

## A Newsletter From Edwards Consulting Firm, Inc. Helping Business Leaders Manage Their Careers and Their Resources

### Welcome to *Conscious Communication*!

"Technique is communication: the two words are synonymous in conductors."

- Leonard Bernstein



*Conscious Communication* is dedicated to providing valuable human capital management strategies and career tips quarterly to our clients, career seekers and professional network.

In the last few years, we have experienced a turbulent world and market, from the dot-com economy and terrorist attacks to a few corporate ethical failings. These events prompted many organizations to downsize and restructure their businesses.

In getting back to basics, it is imperative for organizations to have effective lines of communication. Companies now, more than ever, need to communicate effectively to reinforce a healthy culture. How are companies and their leaders effectively managing change? How are organizations obtaining buy-in and support from their employees for the changes they find necessary to make? How can leaders communicate better orally? What motivation is needed to be successful? These are a few questions that we set out to answer in this issue of *Conscious Communication*.

Since this is our kick-off newsletter, we think the theme communication is timely.

We start with an interview with Kimberly Douglas, who serves on the SHRM-Atlanta National Expertise Panel for HR Consulting and Outsourcing, to discover how to facilitate effective communications during a time of change in your organization. Steve Clements of Executive Speak/Write, Inc., shares his career tips on speaking effectively. We wrap up this newsletter on a positive note with best-selling author, Dr. Dennis Kimbro, who teaches us that how we communicate with ourselves is the key to our success.

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Share this newsletter with your friends and colleagues. They may register at [www.edwardsconsultingfirm.com](http://www.edwardsconsultingfirm.com) to benefit from our executive search and contract services. We welcome your ideas and feedback for future issues. Enjoy!

Best regards,



Damali  
Damali Edwards  
Founder and CEO

### One-on-One

#### Facilitating Success through Effective Communication



Kimberly Douglas, SPHR, is no stranger to success. As president of FireFly Facilitation, a firm specializing in the design and facilitation of high-impact initiatives (strategic planning, board initiatives, team building, conflict resolution), she has been instrumental in generating results for over 15 years in a broad cross-section of industries and organizations, including Coca-Cola, Earthlink, Emory University and AmSouth Bank. Douglas holds a master of science in industrial/organizational psychology and is certified as a Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR). She is also a certified practitioner of the Herrmann Brain Dominance Indicator, the world's leading thinking styles assessment tool. In addition, she served as the 2003 president of the 2,300-member chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and is currently serving on the SHRM National Expertise Panel for HR Consulting and Outsourcing. Douglas is also a published author and frequent speaker at meetings and conferences.

*Conscious Communication* recently spoke with Douglas, who shared her views on facilitating effective communication.

**Conscious Communication:**  
What do you think are the biggest communications challenges facing organizations today?

**Douglas:**  
The number one issue I find in every client management is external and internal communications. For example, a vital

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outcome of strategic planning should be getting a few core messages clearly communicated to shareholders and stakeholders. In team building, communication becomes an issue due to the diversity of the workforce. Everyone has their own unique perspectives, which can lead to different communications styles.

Leaders in the past did not necessarily get where they were from being such good communicators. They simply got things done. The next generation of leaders has to master getting others to want what the leader wants – not just to do what the leader says.

## **Conscious Communication:**

How can these types of obstacles be overcome?

### **Douglas:**

The emphasis must remain on solid communication. Change within an organization must be communicated and reinforced at every opportunity. The delivery of that message can be achieved through a variety of approaches.

## **Conscious Communication:**

What are some trends we can expect to see in the area of communication/facilitation in organizations?

### **Douglas:**

I think we are developing more diversified workforces with more outsourcing taking place. Communication is not only core to employees, but to stakeholders outside of the company. Compelling messages that extend beyond a company's four walls has to be created.

Regulations are also going to impact what can and cannot be communicated to employees and external audiences. I can't wait to see where technology is going to take this. For example, Webcasting is a trend we are going to be seeing a lot more of. In fact, we are considering doing more Webcasting at SHRM-Atlanta. People want the option of multi-tasking. They want to be able to take a class from their desk rather than having to leave the office.

## **Conscious Communication:**

What was your biggest achievement while serving as president of SHRM-Atlanta?

### **Douglas:**

The biggest achievement was getting the executive team to create a shared vision for the future and to consistently and constantly communicate this message to our many stakeholders.

## **Conscious Communication:**

Why was this important to the SHRM-Atlanta executive team?

### **Douglas:**

It was extremely important that SHRM-Atlanta put its strategic plan on one page. It was vital that this plan be communicated repeatedly to stakeholders and those in leadership positions. This was not a one-step process. We spent one year developing the executive plan and then conducted an operational redesign the following year.

Cascading the message in this type of situation is crucial. Everyone on the most senior level must agree on the message and then share that message from the top down.

## **Conscious Communication:**

You've had a long career in the HR industry. As founder and president of FireFly Facilitation, what would you say sets you apart from the rest of the industry?

### **Douglas:**

I think my unique competitive advantage is combining strategic planning with team building. Some would say this is combining the hard piece (strategic planning) with the soft piece (team building). I help organizations discover what is very important to them, their priorities and how do they need to work together differently so that their vision becomes a reality. People have to be engaged to make that strategic plan a reality.

## **Conscious Communication:**

In looking ahead, what can we expect to see from Kimberly Douglas?

### **Douglas:**

My goal is to be the just-in-time facilitation resource to Atlanta's top companies.

