

Practical Rhetoric in the Workplace

Proposal for Bernard Controls China, Sept. 2015

GOOD RHETORIC: ENGAGING, INSPIRING, MOTIVATING

It is not by chance that every manual on team-building, strategic management and self-help are filled with famous quotes of great men, from Sun Zi to Shakespeare, from Giulus Caesar to J.F. Kennedy. Defined by Plato as "the art of ruling the minds of men", rhetoric is **the ability to communicate clearly and inspire people with the power of words**.

Surfing the internet to find inspiring quotes to paste on your memos is easy. But only if told at the right time, in the right way, a famous quote will actually be *inspiring*. This, in short, is what 'good rhetoric' is about: using the right words, at the right time, in the right way in order to **engage, convince, and motivate** others.

"AND HOW DOES THAT HELP US, EXACTLY?"

Successful managers know that the way to success goes through effective communication. As team leaders, they need to instruct their team on what to do, how to do it, and why it is important to do it. Good sales agents know that communication skills are the most essential tools as well. In a few minutes' time, they must persuade a client of the quality of their product, and why it is crucial to buy it.

For most professionals (business executives, HR coordinators, etc) good communication skills are the prerequisite to complete most of their tasks. Memos, interdepartmental meetings, sales pitches rely on basic abilities: capture your audience's attention; expose your ideas with clarity; win the trust of associates and clients; motivate your team to achieve set goals. In other terms: master the art of rhetoric.

In international companies with employees from different cultural backgrounds, efficient communication is especially important. "Why can't they follow such simple instructions?", "why does he react that way?", "what's so hard to understand?". Problems like these are common in multicultural working environments, and miscommunication can compromise good collaboration between colleagues. Having a better understanding of how communication works can help clarify the misunderstanding, and create a channel that bridges cultural gaps.

PRACTICAL RETHORIC TRAINING AND ITS AUTHOR

Formerly a famous actress from TV, film and theatre, **Marie Louise Tank** furthered her academic research at university in subjects such as history of ideas and religions. Combining her performer's experience with her academic background, Tank developed a training method in **Practical Rhetoric**: a simple and effective method to improve communication skills in the working environment. M. L Tank is a highly requested lecturer that in the last 20 years consulted for major Norwegian organizations, both private and public, including

Telenor, Statoil, Hydro, Jotun, Ministry of Children and Equality, Ministry of Justice, NHO, Innovation Norway.

PRACTICAL RHETORIC IN CHINA

In 2015 Ibsen International started a project to introduce to China Tank's method of Practical Rhetoric. Tank's book "Take the word to work", a manual in practical rhetoric, is being translated into English and Chinese, and will be published in January 2016.

Moreover, 7 Young people from 5 different countries and varied backgrounds were selected to be instructed by Tank in her method, and by the end of the years will be qualified to give classes in Practical Rhetoric. Ibsen International's goal is to provide the course to both private and public companies. Thanks to our bilingual team of teachers, we will be able to give the course in either Chinese or English language, according to the client's request.

FROM TRAINING TO PRACTICE: PILOT SESSION, 9 OCTOBER 2015, BERNARD CONTROLS CHINA

After three series of workshops our team is ready to meet "real people and real situations". Ibsen International is glad to invite Bernard Controls China to participate to the project for a Pilot Session. During this session our team of Rhetoric Consultant will visit the factory and, divided in groups, will dialogue with the different departments (workshop, administration, quality control, management, etc) to analyse possible communication problems. Afterwards, the consultant will gather to discuss the issues and elaborate suggestions and solutions, which will finally be shared with the different departments. Please see the program below for details:

7 OCTOBER	
time TBC	Visit of the factory together with social sensibility director Alessandro Rolandi
9 OCTOBER	
9:30 – 12:00	Rhetoric Consultants split in groups and discuss communication problems in different departments
12:00 – 12.30	Lunch break
12:30 – 15:30	Consultants meet and discuss the communication problems they observed and elaborate solutions
15:30 – 16:30	Consultants meet with the departments and present their analysis and suggestions
16:30 – 17:00	Consultants illustrate their analysis and their suggestions to the

	relative departments
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This project is supported by the Norwegian Embassy in Beijing and Innovation Norway. Ibsen International is interested in discussing possible partnership to promote it to organization, institutions and private companies.

Thank you for your attention, and best regards

Fabrizio Massini, Project Manager

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