

5 VIRTUAL PRESENTATIONS

Read the opening lines

VIRTUAL SPEECH 1

CHOSEN APPROACH TO THE OPENING LINES:

Recall a personal experience from long ago with a takeaway for today

Nineteen years ago – back in 2001 – I started my wholesaling career as a trainee at Charleston Noland.

One evening, I found a bunch of old photos showing Noland employees serving customers at the counter. The photos were dated Sept. 22, 1989.

When I asked our warehouse manager about them, he told me why those photos were so special.

The night before – right around midnight – Hurricane Hugo made landfall north of Charleston.

Hugo was a powerful hurricane – a Category 4 – and the strongest storm to hit the U.S. in 20 years.

In the morning, relief workers began arriving to give residents food, water and temporary shelter.

- The trees were down.
- The power was out.
- And wind and water had either damaged or destroyed thousands of homes.

But despite that – despite all the damage and destruction along the Carolina coast – the counter at Charleston Noland was open and serving customers in only a few hours.

Not days or weeks later. **Hours.**

Seeing those old photos taught me a lesson:

In our industry – no matter what – we show up to serve.

And that is exactly what you have done, and what you continue to do, during this pandemic.

Thank you for everything you have done to keep your local company and our country moving forward. ■

VIRTUAL SPEECH 2

CHOSEN APPROACH TO THE OPENING LINES:

Go down memory lane

Six months ago, on March 7, as I flew from Dayton to our Strategic Planning Meetings in Nashville, I wasn't thinking about masks, hand sanitizers or social distancing.

Instead, I could hardly wait to meet back up with all of you to celebrate another record year at Winsupply.

I was looking forward to it all:

- Honoring our top performers at Tuesday night's awards dinner ...
- Catching up with vendors and reps at our Vendor Showcase ...
- And learning each local company's plans for the new fiscal year.

As everyone arrived and greeted each other, it was the same as it ever was. A lot of smiles, handshakes and hugs.

During my address to local company presidents, I spoke a lot about our focus for the year. And I asked you to start thinking about ways to make your business disruption-proof.

I explained that “disruption-proofing is based on things you don’t know and can’t control. And that is why you need a plan to make your business disruption-proof.”

Little did we know that a major disruption was already well under way ...

And so we began.

And all of you know the rest of the story:

Over the last six months, local companies wrote the playbook for how to adapt to the disruption caused by COVID-19. ■

VIRTUAL SPEECH 3

CHOSEN APPROACH TO THE OPENING LINES:

Reveal a backstory

A year ago, inc.com ran a story with a shocking headline:

**“Blockbuster could have bought Netflix for 50 million dollars,
but the CEO thought it was a joke.”**

It was a fascinating story about a crucial meeting 20 years ago between three executives from Netflix and Blockbuster’s CEO: a guy by the name of John Antioco.

You remember Blockbuster, right?

How many times did you stand in line on a Friday night, eager to rent a movie, the latest New Release in your hands?

Twenty years ago, Blockbuster Video was printing money and flying high, a public company with plenty of capital and 25,000 employees.

Meanwhile Netflix, which began in 1998 as a service for renting DVDs by mail, was bleeding money. Unless something changed, Netflix was going down. An acquisition by Blockbuster was the lifeline Netflix needed.

For many months, three executives at Netflix had been trying to get a meeting with Antioco to make their pitch. When the call finally came, the executives chartered a plane from California to Dallas.

They arrived just in time at Blockbuster's multimillion-dollar headquarters.

Their offer was pretty simple:

- Netflix would run the online business, and Blockbuster would focus on the stores.
- Synergies would result.

But Antioco didn't buy it.

He thought online businesses were a fad. They'd never make any money! And his team did not push back.

But still, they wanted to know: What would it take for Blockbuster to buy Netflix?

When a Netflix executive said 50 million dollars, Antioco tried not to laugh.

Soon, the meeting was over. No deal! And all of you know what happened next.

By 2010, Blockbuster was bankrupt. And four years later, Blockbuster closed its last corporate store.

Blockbuster failed because they stayed in the present.

They got comfortable on their path and were happy where they were. So they continued to do what they'd always done well. And did not make investments to grow.

Plus, they did not anticipate the future. They did not pay attention and did not look ahead. They did not plan for any disruptions and did not ask what their customers wanted next.

By the time Blockbuster realized what was happening, it was too late. They did not have a chance to catch up.

To me, the Blockbuster lesson for us is clear: Companies that want to grow and become more relevant in their markets need to follow two parallel paths at the same time:

- First: Keep doing what you do well.
- And second: Anticipate what customers want next.

I've said it before, and I'll say it again: We can never get too comfortable.

We must always be ready for the next disruption. We must always be ready to adapt to change. And we must always be looking for what is next. ■

VIRTUAL SPEECH 4

CHOSEN APPROACH TO THE OPENING LINES:

Recount a familiar conversation

Every time I ask people at local companies, “Why do customers buy from you?” a lot of you tell me this:

“Because we do what we say we’re going to do.”

Or in other words, you make a promise. And then you keep it.

- If you say you’re going to get that delivery to the job site by 6 a.m. tomorrow, you do it.
- If you say you’re going to find that one special product for your customer that no one else can find, you get it done.

Doing what you say you’re going to do is the meaning behind our fifth key principle: Our Word is Our Bond.

It says that in our organization, you are expected to follow a code of conduct based on honesty, trust and accountability.

It also says that you keep your word every time you make a promise to your customers, fellow employees and shareholders.

But what happens when you make a promise to yourself?

Do you honor that promise?

Do you still do what you say you are going to do? ■

VIRTUAL SPEECH 5

CHOSEN APPROACH TO THE OPENING LINES:

Be dramatic

It was 12 noon on a Wednesday when our Dayton distribution center got the frantic call. It came from Rob Johnson, the local owner and president of Mokena Winsupply, one of our local companies just outside Chicago.

Nonstop rain was flooding the area. And Rob said his company was completely out of pumps.

He was desperate! Rob needed to know: Could the people at our Dayton distribution center stop what we were doing, pull 200 pumps off the shelf, and get them loaded and trucked – all the way to Chicago! – yet today?

Our DC in Dayton said yes!

By 2:30, we had 200 pumps ready to go. And by 4 o'clock, they were loaded and on their way.

They made it to Chicago by sunset. And before breakfast the next morning, Rob's driver had them on the road to customers.

Our DC in Dayton got it done! And Mokena Winsupply won good business it would have lost otherwise.

You might not know it, but this kind of service and response would not have happened at a “normal” construction wholesaler.

That’s because other wholesalers have no incentive to change their standard operating procedure.

Instead, other wholesalers would have put those pumps on a scheduled truck – maybe 24 or 48 hours later – far too late to meet the customers’ needs.

But Winsupply got it done in time because we have a different approach to sourcing services and the supply chain.

So let’s talk about that. ■