



Speakers give entrepreneurs a boost

Faithful followers find business inspiration in motivational speakers

By Glen Korstrom

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Sarah Fullerton is an independent contractor working in what can be a discouraging field: trying to get new acquaintances to buy insurance or to switch mutual fund companies.

She is building her business by meeting as many people as she can at networking events, conferences and seminars. She's quick with a business card, and just as quick to whip out a Clarica form listing insurance and investment products.

Like other entrepreneurs who are passionate about what they do but who sometimes need a boost to sustain high energy, Fullerton sees motivational speakers and business coaches whenever possible.

"I'm a much happier person because I listen to these speakers. I get people wanting to talk to me and more clients because I have a positive vibe," she said.

Fullerton was one of hundreds of entrepreneurs who got a thrill repeating phrases aloud, raising their arms in unison and high-fiving each other when prompted by best-selling author and business guru T. Harv Eker at the October 2005 SOHO-SME Business Conference and Expo.

There was scarcely a vacant seat at the Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre when the North Vancouver speaker took the stage to instill what he called the "secrets of the millionaire mind," which is coincidentally the title of Eker's *New York Times* best-selling book.

It was more than just a let's-get-excited-about-life session. Eker taught business owners to view the world in a way that will draw wealth.

His presentation prompted Fullerton to take a day and reflect on what thoughts about money she had internalized.

"When I was younger, I learned how 'money doesn't make you happy,' or 'we can't afford that' and 'don't be jealous of people who are rich.' I noticed how that has affected me in the way that I think about money today," the 23-year-old said.

Eker's spiel encouraged listeners to purge the belief that they should make do with less. He preached the importance of positive energy by challenging listeners to go one week without complaining. He also sounded like a Nike ad-man when he told his audience to "just do" whatever it is that they have been considering doing but are worried about acting on.

"He inspired me to get out there, talk to people and not be afraid. If someone says, 'No,' they say, 'No.' At least you tried," Fullerton said. "You have to think about what you're doing that's going to help them. Why would they want to talk to you?"

Fullerton has gleaned lessons and motivation from big-name speakers such as Brian Tracy, Anthony Robbins and Suzie Orman.

Two North Vancouver speakers with ties to T. Harv Eker are also making local rounds.

Business mentor and ProCoach International Inc. principal Andrew Barber-Starkey has grown his business following a six-month stint as T. Harv Eker's personal coach in 2000.

He's been a business coach since 1993, and started shifting from one-on-one coaching to group coaching 18 months ago.

Group coaching costs \$179 a month compared with \$700 a month for one-on-one coaching. It also comes with workbooks and peer interaction and is usually preceded by a free seminar presentation where Barber-Starkey reveals what he calls seven success accelerators. He tells his clients that they can double their income within three years.

"There's so much hype out there. There are so many people who are big on the sale and big on doing it overnight," Barber-Starkey said. "Tony Robbins used to have a 30-day training program called Unlimited Power. That was 10 to 12 years ago. Now, he has a seven-day program."

One of the key lessons that Barber-Starkey instills is to focus on taking one step at a time. This is worthwhile advice to salespeople who have grand visions of becoming a millionaire but procrastinate when it comes to making sales calls.

Robert A. Arthurs International certified coach Robert Arthurs volunteered as a coach at some of Eker's functions a few years ago and has since become successful in his own right.

He expects to grow last year's revenue 25 per cent to \$200,000 in 2005 thanks to three cash sources.

Arthurs teaches entrepreneurship at the Toward Excellence self-employment program and at Langara College. About 20 people go to him for one-on-one coaching. And he holds education-based seminars where participants can collect continuing education or professional development credits with professional associations.

Organizations such as the Certified General Accountants Association of British Columbia, The Human Resources Management Association and the Association of

Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of British Columbia recognize those credits as part of their requirements for membership, he said.

Arthurs believes time management and prioritization lie at the heart of being an effective business person.

"Whether you're a professional engineer or a business owner, it's all about how you focus and prioritize your time," he said.

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