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Charles Russo

SALES MANAGER, UPS

Charles Russo believes in three important factors for achieving success on the job: “First, you must know the specific goals of the assignment. In whatever industry or job you’re in, having measurable goals will help you define job success. Second, you must have a solid plan or map for success. This plan should include action items and dates of completion. Follow-up is key. Make sure you follow up with your supervisor to make certain you are achieving the goals of any assignment or the goals within your action plan. Third, be flexible enough so you can adjust your plan when necessary. Many times when things don’t go the way they were planned, people make excuses. If instead you channel that energy into coming up with solutions—and that may include taking risks—you will see better results and a higher degree of success.”

Finding ways to achieve better results and a higher degree of success often means going the extra mile—a stretch of highway with few traffic jams. According to Russo: “Going the extra mile is not only important, it’s imperative because it demonstrates commitment. When I see an employee demonstrating commitment, I know the person is hard working and motivated, which are attributes of a person I want on my team. I’m looking for the person who takes the initiative, makes suggestions, and asks questions that will help him or her perform better. The person who goes the extra mile for me instantly becomes

someone I would find it hard to live without. He or she becomes the go-to person for harder assignments, which makes the person an asset and inevitably makes the individual a prime candidate for any promotions that may arise and puts the person ahead of the pack.”

Being ahead of the pack affects the entire team in positive ways, according to Russo. “Going the extra mile becomes contagious, so every new hire is an opportunity to push the entire team. It even has an impact on my own enthusiasm and commitment. It gets the competitive juices flowing and helps everyone play his or her best game.”

The ability to playing one’s best game depends on how well one manages time. Russo has three strategies for time management: organize, prioritize, plan. “If you are not organized, you cannot prioritize or plan what needs to get done, and you can get frustrated because you find yourself spinning your wheels. Your day may be busy, but you will feel as though you’re not getting anything important done. But if you are organized, you will have an easier time determining what needs your attention and what is a priority, which then allows you to plan. This approach will help you become more efficient and help you get more accomplished. Since you won’t be constantly playing catch up, you’ll have the time and the ability to then go the extra mile.” ●

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Linda Cesare-Busold

**SENIOR LOAN ANALYST, LENDING DEPARTMENT
MEMBERS UNITED CORPORATE FEDERAL CREDIT UNION**

At a pivotal point in her commercial lending career, Linda Cesare-Busold began making presentations to loan committees. Although she knew the subject matter, she felt nervous addressing her colleagues and feared that she wouldn't be able to think quickly enough to answer their questions with well-delivered responses.

"I had also seen various people give presentations," Cesare-Busold remembers. "Some people did it well, and some people did not do it well. I didn't want to be perceived as someone who did not present well. So I figured the best way to be up there and be doing a good job was to learn how to do it properly." That decision led Cesare-Busold to her local chapter of Toastmasters International.

Toastmasters International is a worldwide organization dedicated to helping members cultivate the skills of speaking, listening, and thinking, which contribute to greater self-confidence, increased personal growth, and enhanced leadership ability. Typically, a Toastmasters club consists of up to 20 to 30 individuals, meeting once a week. What do members do during that 1-hour meeting?

"Practice, practice, practice," Cesare-Busold says. "In every meeting, you're given the opportunity to speak in front of a group of people. You also get constructive

criticism through evaluations when you give either a speech or respond to the 'Table Topics' portion of the meeting."

"Table Topics" is an impromptu session during which a random subject is introduced, a member is called on, stands, and has one to two minutes to respond to the topic. This session helps build confidence while members learn to think while speaking.

Since joining Toastmasters 8 years ago, Cesare-Busold has received a Competent Toastmaster Award (CTM) by completing 10 speeches, and an Advanced Toastmaster Bronze Award (ATM-B) by completing 10 additional speeches. Cesare-Busold has also served her club as Treasurer, President, and past-President. She believes that Toastmasters has been an asset for her career in commercial lending.

"I work with owners of companies and chief finance officers, and I have the confidence to speak with them one-on-one as well as in a group setting," Cesare-Busold says. "When I'm speaking one-on-one with someone, he or she is going to ask a lot of questions about finance but then he or she might ask if I saw the ball game last night. I have to be able to think quickly and respond. Since I never know what people are going to ask, my being able to speak extemporaneously on a variety of topics has been very important in my career."

Cesare-Busold also believes that Toastmasters has been an asset for her employer. "People see me as much more professional. As a result, they have more confidence in doing business with me, knowing that I'm able to manage them and manage their money. That's very important, because we

then have more loyal customers," Cesare Busold says. "My employer is interested not only in hiring people who represent the goals and vision of the company but also in the continued education and self-development of employees through programs like Toastmasters." ●