

## Hot Topics

by Beverly Denver

It's August, and the heat here in Houston is intense, as usual, but that's not the reason Hot Topics are top of my mind these days.

You see, last month I traveled to San Diego to attend the National Speakers Association's annual conference. I went, primarily, to hear some of the best speakers in the country and to learn from them about the hot topics of the day. Knowing, of course, that what I gained would eventually find its way amongst these pages. Good excuse, I reasoned, to go to such a cool place in the middle of the summer!

Most of the speakers at that conference make a living addressing corporation executives and their employees. Their job is to educate and motivate their audiences. Their clients say, "We want you to speak for an hour and get our team to *change* [their behavior in some way to achieve desired results]."

The best of the speakers deliver their messages in ways that inform, entertain and inspire! And, by doing so, listeners often walk away uplifted and transformed — eager to move in new directions, to take risks, to go for the gold!

Many of the speakers told me they often become consultants for their clients, sitting in on executive meetings, giving feedback on major decisions being made in the boardroom. Wow, what a responsibility!

In putting together this month's section on Women in Public Relations, we learned that PR specialists and professional speakers have much in common. Both are expected to be able to aptly advise clients about staying current and adapting to change. They are expected to know everything there is to know about advertising and marketing, branding and positioning. They are expected to give easy solutions to serious issues and share special "secrets" to overnight success.

Ladies, there are no easy solutions; there are no secrets!

Simply stated, those of us in business are left with old-fashioned things like passion (for one's work), preparation (knowing well what we are doing) and proof (delivering on our promises)!

When we address the Three P's, the rest falls into place.

These days, I hear a lot about the virtues of branding, as if it were a miracle cure. As a result, many spend countless worrisome hours trying to figure out how to distinguish themselves amongst the masses, sure that "branding" will be the remedy to heal their wounded spirits and ailing bottom lines.

Now, don't get me wrong. I'm not saying that branding isn't important, only that identifying one's brand shouldn't be all that difficult. To me, branding is all about authenticity.

Do you *absolutely* love what you do? Are you staying true to your own calling? Are you using your natural gifts and abilities to their utmost? Are you paying attention to the synchronicities and coincidences that pop up at odd times and lead you down certain paths?

If you answered, "no" to all of these questions, you will never be branded as anything! You will remain in a confused state and somewhat invisible to the very people (and business) you are trying to attract.

If you answered, "yes" to all of those questions, you are already branded — as a fine artist, a brilliant attorney and a compassionate physician. Girl, go with it — wholeheartedly and with panache!

Being who we *really* are is empowering and attractive. Amazingly, it prompts others to seek us out with confidence and ease.

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