

Speaking to groups helps the small businessman

Taking advantage of the opportunity to speak professionally represents a key business strategy that many independent business owners and managers typically ignore.

The reason why business professionals avoid public speaking is the same for anyone asked to present information in front of a group.

Stage fright is the most common deterrent along with fear of rejection and unwillingness to be the center of attention.

BRITTEN, A communications consultant, believes that practice and experience are the two primary ways to help individuals overcome the fears associated with speaking in front of others.

"It isn't going to be easy, but no one needs to start by speaking in front of 100 people," she said.

Britten offers tips to help both the novice and seasoned speaker give presentations. The first step is preparation.

"If a person has never spoken in front of an audience, the first step is to identify what topic(s) he or she is comfortable discussing.

"As an example, an accountant

who is a master sailor may want to start out by speaking to the local Rotary Club about sailing.

"ON THE other hand, a professional speaker would already have a prepared list of topics that he or she would submit to local business groups and organizations for consideration."

"Business people need to speak in order to become true professionals, be recognized in their field, and further their careers," said Kay Britton of Kay Britton Associates.

One is due to the fact that the government has been cutting back on what it pays for the costs of medicare patients.

The other is the fact that hospital occupancy has been decreasing, and costs are thus spread over a smaller number of patients.

Six years ago I bought shares in Hospital Corp. of America at \$44. My broker said it was one of the greatest growth companies in the country.

It did go up to \$56 after I bought it but that was in 1983. Since then it has been mostly on the down side. In fact it recently has sold at \$28 to \$29.

My broker still says it is a good company, but I would like your opinion.

ANALYSTS ARE projecting good earnings for Hospital Corp. of America. From roughly \$3.10 in 1987, Standard and Poor's is estimating 1988 earnings at \$4.20 a share.

Value Line says earnings per share could hit \$6.00 a share by 1990-92.

The price of the stock was doing well until the October stock sell-off.

Hospital Corp. of America has been very well managed.

The problem is in the industry. As you might be aware, the hospital industry has been in trouble two ways.

34.3 percent of the company's common stock.

Hospital Corp. still owns 82 general acute care hospitals, 49 psychiatric hospitals and manages more than 220 facilities in the United States. Overseas it manages an additional 15 units and owns 33 hospitals.

VALUE LINE classifies the industry as number 79 out of 92 industries for probably performance over the next 12 months. But it really looks like the worst is over, and we should see better earnings and a better stock price in the years ahead.

The company looks like a real bargain at a price under \$30. Additional purchases in that area could



focus: small business

Mary DiPaolo

Next, Britten suggests that the speaker understand his or her main audience. What is the age? Predominantly male or female? Education and lifestyle? Active in what field of business?

"A group of advertising executives won't respond to a speaker who presents introductory information relating to the field of advertising."

When it comes to preparing the speech, Britten suggests writing down the main theme in one sentence. "This helps to avoid the problems associated with presenting too much information in too short a time period."

"A PERSON speaking for 15 minutes should cover only one main point with several examples. Someone speaking for 30 minutes has time for two main points and the appropriate backup information."

It is also recommended that 15 percent of a speaker's time be used to introduce the subject matter, 75 percent to discuss and 10 percent to wrap it up.

As final suggestions relating to preparation, Britten recommends becoming familiar with the site where the speech will be given and having the right kind of visual guide or notes to use during the talk.

"And by all means, rehearse your speech over and over again. You want to be thoroughly prepared — as though your life depended on it."

Mary DiPaolo is the owner of *Market Trends*, a Farmington Hills-based business consulting firm. She is also producer and host of the cable television series, "Focus: The Small Business Environment."

Hospital Corp. of American looks like a good buy



today's investor

Thomas E. O'Hara
of the National Association of Investors Corp.

It had been up to \$50, but then came down to \$23.3. It recovered to above \$30, but recently has been back to \$28-29.

The company sold 104 acute care hospitals and more than 40 medical office buildings. These were sold to a new company, HealthTrust, which was formed by employees of HCA.

THE SALE of these units produced \$1.94 billion in cash. The profit on the transaction was \$1 1/2 billion.

Of that, \$600 million was used to buy back the company's stock, and the balance was used to reduce debt.

In addition to the cash it received from the sale, Hospital Corp. received \$260 million in HealthTrust Class A 14.5 percent preferred stock and \$200 million of Class B 12.5 percent preferred plus warrants to buy

lower your cost and improve your profit opportunities.

