function. Instead of overly planning each and every time, there is another plausible solution that can have you ready to go when there is virtually no warning. Have an impromptu process and it will come through for you regardless of what content you need to use with it.

The first step of the process is to begin looking like you are in control. This can be accomplished by asking a rhetorical question on your topic that you do not expect the audience to really answer, at least not out loud. For instance, let's say your manager just asked you to report on a new software program being created. Your rhetorical question that you begin with as soon as you open your mouth could be, "How much time could you save if, at the click of a finger, you could find the status of each sale you are working on?" Pause after the question for 1-3 seconds to allow the group to think about their own answer.

The second step of the process is to answer the question. This answer can be detailed and accurate or general in nature, depending upon the knowledge level you have readily accessible in your brain. Your answer to the above rhetorical question could be, "I know that I could save countless minutes each hour as well as feeling more secure that I am on



top of things!"

The third step of the impromptu process is to give the current status or situation. Keep it simple, leaning more to hitting the bottom line rather than painting a complete picture. Most people do not want too much detail and those that do can ask you questions afterwards.

The fourth step is to give information about the next steps. Again, be brief. Too much information can bog you down. Besides, since this was an impromptu presentation, there was most likely not time allocated for it in the agenda. People will appreciate your brevity.

The final step is to ask for questions or, if time seems limited, encourage people to talk with you after the meeting. The entire process should only take a few minutes and you will not falter striving to organize your thoughts. You will never have to fear the unknown again when you have an impromptu process in your head!

IN THE NEWS



TLC's Senior Communication Coach, Vincent Phipps, announces the release of his first published book, *Beyond the Poems, Explanations Behind My Inspirations*. Published by Penman Publishing, Inc., this book takes the reader past just the words and deeper into what inspired the poems. To learn more about Vincent or his book, check out his new website, www.VincentPhipps.com.

TLC's CEO, Beverly Inman-Ebel, was the guest of honor and keynote speaker at the Libyan Women's Empowerment Workshop, For Women by Women, September 19 – 21 in Tripoli, Libya. She was invited by the International Forum Institute (IFI).

What Our Clients Are Saying

"You gave our case workers the tools they can use to conduct an effective interview."

Regina Cano, Alexandria VA



OCTOBER 2005

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

ONLY WHAT YOU TAKE WITH YOU	2
GET WELL, VINCENT!	2
FACING THE UNKNOWN FACE	2
COLD FEET	3
ASK THE EXPERTS	3
FEATURED SERVICE: Fall For Training	3
CEO CORNER: "A Lesson From Vincent"	4
Happy Birthday!	4

LOOKING AHEAD:

♦ **Welcoming New Team Members - the focus of the November issue of the Exchange.**

LOOKING BACK:

♦ **For previous editions of The Exchange, go to our [back issues](#).**

♦ **Re-read the [01/2004](#) edition: Change.**

We cannot direct the wind, but we can adjust the sails.

Author Unknown



Helpful Hints:

- Seek input about improvements from someone who thinks differently than you.
- Expect the unexpected by having contingency plans in place.
- Create options for yourself.

Life loves to be taken by the lapel and told: "I am with you kid. Let's go."

Maya Angelou



To learn more about it, click here!

ONLY WHAT YOU TAKE WITH YOU

By Vincent Ivan Phipps, B.S.

How do you handle the unknown? If it's unknown, how do you prepare for it?

When I asked my young daughter, "What are the reasons you are afraid of the dark?", she innocently replied, "I don't know." After a lengthy conversation (and several nights of her sleeping in my bed), I realized the fear she was experiencing was a common one. She was not afraid of what she could see, she was only afraid of what she could not see.

The more I travel the world and work with clients that have various responsibilities, the same common fear of addressing the unknown is apparent. I've worked with clients managing hundreds of people at a time, balancing budgets into the millions, and engaging in transcontinental communications spanning thousands of miles and multiple time zones. We handle it because we know it. What is shocking is our inability to handle what we do not know.

- How do the survivors handle the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina?
- How does a professional of a particular field make a drastic career change?
- How do you replace an efficient employee that suddenly leaves?

The challenge in handling these situations is in two parts:

1. Attitude. Know that you cannot control what life puts on your shoulders. You have total control over how you handle what life brings you. Every obstacle is an opportunity. Every shut door opens another. Every breaking barrier can be a strengthening point.

2. Preparation. Find the biggest devil's advocate on your team or in your life. For every new endeavor you want to pursue, ask them, "What could go wrong here?" or "What have I overlooked that I should prepare for to accomplish this?" They'll be more than happy to give you their insight regarding unknown areas you can plan for.

