

Amy Carroll, 45: communications coach



by Helena Bachmann

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Since she moved to Suisse Romande in 1995, New York native Amy Carroll travels all over the world - and throughout Switzerland - to coach her clients to become more dynamic and confident speakers. As a communications coach she also smooths out 'abrasive' executives to help them better influence others in

business and personal relationships. The US presidential candidates also suffer under her trained eye. All of us would like to know the secret to making friends and influencing people, but we may lack the skills to put this premise into action. That is where Amy Carroll comes in. A communications coach based in Vevey she trains "abrasive, aggressive or intimidating" executives in personal presence, leadership, and presentation skills.

So when relations with their subordinates or colleagues suffer, Carroll - whose clients include Microsoft, Cisco Systems, Nestlé, Procter and Gamble, Hospices Cantonaux and Swiss Post, steps in. "The first thing we do is raise their awareness of the damage they cause, because many of these people don't realize how they're being perceived," she explains. "The next step is motivating them to change – getting the results they want while preserving relationships and loyalty. Then, we coach them to use behaviors and mindset to communicate respect for themselves and others, producing the desired outcome."

Carroll, who has a degree in psychology from Michigan State University and works with a US-based company called, appropriately enough, Skills to Success Inc., says the art of effective communication is just as crucial in work and personal relationships as it is in solving international conflicts. "If you start off communicating effectively, by using behaviors that show mutual respect, most problems will dissipate before taking hold," she says. "It's simple, though not always easy to do."

Carroll says even seasoned politicians like the US presidential candidates, who have the natural gift of the gab, could use some professional coaching to hone their speaking skills. "If I worked with McCain, I'd advise him to change his monotonous tone," she says. "He might be doing it to project the calm and confident demeanor, but he comes across as boring. He needs to inject some passion into his way of communicating – especially at his age."

As for Obama, "he is intelligent and gracious; I'd still coach him to remove the filler 'ah' sound and the hesitating speech. He sometimes gets stuck on the beginning of a word or sentence. The reason these techniques are so important for him is that both points can unconsciously create doubt in the mind of a listener. Lastly, get rid of the pointing finger, too negative. Use an open palm instead."

Whether the two candidates will heed Carroll's advice remains to be seen, but the rewards of good communication skills are clear, she says: "Getting more of what we want, more often and more easily."

Link : <http://www.swisster.ch/content/amy-carroll-45-communications-coach>