Thomas O'Hara of Bloomfield Hills welcomes your questions and comments but will answer them only through this column. Readers who send in questions on a general investment subject or on a corporation with broad investor interest and whose questions are used will receive a free one-year subscription to the investment magazine "Better Investing." For a sample copy of "Better Investing" or information about investment clubs, write Today's Investor, PO Box 220, Royal Oak, MI 48068

datebook

- CAREER DAY**
Thursday, March 3 — Wayne State University Career Day continues until 4 p.m. in Detroit. Free. Information: Koushika Patel, 577-4783.
- WORD PERFECT**
Thursdays, March 3 through 24 — "World Perfect!" offered 7-9 p.m. in Bloomfield Hills. One person per IBM-PC. Fee: \$75. Information: Jane Fawcett, 645-3635. Sponsor: Cranbrook Schools.
- LAND IN FLORIDA**
Thursday, March 3 — Vacation properties in Florida discussed 7-9 p.m. in Birmingham. Free. Information: Mike Allingham, 645-6700.
- Sponsor: Vacation Properties Network.
- SMALL BUSINESSES**
Saturday, March 5 — Free small business management workshop begins at 10 a.m. in Troy. Information: 542-4220. Sponsors: Small Business Management Schools, Wayne State University.
- BUY A BUSINESS**
Saturday, March 5 — "Buying an Existing Business" offered 10 a.m. to noon in Troy. Fee: \$25. Information: 649-8646. Sponsor: Start a Business Store.
- ENGINEERING REFRESHER**
Saturdays, March 5-26 — Part II

- Professional Engineer refresher course will be offered half days at Lawrence Institute of Technology in Southfield. Information: 832-5400. Sponsor: Engineering Society of Detroit.
- QUALITY CONTROL**
Monday, March 7 — American Society for Quality Control meets with Society of Plastic Engineers in Troy. Information: William Harrall, 420-0122.
- START A BUSINESS**
Monday, March 7 — "Start Your Own Business" offered 7-9 p.m. in Troy. Fee: \$25. Information: 649-8646. Sponsor: Start a Business Store.
- REAL ESTATE EXECs**
Monday, March 7 — National Association of Corporate Real Estate Executives meets in Southfield. Information: Tina Munley, 353-7370.
- BEGINNING LOTUS 1-2-3**
Mondays, March 7 through 28 — "Lotus 1-2-3 Beginning on the IBM-PC — Spreadsheets for Home or
- Business" offered 7-9 p.m. in Bloomfield Hills. Fee: \$75. Information: June Fasang, 645-3835. Sponsor: Cranbrook Schools.
- VENTURE GROUP**
Tuesday, March 8 — Southeastern Michigan Venture Group meets in Troy. Information: Ann Martyn, 779-9862.
- A BUSINESS PLAN**
Tuesday, March 8 — "Writing the Business Plan" offered 6:30-8:30 p.m. in Detroit. Fee: \$20. Information: 577-4650. Sponsors: Detroit Economic Growth Corporation, Wayne State University.
- ROBOT VISION**
Tuesday, March 8 — Machine vision forum and tour offered 5-8:30 in Southfield. Information: James C. Logan, 377-7509. Sponsors: Robotics International, Lawrence Institute of Technology.
- BUSINESS WOMEN**
Tuesday, March 8 — Business & Professional Women's Clubs meets in Southfield. Information: 562-7784.
- SMALL BUSINESSES**
Wednesday, March 9 — Free small business management workshop begins at 7 p.m. in Troy. Information: 542-4220. Sponsors: Small Business Management Schools, Wayne State University.
- FRANCHISING**
Wednesday, March 9 — "Pros and

- Cons of Franchising" offered 7-9 p.m. in Troy. Fee: \$25. Information: 649-8646. Sponsor: Start a Business Store.
- REAL ESTATE WOMEN**
Wednesday, March 9 — Commercial Real Estate Women Inc. meets in Southfield. Information: Kathleen Valenstein, 350-3338.
- TRAINING SOCIETY**
Wednesday, March 9 — American Society for Training and Development meets in Troy. Information: 258-8923.
- FINANCIAL PLANNING**
Wednesday, March 9-23 — "Financial Planning for the Longer Term" offered 7:15-9:30 p.m. in Auburn Hills. Information: 334-2411. Sponsor: A.G. Edwards & Sons Inc.
- FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE**
Wednesdays, March 9 to 23 — "Developing Your Financial Independence" offered 7:30 p.m. in Southfield. Fee: \$75. Information: 577-4665. Sponsor: Wayne State University.
- LEADERSHIP SKILLS**
Thursday, March 10 — "Leadership and Supervisory Skills for Technical Managers and Supervisors" offered 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Southfield. Fee: \$125. Information: 1 (800) 258-7246. Sponsor: National Career Workshops.
- BUSINESS WOMEN**
Thursday, March 10 — American Business Women's Association meets in Bloomfield Hills. Information: 683-2126.
- BUILDING OWNERS**
Thursday, March 10 — Building Owners and Managers Association meets in Southfield. Information: Jaki Lewis, 964-4000.
- AGING WORKFORCE**
Thursday-Friday, March 10-11 — "An Aging Workforce: Agenda for Action" conference held at Westin Hotel in Detroit. Fee: \$100. Information: conference coordinator, Institute of Gerontology, 577-0278. Sponsor: Wayne State University.
- RETIRED PROFESSIONALS**
Friday, March 11 — Retired professionals meet in Rochester. Information: 370-3140.
- TABLE TOPICS CLUB**
Friday, March 11 — Table Topics Club meets in Farmington. Information: 471-8709.
- SMALL BUSINESSES**
Saturday, March 12 — Free small business management workshop begins at 10 a.m. in Troy. Information: 542-4220. Sponsors: Small Business Management Schools, Wayne State University.
- BUSINESS FORUM**
Wednesday, March 16 — International Business Forum meets. Information: Don Keese, 340-2615.

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