

as seen in...

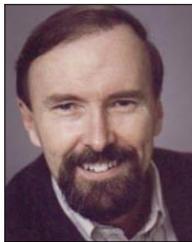
ConventionSouth
For planners of meetings, conferences, seminars and similar events that are held in the South.

SpeakerProfile

Speaker Shares The Ultimate Sales Trick—*The Truth*

By Angie C. Baldwin

Barry Maher is a salesman from way back. As a kid in the suburbs of Boston, he constantly saw ads on the back of comic books proclaiming, “Win Great Prizes and Make Money Selling Greeting Cards.” Maher took the chance. He entered the greeting card business, went door to door selling cards and proved the ad right. He did win great prizes, and he made money. You could say it was the first of his many successes in the sales arena.



Maher

During his college years at the University of Notre Dame, Maher supported himself through sales jobs. There, he came to understand the ultimate sales trick—the truth. “Nothing disarms like honesty,” he explained. “A great salesperson doesn’t hide potential negatives, and he certainly doesn’t stumble over them. He uses potential negatives as selling points—even brags about them.” After graduation, Maher became a success in sales training, something that groomed him for what was to become his eventual calling—professional speaking.

Along the way, Maher realized the same techniques he used as a salesman and sales trainer also applied to the issues everyone faces in business, and even in life. Today, he incorporates his years of sales knowledge into presentations that are delivered to 100 or more companies a year. He shares his philosophy, techniques and advice to sales people and others in the business world in the hopes of making them more successful. The reason his message is working, according to Maher, is that his techniques come from real world experiences. “I pride myself on the fact that this is not pixie dust that I’m spreading here. It’s not wishful thinking. These techniques have been tested in the real world of

business year after year after year. These are real world tactics I learn from the people in every audience I speak to and from the people and customers in every company I consult with,” Maher explained.

One of Maher’s most popular keynote presentations, “Filling the Glass,” stems from a successful book he wrote titled, “Filling the Glass: The Skeptic’s Guide to Positive Thinking in Business.” This book and the presentation and workshop offered in conjunction encapsulate Maher’s main objective. “We keep hearing that there are two kinds of people: those who see the glass as half empty and those who see the same glass as half full,” Maher said. “The person I want to be, the person I want to hire and the person who will ultimately be more successful and more valuable to his company, society, family, friends, dog, parakeet and him or herself is the one who takes a look at that glass and is concerned not with whether it’s half empty or half full, but with trying to figure out what he or she has to do to fill it up. That’s the idea behind everything I do—to help people fill their glass. Ideally until their cup runneth over and starts dripping on the rug.”

Maher admits he is addicted to bringing his “Filling the Glass” material to as many different types of businesses, industries and people as he can. He believes in it that much, and so far, audience response tells him he should.

Maher tells the story of one audience member whose demeanor and posture said, “Not interested,” through his whole “Filling the Glass” presentation. At the end of the keynote, the rest of the audience was pulsing with enthusiasm, and so was Maher. He talked with audience members after the presentation, but it was only when everyone else was gone that Maher noticed this disgruntled guest still lurking. “For a moment, he just looked at me. I was thor-

oughly energized with the reception, but the way he’d been eyeing me was not promising. Then he said, ‘I just wanted to tell you that this morning you helped me make a decision I’ve been struggling with for a long, long time. You changed my life in there today. Thank you.’ The way he said it actually made me weak in the knees and literally speechless. It was gratifying, of course, but what really struck me was an immense sense of the responsibility that speakers and writers have. I try never, ever to forget that when I’m speaking or I’m writing. I would hope that it keeps me grounded and steers me away from pat answers that may sound good and keeps me focused on providing genuine solutions that actually work,” Maher said.

Maher makes it a priority to always remember his audience and why they are there listening to him. He advises up-and-coming speakers to do the same. “Just as a great salesperson concentrates on his customers and the what’s in it for them, a great speaker concentrates on his audience and the what’s in it for them. Take care of the what’s in it for them, and the what’s in it for you will take care of itself.”

Maher has been taking care of his audiences and as a result, his life, in his opinion, is pretty good. From his home in Santa Barbara, Calif., he can see the mountains and the ocean, a far cry from the often cold and snowy Northeast where he grew up. Despite a busy speaking schedule, he continues to make time for himself, something that allows him and his material to stay fresh. Throughout his career he has never lost sight of that early lesson in truth, and after all this time he continues to be inspired by his work. It could be said that Maher’s cup runneth over.

For more information about Barry Maher, check out his website at www.barrymaher.com. §