



focalvocal

Welcome, Bienvenue and Herzlich Willkommen to

VocalPoint

FocalVocal's Free Monthly Newsletter

VocalPoint: Issue 4: December 2006

Welcome to the fourth issue of VocalPoint! The FocalVocal team and I are delighted that you are interested in receiving up to date news about FocalVocal and reading articles written by us about current issues within training today.

If there are specific questions you have regarding your training needs or areas that you think are worthy of investigation, we would be happy to hear from you and see if we can help out by doing some research and writing an article.

In this month's issue of VocalPoint Karen Bartholomew will be taking a light hearted look at the twelve days leading up to Christmas, but in the meantime

What's on?

In-house taster sessions

FocalVocal is currently offering free of charge in-house taster sessions, a perfect opportunity for you to test drive FocalVocal's method of training and our skills. If interested please e-mail monica@focalvocal.co.uk

A recent two-hour taster session conducted at PKF (UK) LLP proved hugely successful and thought provoking dialogues regarding combating nerves by 'thinking in pictures' when presenting ensued.

'PKF invited FocalVocal to deliver a taster session on Beginners Public Speaking. The attendees found it to be informative, developmental and fun. The presenter and actors struck the right tone from the very start and allowed the participants to contribute which helped maintain their focus. It was a thoroughly worthwhile session.'

John Watkins Director of Training and Development PKF (UK) LLP
Accountants & business advisers

FocalVocal Taster Sessions 2007

1. Beginners Public Speaking with Monica Lowenberg
2. Assertiveness with Helen McNeill
3. Managing Change with Chris Robinson
4. Giving and Receiving Feedback with Chris Robinson
5. Work/Life Balance Helen McNeill
6. Media Training with Gareth Rubin and Monica Lowenberg as from April 2007

FocalVocal taster sessions are two hours and fifteen minutes in length, conducted at your premises by one trainer and two actors, one session can train up to 18 persons.

What's New?

Corporate Entertainment

'Raise the Spirit' a light-hearted look at the world of wine, led by wine expert (or so he thinks) Angus Tarte. The inflated and flawed ego of Mr Tarte visits wine growers, sommeliers and marketers from the new and old world regions.

If you would like an opportunity to see FocalVocal's Karen Bartholomew in this production, you are invited to attend a showcase evening on:

Wednesday 24th January 2007 7.30pm
at the Concert Artistes' Association
20 Bedford Street, London
WC2E 9HP.

If interested please email monica@focalvocal.co.uk

What's coming up in the new year?

- **New workshops for small groups**
- **Forum theatre**
- **Role-Players for assessment days and pilot days**
- **New website**
- **New brochure**
- **January VocalPoint with Geoff Cotton**

Geoff is FocalVocal's presentation coach and will be writing about 'Presentations, Traps and Tricks. How to avoid the traps and improve the delivery of live presentations.' Geoff is a presenter, speaker and scriptwriter with extensive experience of conferences, live events and corporate videos. Since 1987 he has anchored and presented a wide variety of corporate events, working in the UK, Europe and North America.

However, in the meantime here is Karen with some

Christmas Cheer!

Yuletide felicitations to you all, spoke Margo Leadbetter of the enduring 'Good Life.' Indeed, or Merry Christmas, happy holidays and copious amounts of alcohol and festive entertainment to boot. Bless the Internet for making a PA's life easier, or whoever has to arrange, find, and book the company's event or outing. There's a sense of enjoyment and foreboding about approaching these 'obligatory' evenings. Show willingness or have a reasonable excuse to miss the Mexican Christmas meal or a karaoke evening or tenpin bowling when you have tendinitis. Oh really, it can't be that bad can it? After all isn't it time to let down a split end or two? Spotlight the praise or blame at whoever suggested the thing in the first place. Let's take a refreshing approach to this and take a democratic look at the whole thing. Reply to the group email with ideas, suggestions of what you fancy or at least glance at the suggestions. And just think when asked 'are you going?' you can just say 'yes' instead of sounding like the party poop. No matter what you say, it's more exhausting getting out of 'do's' than just doing them. More surprisingly, you might actually enjoy yourself and the company are paying for a bottle of bubbly or two aren't they?

Now in equal measures suppose your dread and fear of socialising with everyone including those you are less keen on, actually has no substance. Suppose for one remote, tiny, incomprehensible, very unlikely situation, that the turkey or veggie hotpot has been forgot, that there is no Christmas tiara in site and that the only glimmer of festivity is the tinsel on your PC or last year's stale orange juice rolling around the department's fridge. Hark! Can such a mistake happen in this era of sophisticated technology? The 'organiser' has forgotten to organise 'the do.' Then will we hear a chorus of disapproval and shame that this company has nowhere to get respectably merry.