*Kimberly Douglas, SPHR, can be reached at [www.fireflyfacilitation.com](http://www.fireflyfacilitation.com).*

## Connect Your Career

## Speaking of Success

by Steve Clements, Executive Speak/Write, Inc.

Say it. Be brief. Be seated.

Reasonable rules for the message you are sending, but with one glaring omission. You! Who you are, your personality and your way of conveying that through your speaking style is crucial to communicating successfully with an audience of one or a thousand and one.



Bottom line, how you convey your message is as important as the message you convey. It's that simple. Your oral communications style can keep your audience at a distance and discourage attentive listening – or it can invite the audience in, making those individuals move toward the goals you have set.

Think about Ronald Reagan is touted as having been the great communicator. Why? Because no matter what size audience he addressed, President Reagan's affability was so infectious that even a difficult message became easy to accept. Likewise, John F. Kennedy is remembered more for his style, personality and humor than the work he accomplished in his three short years

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in office. His ability to communicate made the mundane sparkle. Even his very inimitable jab of an index finger toward an audience became beloved.

How do you make yourself approachable? How do you move away from stiff formality and toward your own personality and distinctive mannerisms? Ultimately, you must strive to be inclusive – to embrace the entire group, no matter how large, with your words and style. To attain that inclusiveness when speaking:

- Maintain direct eye contact, occasionally glancing away for eye relief.
- Adapt the volume of your voice to the size of the group and your surroundings.
- Use pauses.
- Animate your speaking.
- Use the lectern only as a “home base.”

Finally, structure your message to leave room for “hope.” Even when conveying bad news, include some positive note that allows your audience to continue listening.

No matter what your current level of expertise and achievement, refining your skill as an oral communicator will translate into increased awareness, prestige and leadership roles, and, ultimately, achieve coveted positions.

*Steve Clements effectively translates his expertise as an award-winning television producer and celebrity trainer into customized oral communications and media training programs for executives. Under his Executive Speak/Write, Inc., banner ([www.executivespeakwrite.com](http://www.executivespeakwrite.com)), Clements enables professionals, from sales managers and directors to CEOs, in all industries, to maximize their oral presentation skills for one-on-one interactions with peers, stakeholders and the media. He also serves as Distinguished Professor of Television & Communications at Augusta State University.*

## A Balanced Life

### Your Inner Dialogue is Talking – Are You Listening?



Dr. Dennis Kimbro, prominent lecturer and researcher in the field of management, entrepreneurship and human potential, encourages all of us to look within to extract the keys that serve as the foundation for all accomplishment. He believes that a “can-do” attitude and listening closely to our internal dialogue are simple steps that will ensure success, both professionally and personally.

“Start with yourself,” Dr. Kimbro stresses. “The greatest conversation you will ever have is with yourself. Write down your own career development plan. What

are your strengths and weaknesses in 10 words or less; five words or less; one word or less? Know exactly what you want to do.”

In his book, *What Makes the Great Great: Strategies for Extraordinary Achievement*, Dr. Kimbro outlines nine mental strategies that can be used when conducting your internal dialogue. These approaches can assist you in taking both your professional and personal life to the next level.

1. **Deep-Seated Spiritual Beliefs.** There is an inner voice that speaks to all humanity.
2. **The “I Can” Credo.** You are capable of those things you are capable of believing.
3. **Vision.** The successful man or woman has a guiding vision, a dream, a sense of focus.
4. **Passion.** Perhaps the biggest break you could ever receive is to find your place and overfill it.
5. **Courage.** Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one’s courage. Courage means the willingness to take risks, to accept challenges.
6. **Character.** The successful are always open and honest in all business dealings. Integrity is the basis of trust.
7. **Competence.** Sometimes good is not enough. Competence is the difference between excellence and mediocrity.
8. **Self-Confidence.** Optimism means expecting the best, but self-confidence means knowing how to handle the worst.
9. **Discipline.** The mind that is properly disciplined and directed to a clear-cut objective cannot be defeated.

Dr. Dennis Kimbro ([www.denniskimbro.com](http://www.denniskimbro.com)) or review his profile at ([www.premierespeakers.com](http://www.premierespeakers.com)) received his B.A. and M.A. degrees from the University of Oklahoma and a doctorate from Northwestern University, where he studied wealth and poverty among underdeveloped countries. His honors include the Dale Carnegie “Personal Achievement” award and he has been featured on the pages of the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times and USA Today. He is the past director of the Center of Entrepreneurship at Clark Atlanta University and a past judge for the prestigious Ernst & Young USA Today Entrepreneur of the Year award. He is also the author of Daily Motivations for African American Success and the highly acclaimed *What Makes the Great Great: Strategies for Extraordinary Achievement*. Reprint of nine mental strategies permission granted by Dennis Kimbro.

## RECOMMENDED READING

*Great Communication Secrets of Great Leaders*  
by John Baldoni

*Harvard Business Review on Effective Communication*  
by The Harvard Business Review Paperback Series

*Leading Change*  
by John Kotter

*What Makes the Great Great: Strategies for Extraordinary Achievement*  
by Dennis Kimbro

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# Conscious Communication

## Mission



To provide valuable human capital management strategies and career tips to our clients, career seekers and professional network.

*Conscious Communication* is published quarterly by Atlanta-based Edwards Consulting Firm, Inc., a corporate talent search firm that provides executive search and contract services. To learn more about us, call 404.288.8824 or visit us online at [www.edwardsconsultingfirm.com](http://www.edwardsconsultingfirm.com).

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