

## *Engage ~ Lead ~ Inspire*



**STUART FORRESTER** *is an Operations Manager for Iluka, where he has won awards for performance improvement and workforce diversity. He has also worked with Rio Tinto, and chairs the board of the SHINE charity.*

*He talks here about working with Margo Halbert on his public speaking and workplace communication strategies.*

### **Q. What outcomes were you seeking when you started working with Margo?**

Initially I just wanted to deliver a professional presentation that was engaging for audiences. I wanted to be able to get my message across to them.

Margo is a professional speaker herself, so she's able to pass on her knowledge from years of experience. She's well trained and has a large network that she draws on. Margo was able to give me really practical tools I was able to take away and work with.

I'd practice and continue to use those skills until I needed the next set of tools - then I'd work through that new set of tools. In a very short space of time, Margo was able to give me a lot.

### **Q. What results came from engaging Margo?**

My confidence with public speaking has improved dramatically. Umms and ahhs disappeared from my presentations within the first hour and I pretty much haven't used them from that point on.

I gained confidence every time that I spoke. I won an award, and had the opportunity to speak about twelve times last year, embedding what Margo taught me and building on it. I was able to feel so much more confident and engage with the audiences. Margo showed me how to use good introductions to get initial engagement, how to create a succinct flow to get my message across, and how to close strongly.

### **Q. What did you like most about working with Margo?**

Margo's personality, she's easy to get along with, professional and gets on with her job. She also engages with you as a person. Margo has also been willing to provide some in-kind support to develop the presentation skills at a not-for-profit I chair.



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## **Q. What are some of the main areas of growth during the coaching process?**

I now concentrate less on delivery and more on content so I am more able to engage with audiences.

Margo's given me a really simple process to get my message across, and recently helped me with my visuals. I'm looking forward to using those new visuals and seeing how that improves my presentations.

Margo's also given me tools to stay calm in front of big audiences and be prepared. I've got a way to get myself into a very positive state of mind so I am ready to deliver a speech. I feel much more confident whether I'm presenting to a board, my work teams or to an audience of a thousand people. I now have more confidence in the way I talk in any situation.

When I first met Margo, I would be looking at my page of notes and reading directly from them and every now and then looking up to the audience. Now I am confident presenting on any subject even without notes.

I've found Margo can give you the exact tools you need in a short time frame. These results might take someone else longer to deliver.

## **Q. Are you more persuasive now?**

Yes, definitely, far more persuasive. I get really good feedback on my presentations, people tell me how engaging they are. When I get a clap in the middle of my presentation, I think, "Well, okay, it's going well." They're paying attention and I can tell I'm getting my message across.

## **Q. You've been very active in cultural change in your own organisation. How has that affected your need to present?**

I do a lot of presentations in my own industry, in my own workforce. It's really important that I can get our employees engaged and on board. The key to achieving change is to help people understand the reason for change. If I can communicate the reason for change simply and clearly to my employees, then I'm much more likely to get them to come on board with the change.

## **Q. Have you seen other benefits from working with Margo?**

We've worked on communication skills, aspects of my leadership style, and developing myself as a leader. That's been through improving my communication. The key to having an engaged workforce is a leader with strong communication skills.

If you communicate well, you can lift engagement levels within your organisation tenfold.

When people understand your vision and goals, and feel enthusiasm and energy, they are more likely to follow. You need to be able to communicate all the things that you're doing positively internally, but also externally with communities.

There's also the important communication strategies in how you reward people for their efforts. Communication is such a key for bringing your employees along on the ride.

Margo has a very strong network. During her coaching she can tap into it to help you with what you need.

## **Q. Would you recommend Margo and her work?**

Margo is fantastic, her energy levels are always high. I've recommended her to my employees, my peers and within the corporate sector.

