

*Anita Percudani founded Realmark with her husband John in 1989. Since its inception, the business has transformed from a two person consultancy into an innovative and multi award winning commercial and residential real estate group, with a respected reputation and employing over 250 people.*

*Anita initially focussed on the financial management of the business. In 2006 she moved into a leadership role to grow and develop the commercial and residential property management portfolios. During that time, Anita has grown the management portfolio from around 300 properties to several thousand today.*

*Currently the Executive Director, Anita contributes to strategic decision making and planning for the company's growth. Here Anita discusses her experience of engaging Margo Halbert as a presentation coach.*



### **What were the outcomes you were seeking when you engaged Margo?**

I've had very little public speaking experience, I was quite a novice. I wanted someone who would guide me in how to prepare a presentation and how to deliver that presentation. I know that they are both two key areas as I've sat through so many speaking engagements and conferences. I understand it's so vitally important to make sure you engage the audience, so that's why I was seeking Margo's assistance.

### **What was your personal goal?**

It was so important for me, having never been on stage before, to have self confidence. Unfortunately I've just never been one to be on stage and in the limelight. Even at school when I had to give presentations, I was always the last one to put up my hand. I needed someone who would be able to help me feel confident and Margo certainly did that.

### **So what do you think her point of difference is?**

Margo listens. She wants to understand who you really are and what you want to achieve. That was very helpful for me, because I was speaking to someone focused on doing it my way, not their way. She knew what I wanted to achieve and focused on that. She listened, understood and delivered what I needed, it was a great help.

### **What sort of dimensions does Margo work on?**

Margo's work is well managed and strategic. Together we mapped out the presentation, and once it was clarified we put it together like a jigsaw puzzle. We put those pieces in where they needed to go so that there was a flow and there was a link through. The planning experience was such great learning for me, it was empowering, and I know I can do it myself now.

## ***What did you find as a result of engaging Margo? How was the presentation experience for you?***

It was life changing. I've always had a fear, probably my worst fear, of having to do a presentation. I've always refused invitations to speak because it's out of my comfort zone. On the next occasion I was asked I hesitated and then I said okay.

I rang Margo and explained to her how I felt. She made me feel very, very relaxed and comfortable. She said, "I can help you to do it, we will get you up there on stage, and you will deliver the best presentation." Immediately I knew I was in the right hands. She engaged and embraced me and understood exactly what I needed. Every time I went to see her it was just a joy and I looked forward to it because I really wanted to learn more, because we enjoyed it together so much. And it wasn't just about the one hour or two hours that we spent working on it. It was our personal engagement, our story telling and just delving personally into our beliefs and feelings that just helped draw out from me exactly what it was that I wanted to achieve.

## ***So it sounds like the whole of you was engaged in the process.***

Yes, it definitely was, it was the whole of myself. It was something that I really passionately wanted to do but there was this person sitting on my shoulder saying, "Anita, you're not going to be any good, you're going to stumble, you're going to forget everything you're going to say, and kept saying don't do it." I really wanted to do it. I felt like I really needed to add this to what I'd done and created over the years. Like the icing on the cake.

It gave me an opportunity to share my story with people, to have people understand why I was doing it and it's also led me to have other engagements and interviews with magazines. There's one coming up in QANTAS, Business First Magazine. Since I've started speaking it's opened a whole new world.

## ***What is it that you most enjoyed about working with Margo?***

It was her honesty and her excitement. She's really engaged and I felt that she wanted to make a difference. It's almost like she'd stepped inside of my body and said to me, "Okay Anita, we will take this journey together and don't fear because I'm always there with you."

It's very powerful. And it's interesting, on the very first presentation I did, we had to make some changes on the little USB on the PowerPoint and it was something like two days before leaving. I left it with Margo and we were talking by phone and the last thing she did, she had to put it in her letterbox for me to pick up the next day before we were flying out.

I remember I went to her letterbox to take it out. Inside was a brown paper bag that she puts the children's lunches in. On this brown paper bag she wrote, "Good luck Anita I know that you will do it, I'm with you all the way". I took this brown piece of paper with me to Sydney, before I did the presentation. I actually folded it up and took it up on stage on the lectern with me. Every time I turned around and saw the paper bag, I saw Margo! She'll probably laugh at this but it's true, it's almost like she was there with me helping me through it and that made me feel really comfortable and very positive.

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## ***What was the feedback you got from your presentation?***

It was a resounding success, it was so empowering. I was standing there getting ready to go up on stage next to Andrew Daddo. I didn't have nerves. People were saying, "Oh, you must be nervous", but no, I was excited, I really wanted to get up there and do what I had to do. That whole feeling of fear had left me and was more a case of - I have a job to do, I'm excited and I want to get up there.

When I did, the first few minutes you find your feet and I was trying to remember all the things Margo told me to do which I did. I just thought, well it's about just being me, nobody knows if I've made a mistake, nobody knows if I've forgotten anything. I even had a few problems with the PowerPoint but I managed to override that, but when I got off the stage I had people coming up and patting me on the shoulder saying, that mine was the best presentation and they loved it. People asked me to come and work for them. They said, "I want you to come and work in Sydney." I got such great accolades, I was on a high! It was wonderful, so for a first time speaker it was really good. Exciting!

## ***So what are the main areas that you've worked on during the coaching process, what would you identify as the main areas of growth?***

I would say self confidence and losing that fear of doing something that has always overwhelmed me. One of the other things I learned was how to manage the way I present myself. That was just such a great learning opportunity for me. Margo empowered me with so much more than just understanding how to put together a presentation. It is a more holistic type of professional growth.

## ***So what are the three main benefits of engaging Margo to work with your people?***

She delves deeply and understands the people that she's working with. She's very careful to personalise the work to fit the person and their goals. She listens, she understands and she tailors the training around what the individual's needs are. Because the work is so suited to the individual it's makes the overall achievement matter more. You can actually deliver, look back, review and understand, you know? Margo helps people realise the power of being authentic and being original. And I think those areas help you go forward to the next challenge. So the benefit is giving people a lasting skill.

## ***So would you recommend Margo's services and why?***

Yes, without any hesitation I certainly would. I have people within my organisation and people outside that I would definitely recommend Margo to. I know that she will be able to deliver coaching and help them to grow and be comfortable with themselves just like she has done with me.

### **Margo Halbert**

*Margo works with business leaders to build their reputation and confidence by helping them to be more engaging and influential. They face important audiences and they achieve results.*

*She is a Certified Speaking Professional (CSP), the highest international accreditation available from the National Speakers Association of Australia.*

*Margo's clients include Chevron, Shell, Wesfarmers, BHP Billiton, FMG, RAC, Crown Casino, Bunnings and AngloGold.*



***Engage ~ Lead ~ Inspire***