

Will Green Cleaning Turn You into Othello?

By Mike Sawchuk

When William Shakespeare wrote the play Othello, he wanted Othello, the lead character, to be bigger than life. To do this, he made him a great general, an eloquent and physically powerful figure who was respected by all those around him.

One of the other ways Shakespeare accomplished this is by making Othello a great orator. After all, in order to be a popular leader and win the admiration of both the military and civilians, Othello had to possess great confidence when speaking before others.

Green cleaning is turning some distributors into Othello's. This is because more and more distributors are being asked to speak before the upper management of facilities, school administrators, facility managers and building occupants, discussing what Green cleaning is and how it can be beneficial to the various stakeholders. For this, distributors need good presentation skills.

Below are some tips on how to make your next Green cleaning presentation not only successful, but lead to a sale as well:

- **Preparation:** It is critical that you prepare for the presentation by knowing your audience. A medical facility will likely not have the same Green cleaning needs of a school or office building. And no facility type should be taken for granted. Most all facilities have their own needs and requirements. To find out more about a facility, ask questions such as: Why are you now considering Green cleaning? What type of facility is it? What types of people (adults, children, ill, well, old, young) use the facility? How often is it used? How old is the building? Answers to these questions can help give you a solid foundation for your presentation.
- **Interaction:** The questions should not stop at the preparation level. To make sure everyone is alert, tuned into what will be discussed, review what you know about the facility and ask more questions. Also, briefly introduce yourself so that your

audience knows who you are, your knowledge of cleaning and especially Green cleaning, and why they should be listening to you.

- **Tell a Story:** One of the best ways to discuss Green cleaning, how it has helped someone else, and how to implement it is to describe how it was done at a similar facility. For instance, working with school administrators responsible for scores of school, getting everyone on board with Green cleaning may seem a bit daunting. Discussing how another district made the move, the steps they took, as well as the challenges they encountered, can help your audience better understand the system and the process.
- **Passion:** In past selling tips, we have discussed the need for some passion. It helps when selling concepts and products to individuals and is especially useful in front of an office. You can show passion about Green cleaning through your voice, gestures, movements, and facial expressions. And don't forget eye contact. To convey passion, you must speak directly to the members of your audience.
- **Use a PowerPoint Presentation:** Working with a PowerPoint presentation has several benefits. It helps organize your talk, it makes sure all of the important items you want to cover are included, and for many speakers, it helps them "talk" about a subject, instead of reading from notes, which can get boring rather quickly. In addition, it allows you to leave a formal, comprehensive package for the audience. However, a PowerPoint can also be a distraction. For instance, avoid reading verbatim what is written on the slides. Instead, use the slides as notes to guide you through the talk. And as to the slides themselves, they can either add to the presentation or distract. Flashing words or graphics are cute once or twice, but repeated over and over again they will just become a distraction. In some of the best presentations I have ever attended, the speaker used rather basic, but attractive, slides to make his or her point.

- **The Meat and Potatoes:** There is no room for “fluff” when delivering a presentation. Your presentation must include important, pertinent facts to help convince the audience of your expertise. And the content must address the specific needs of the facility, including its budget, resources, timelines, and priorities.
- **Dress Appropriately:** Although most of the distributors I work with dress in what is called business casual, a presentation often requires a bit more formal attire. Why? Dressing up shows respect for your audience and, the reverse is true as well. The better dressed you are, the more likely the audience will believe you are a credible source and advisor when it comes to Green cleaning.
- **Facing the Fear:** No article about public speaking is complete without talking about the “fear” many of us have about public speaking. If it helps any, some of the world’s greatest entertainers say they get a little—or a lot—nervous before every stage performance. Bob Hope often said that if he was NOT nervous, it often meant he was not at his best. To handle the fear of speaking before an audience, some experts suggest stopping for a few seconds after getting introduced, smile at their audience, and get familiar with the room and your surroundings. Then, find one person in the audience that looks welcoming and begin speaking to him or her. What usually happens is that although there may be some jitters and apprehension before the talk, once you begin speaking, they all melt away. And even if they stay with you, try to channel those fears and turn them into “communication energy,” so that your audience learns from the presentation and the event leads to Green sales for you and your company.

