

If You Rest, You Rust!

By Judith Filek—President
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Helen Hayes (1900-1993) was the quintessential actress of her day. When asked why she continued to act well into her seventies and eighties, she said, "If you rest, you rust." As speakers, we can't assume our communication skills are good enough. Miscommunication is too costly to our organization and to our career. We must continue to practice.

Some of us are lucky and have the opportunity to speak often. As a result, we become quite adept. The rest of us may fall into the category of occasional speaker. To prevent rusting out, speakers need to look for opportunities to hone their skills, just as an actor or actress might.

One way is to join Toastmasters. It is terrific organization to practice addressing an audience. Its members meet biweekly and deliver an assigned topic. They are critiqued by other dedicated members. Toastmasters is a non-profit organization that has groups meeting around the globe, perhaps even on-site in your company. There is even Toastmasters for professional speakers. If you are someone who doesn't speak regularly, this organization will be invaluable in providing the feedback necessary to improve.

Within one's own organization, there are opportunities to practice informally. We all give updates. We all regularly educate our own peers on new products or services. We all participate in webinars or teleconferences. Undoubtedly, there are colleagues we can solicit to give us honest feedback on how we have delivered our message.

Outside of the business environment, we may belong to professional or social organizations. We can volunteer to introduce speakers or serve on committees. We can use those sessions to practice particular skills. We can even practice in front of family while giving a toast or saying a grace.

Helen Hayes once said, "If you rest, you rust." The founder of the Navy Seals, LCDR Roy Boehm said, "The more you practice, the less you bleed in the field." Either way, practice makes perfect. In today's

tumultuous business environment, we need to have our ideas heard. We need others to take action. With practice, we can perform at our best and receive applause from our listeners.

Impact Communications, Inc. consults with individuals and businesses to improve their face-to-face and over the phone communication skills. It is not what you know but how you communicate it that makes a difference. When you have to have impact, phone (847) 438-4480 or visit our web site, www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com.