An aging parent wanted to teach a child how to overcome their fear of traveling alone into the woods. When the teary-eyed child pointed to the dark solitude of the forest and asked the parent, "What's in there?", the parent responded, "Only what you take with you."

GET WELL, VINCENT!

Our dear friend and co-worker, Vincent Phipps, is recovering from an automotive accident he suffered on September 11, 2005. We know he will appreciate cards and emails as he recovers. We also know he will make a full recovery and we cheer him to success! He can be reached via email at: vip@talklisten.com

FACING THE UNKNOWN FACE



Have you been embarrassed recently by not remembering someone you met earlier? The conversation may begin like this: "Hi Pat! We met last year at the ABD convention. I bet you don't remember me."

This person gave you quite a bit of information, but unfortunately not the name. Don't over obsess on the name, rather use the information that was given to you. Your response could be: "That ABD convention was great, wasn't it? I especially liked the open space sessions. What about you?"

Although you did not call the person by name, you are engaging them into a conversation. Be sure to be an attentive listener. You can finally end the conversation by confessing, "It has been great to meet up with you again. I am not blessed with a good memory for names like you are, so please help me out by reminding me of your name." Repeat the name in the final moments of the conversation and you have basically escaped an embarrassing moment.

Sometimes people will know you, yet they may not remember your name either. After you have been introduced, reply "It is so good to see you." If you say, "It is so good to meet you", they may remind you that the two of you have met before.

If you are attending the function with another person, there is another save for not recognizing the person you meet. Simply tell them in advance, "If I do not introduce you immediately it is because I have had a memory lapse so please jump in and introduce yourself." Timing is important; the sooner the better, so be sure they introduce themselves right away.

Stop sweating that you are going to create a social injustice when you don't remember a face or name. Be pleasant and eager to talk with them and most people will forgive you. Some will not even notice. And to keep others from the same fate, always introduce yourself to someone you have not seen in a while, even if just by your first name.

COLD FEET

Do you remember the last time you had cold feet? Think of the last time you had to handle one of these unknowns:

- Trying something new.
- Addressing an uncomfortable issue.
- Adapting outside of your comfort zone.
- Asking permission for something you were nervous about.
- Having to spontaneously give a speech you were not prepared for.

"Cold feet" is a common expression used to describe the feelings of nervousness or fear. But what do cold feet have to do with handling the unknown? "Cold feet" found its origins in the 1800's during wartime. This saying was first used to describe soldiers who ran away in the face of battle because of fear, or those who were too "frozen" to run toward battle.

When under extreme stress, one of our body's defense mechanisms is to pump more blood to our heart by "robbing" it from our fingers and toes. The next time you have to handle the unknown, warm up your flexibility skills to avoid getting cold feet!



ASK THE EXPERTS



Dear TLC,

I really enjoy receiving your newsletter each month. I especially like how you change the theme and topic each issue. You've helped others in the past so hopefully you can help me this time.

My company is in the final stages of a corporate merger. Within the next 90 days, I will have a new Supervisor (whom I have yet to meet) and I'll be responsible for a new department (with employees that have yet to meet me). The goals for the new company have not been defined. My responsibilities, my staff, and even my pay scale are all currently unknown. Several people lost their jobs due to this merger, so I am grateful to still be employed. But, I'm concerned about maintaining my position in the face of so much uncertainty. What do I do?
Merged into Unknown

Dead Merged,

What you are experiencing is very common in any corporate merger. With so many people

above you making decisions, and so many others having their careers dictated by the decisions they make, there are several unknowns you can fret about. Instead of sweating it out, figure it out. Here are some suggestions.

1. Create some realistic short-term goals.
2. List the areas you feel are the strengths you bring to the team and find a way to use those traits to accomplish the goals.
3. Set ego aside and list your strongest weaknesses that could prevent these goals. Create a plan on how you will address those shortcomings.
4. Determine what types of people are required to fulfill these goals and choose accordingly.

Regardless of the ideas of others, this will show initiative on your part and set a path for potential success. Often in the face of the unknown, most will sit back and wait for a leader to emerge in the face of uncertainty and confusion. Be the one to show up, step up, and speak up! Implement these suggestions and you may be on the front line in re-shaping the face of the merger. Lead by example!

FEATURED SERVICE: Fall For Training

This is a great time of year to plan for a day or partial day of team-building. Summer vacations are memories and employees often enjoy an increased dedication to getting down to business when the children are back in school and the air is crisp. Call one of our coaches to discuss your needs and get solutions that will get your people working together.

