



Lessons Learned While Serving By Dr. Jim Beaubien

I learned or re-confirmed a number of leadership lessons during the time I served on the Canadian Association of Professional Speakers Board, especially during my time as National President. Here's my short list of lessons learned:

1. **Put strategy first:** Like many other small business owners, I suffer from a natural tendency to act first and think later. My time in CAPS leadership reconfirmed the importance of thinking things through before jumping into action. Thinking allows you to strategically leverage your efforts by focusing on the smartest actions.
2. **Focus on talents:** I've learned that people can't do everything even though they might think they can. Everyone has different talents and part of the secret of creating a high performance team is based on aligning people's responsibilities with their talents. Harness people's talents and work around their weaknesses by creating teams of people with complementary abilities.
3. **Build relationships:** I've confirmed that relationships are the currency of leadership. Common interests and trust are key factors in relationship development. Magic can happen when people come together to achieve common goals and share common values in a safe and trusting environment. Leaders bear primary responsibility for creating an environment where relationships can flourish.
4. **Expect tipping points:** Progress is not uniform. It occurs in fits and starts and you never know when a breakthrough will come. You can put a lot of energy in to achieving a goal with seemingly little progress. Then things can suddenly move forward with only a small effort. I've learned that most progress follows this pattern. Things often have to build to a tipping point before they move forward.
5. **Not always convenient:** Effective leaders have to seize opportunities and deal with issues at the right time, which is not always the convenient time. My spouse surprised me with a weekend in Monterey, California for our wedding anniversary. I was dealing with an important issue that hit its tipping point that weekend. I spent two days of our four day vacation working on CAPS business. It was inconvenient but necessary. Such is the nature of leadership.

So that's my top five lessons. I learned a lot during my time on the Board and I am grateful for the opportunity to have served. I encourage you to look for leadership opportunities in your chapter and at the national level. You will learn a lot that you can use to grow your business.