



## **Key Nuggets from Gail Evans' 3/16/09 Address to Athena International Leadership Summit**

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### **Powerful Communication Tips**

- Be cognizant of the words we use at work. Studies have shown that when recommending women for promotion, both sexes use verbiage like:
  - She's a hard worker
  - Devoted & dedicated
- Conversely, when recommending a male, both sides speak to:
  - He has leadership potential
  - Strategic thinker; has vision
- This is also true in the media. For example, Hilary Clinton had the flu and passed out. The media reported she "faints". A coach with the same flu passed out and the headlines read that he "collapses". Words used about women are generally less powerful.
- Therefore, we need to talk about ourselves and each other powerfully!
- Don't respond to a compliment with "it was nothing". Instead, say "Thank you – I'm glad all my hard work paid off!"

### **Mentorship That Gets Results**

- Peer mentoring can be most effective if you tell your mentee what you are seeing in their behavior and reactions. For example:
  - "Great information in your presentation! It would be much more effective as an executive summary than in 47 slides though."
  - Men do this more naturally in casual conversation
- We've been waiting for decades for someone to fix the system. We need to realize we're responsible for our own power and tell each other what we need to know – no matter where we are in our careers!
- Many women are in such a minority in senior leadership that they often feel their comments are unheard. Some SVP women recognized this issue and made a pact: if one of them made a point that wasn't heard or acknowledged, the rest of them would steer the conversation back to them to get it addressed. In this way, they'd receive credit for their ideas and contributions.
  - Result: after 9 months, the women felt their contributions were being heard
  - Probably they were speaking with additional confidence because they were now sure their statements would be acknowledged and respected.
- Mentoring is supporting the person next to you and telling them what they need to know to succeed. Can be a mentor then at any level and can have more than one.

## Networking

- Personally, women will talk to anyone about almost anything. Yet somehow we assume a different way of being in business and not mention what we do unless asked directly.
- We have ONE life. Artificial distinctions between professional and personal lives are simply made up! Our careers are what we do and where we spend the majority of our time.
- Each person has the responsibility to communicate the authority you have. And that's NOT bragging!
- It's YOUR fault if someone goes to your subordinate because they didn't know you're the boss!
- Networking is connecting. Having a safety net of connections so tight that wherever you go and whatever you need, you've got a person there.
- This is true because great networkers pay it forward. Then folks want YOU to succeed because you helped THEM to succeed.

## Promotions

- In general, men have their closest friends at work while women have their best friends in their personal life. So when a woman wants to go for a promotion, her best friend will talk her out of "killing herself" to get it.
- Conversely, when a man mentions to a friend in the men's room that he's considering the promotion, he'll be connected to those who can make it happen.
- Therefore, get a standing lunch meeting set up with business women who could help move you forward. Treat this as sacred on your calendar.
- Breaking through to the top management level doesn't require working harder. It's about moving to "big picture" expertise.
- Women often choose to "opt out" of the competition via retirement, sabbatical or job change than face the fact that they may lose if they go for the CEO position. She did herself!
- Quote from Laura Liswood, another speaker, which applies here: "There is no glass ceiling. Just a fat layer of white men!" ☺