Craig, a newcomer to shall we say of a 'nameless' company had bi-passed such a task. 'Oh

no!' he gasped as the CEO had requested details to be sent to all staff groups. Craig's face ashen as he stared into the abyss of his computer, flicking from researchable website pages, to a flooding in box of 'what's happening for the staff do?' titled emails. Craig typed back furiously, 'details to follow shortly.' 'Shortly' being the operative word with just twelve days to Christmas. Lunch was missed; afternoon fag break was skipped, whilst Craig rang round and emailed with enquiries to all kinds of corporate entertainers who had not yet been snapped up. A panicked stricken sweaty Craig, felt the pressure of failing responsibility. Now he contemplated missed opportunities of managing his time better, dealing with difficult situations, or having the breath to even speak so daunted by looking the fool. Perhaps a visionary glance of FocalVocal's courses could have salvaged this present crisis. Never again, he promised to himself would he sit on his laurels. There was too much to benefit, utilise and shape his future by taking a creative leap with FocalVocal. Meantime, he had only surging adrenalin to deal with and seemingly few options.

Marion of 'Oscars Entertainment Agency' may have the answeror not.

'You've left it a bit late,' she groaned.

'I know, I know, I just need something within budget for approximately three hundred staff, nothing too rude or kinky, childish or Santa madness, just entertaining.' 'That doesn't give me a lot to work with Craig, most our acts are rude, kinky, childish and we specialise in Santa's all year round you see.'

'Yes, yes, all right. Include the bloated man in a red suit then, if you have too.'

Marion sighed.

Craig listened to the tap tap of her keyboard searching for available and 'clean fun' acts.

'Right, we've got a tribute band.'

'Great, who of?'

'Three Degrees, and one's a man. Fancy that?'

'I don't think so.'

'Or we've got Max Masters, comedy extraordinaire.'

'What's extraordinary?'

'I'm not sure entirely but I think he does a lot of jokes about bald men.'

'No!'

We've got an RnB band 'Pumped Up and Loaded' or we've got a newcomer to comedy 'Dr Thoughtso.' After that we've a magician but he's got mumps at the moment, stilt-walkers, after-dinner speaker....'

'What's the speech about?'

'Global waste and sewage efficiency.' 'Not great for Christmas really or our dancers 'Curly Wurlies' who've just finished a Caribbean tour of the Caribbean. They're a nice group of girls.'

Silence descended.

'As I say, most our top acts are booked well in advance.' But we have got Anne Robinson available for compeering the odd quiz night. Oh, and there is Martin Linton as a sort of tribute act to Dean Martin. He does songs in the style of Dean Martin but he looks more like Frankie Howard. But he does a nice turn, if you like?'

'I'll think it over. Thanks for you time, I'll come back to you.' At this point, Craig took a fag break.

Craig's afternoon didn't get any better. The CEO was certainly not going to accept the bouncy castle proposal or the treasure hunt starting in Wigan. She was entirely unimpressed with the newcomer's efforts. Craig a natural born worrier was bound to worry about his forthcoming appraisal. Though he had excelled at communication skills and stationary ordering he was lagging behind in his organising abilities. However his overall performance was about to vastly improve.....as Dorothy in 'The Wizard of Oz.' It was a social success but a nightmare for a blushing principal looking for his exit over the rainbow. The security lads and catering staff helped journey the yellow brick road. The CEO was bemused but with enough festive spirit the quickest panto in history took it's memorable place within the company's history.

The moral of the story is thinking ahead for your events and party planning. A shame Craig had not logged on to www.motormouseuk.com some time earlier and learnt that 'FocalVocal's' Karen Bartholomew produces comedy shows for corporate clients. Tailor-made productions based on a theme, have delighted clients who prefer a theatrical treat with some interactive fun. 'Motormouse Productions' are already booked for all available 06 dates,

however they are showcasing their new show on the 24th January, 7.30pm at the Concert Artistes' Association, 20 Bedford Street, London, WC2E 9HP. Why not 'Raise the Spirit' with them in the New Year and help raise money for Breast Cancer Research, their nominated charity for all showcased work.

Actress and writer, Karen Bartholomew is an energetic member of the Focal Vocal team. Her experience rooted in comic inventiveness comes together under the umbrella of 'Motormouse Productions,' her company who produce comedy shows exclusively for corporate clients. 'Motormouse Productions' are different because they offer tailor made shows which can be performed at clients' workplaces. The shows are more theatrical in their context as they are scripted, witty and delivered on time. Karen felt there was a niche for a new kind of entertainment for corporate clients and have produced shows which work well for celebrations, product launches or networking events.

Monica and the FocalVocal team wishes all of it's clients a very merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year! We look forward to working with many of you in 2007

FocalVocal works with businesses in the private and public sector who wish to improve their communication and management skills. Businesses who

- *know that a dynamic, interactive learning environment is the most successful in helping you to retain newly acquired skills and be confident to apply them*
- *are bored with courses where you get to sit, but don't actually get to do*
- *have found it to be a bonus to have trainers and actors who are native English speakers but are also bilingual in German and French*
- *like the challenge of working with professional actors to test out new skills in a fun, non-judgemental environment*
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If you think the same, then get in touch with FocalVocal today!

Please feel free to forward VocalPoint to anybody you feel would find it of interest.

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