It is also a great time to book your year-end training. Or, if you have a holiday get-together planned with your team, call TLC and have us plan the fun that bonds your team together like Super Glue! Remember, we're the experts when it comes to people! 1-888-BECAUSE or 423-622-8255.



Remember to...

- **Remain flexible and open to alternatives.**
- **Seek knowledge in areas other than your field of expertise.**
- **Examine trends in the marketplace or field of study to anticipate unforeseen challenges.**

Change is inevitable... except from a vending machine.

Robert C. Gallagher

The reverse side also has a reverse side.

Japanese Proverb

The best things in life are unexpected - because there were no expectations.

Eli Khamarov



There's an alternative. There's always a third way, and it's not a combination of the other two ways. It's a different way.

David Carradine

Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower.

Albert Camus

TLC, Talk Listen Communicate, LLC

842 S. Germantown Road
Chattanooga, TN 37412

Phone: 423-622-8255
Fax: 423-624-4365
1-888-BECAUSE

Email: tlc@talklisten.com
www.talklisten.com

CEO CORNER: "A Lesson From Vincent"

By Beverly Inman-Ebel, MA CCC-SLP

My husband was raised in New Orleans and his family still lives there, except for his sister who lives about a mile from the beach at Gulfport, Mississippi. Talk about facing the unknown – Katrina left my family in turmoil.

Whenever we face the unknown, fear is a real factor. Information helps. My husband stayed glued to news broadcasts on television and Internet and figured that his brother's property was flooded, his mother's house was dry and his sister had missed the worst of the damage by a few blocks. Four days later this was confirmed, by a call from someone his mom met who had a satellite phone and from a message his sister left. While the confirmation allowed us to exhale, the information we had gathered gave us some peace.

What unknown are you facing? What do you need to know? Where can you begin your research? Instead of focusing on what you don't know, compile information and sort it out into meaningful data as you go along. Only then can you make a decision with confidence.

Last summer I was asked to go to Libya in September to be a keynote speaker at their first women's business conference. I was in conflict. Basically, I was afraid of what I did not know. I remembered the headline news of Libya from the 1980's. Only when I researched and talked to people who had been to this country within the last year was I able to accept the invitation.

Sometimes the fear of the unknown is a safety measure. Last April, I was in Fez, Morocco, and became quite ill. The hotel concierge brought a French-speaking physician to my room. After a quick evaluation, he prescribed medication that the concierge had delivered to me. I didn't fully know what the pills were for and I didn't really care. Within two days, I was feeling better yet my face was swollen and as red as though I had sat on the beach all day without sunscreen or a hat. I was having an allergic reaction to one of the

medications. Had I felt better at the time the medicine was prescribed, I would have asked more questions and could have saved myself some frightening results.

I took a break from writing this article due to the hustle of helping our family after the hurricane. I never expected another unexpected tragedy to occur in that short span of time, but it did. Vincent Phipps' mom came to my door late Sunday night to tell me that he had been in a bad wreck, had broken his neck, and that the doctors expected full recovery after months of therapy. I missed a night's sleep and went to the hospital the next morning. Vincent had tubes attached to both arms, staples in his head, and a brace on this neck. What I noticed most was his smile. He talked the whole time I was there and let me realize that while we may never be prepared for the unexpected, it is what we do after it occurs that tells us who we really are.

So go ahead and plan your life. Be flexible, especially when the unexpected happens. Get information and move forward. Smile. Live your dreams.



A very happy birthday to our clients whose birthdays are in October:

Tim Smith	Heidi Keasler
Vonnie Beck	Janet Baker
Kay Tyson	Kisha Johnson
Richard D'Angelo	Karen Robert
Julie Patty	Judy S. Russell
Jeff Hope	Lu Ann Brinkley
Satya Mukhopadhyay	Mary Tegelaar
Marie Perry	Kathy Schoendorf
Abdul Mrani	Georges Gonzales
James Smith	Steve Freeman
Michael Massi	Angela Terrell
Don Weatherly	Darrell Clarke
Ken Brashear	Monica Roby
Wanda Griffen	

TLC establishes long-term relationships with our clients. If we have helped you or if you believe our approach to change would work for someone you know, please communicate with us by email [tlc@talklisten.com] or phone [1-888-232-2873]. We work with individuals and groups on the following subject areas: attitude, listening, body language, voice, leadership, compliments and corrections, behavioral style, teamwork, effective meetings, public speaking, accent reduction and much more!

All original materials in this newsletter are the copyrighted property of TLC, Talk Listen Communicate, LLC. For reprint permission, please email a request to tlc@talklisten.com.