

LEAD

THE

Communicate
a message
that *counts*
in moments
that *matter*

ROOM

SHANE MICHAEL HATTON

PRAISE FOR *LEAD THE ROOM*

“At the heart of great leadership is great communication. In *Lead The Room*, Shane brings this truth into the spotlight with infectious energy and enthusiasm. Shane’s personal and relatable, story-driven style means you can’t help but enjoy this book. More than that, no matter where you are in your leadership journey, you can’t help but learn from it.”

– **Tim Costello**, Chief Advocate, World Vision Australia

“We don’t need more eloquent speakers we need more authentic communicators. We need to give more focus to our character and content than we do our form and delivery. Thank you, Shane, for providing a tool to encourage that.”

– **Daniel Flynn**, Co-founder Thankyou and best-selling author of *Chapter One*

“This is the best Australian book on leadership and speaking that I have ever read. Taking a topic that scares most people, Shane creates a model to help people succeed in leading a team, the room, a conference facility and probably even the MCG. It is easy reading, if you want to be a great leader then this book is guaranteed to help.”

– **Toby Hall**, Group CEO, St Vincent’s Health Australia

“In a noisy world where people are constantly challenged with how to grab attention to deliver important messages to gain essential engagement and positioning, leadership matters more than ever. This book is smart, written by a credible leader, packaged in a way that shows you why, what and how. Don’t delay – study this, action this and lead the room powerfully.”

– **Christina Guidotti**, CEO, Leading Women

“*Lead the Room* uses easy-to-understand models and concepts to illustrate the interconnection between leadership and communication. The personalised narrative compels you to want to be a better leader and the practical techniques give you a process to be a better communicator. The book is a wonderful blend of intellect and emotion, both in the way it is told and the content that is covered. Both emerging and experienced leaders will benefit from reading this.”

– **Rachel Tulia**, Head of People & Culture, Department of Treasury and Finance Victoria

“Shane’s book is a refreshing and necessary read in a world where many leaders are struggling to connect their messages with the people they lead. This book genuinely connected with me as a CEO leading transformation. Shane beautifully articulates ‘When you lead with a desire to add value for the people you are speaking to, you demonstrate that you value them. You tell them you care about their time, you appreciate that they showed up and you want to leave them in a better place than where you found them.’ What leader would not want to strive for this? This book will be one that I continue to use as a leader and one that I purchase for those that I coach.”

– **Leanne Williams**, CEO, West Gippsland Libraries

“For leaders to be seen and heard they don’t just need to know how to build a platform they also need to know how to lead from it. Great leaders speak into the hearts and minds of the people they care for. In *Lead the Room* Shane shows you how.”

– **Matt Church**, Founder, Thought Leaders Global,
Voted Top 10 Conference Speakers Globally

LEAD

THE Communicate
a message
that *counts*
in moments
that *matter*

ROOM

SHANE MICHAEL HATTON



First published in 2019 by Major Street Publishing Pty Ltd
PO Box 106, Highett, Vic. 3190
E: info@majorstreet.com.au
W: majorstreet.com.au
M: +61 421 707 983

© Shane M. Hatton 2019

Quantity sales. Special discounts are available on quantity purchases by corporations, associations and others. For details, contact Lesley Williams using the contact details above.

Individual sales. Major Street publications are available through most bookstores. They can also be ordered directly from Major Street's online bookstore at www.majorstreet.com.au.

Orders for university textbook/course adoption use. For orders of this nature, please contact Lesley Williams using the contact details above.

The moral rights of the author have been asserted.



A catalogue record for this book is available from
the National Library of Australia

ISBN: 978-0-6484795-2-9

All rights reserved. Except as permitted under *The Australian Copyright Act 1968* (for example, a fair dealing for the purposes of study, research, criticism or review), no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, communicated or transmitted in any form or by any means without prior written permission. All inquiries should be made to the publisher.

Cover design by Simone Geary

Internal design by Production Works

Printed in Australia by Ovato, an Accredited ISO AS/NZS 14001:2004

Environmental Management System Printer.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Disclaimer: The material in this publication is in the nature of general comment only, and neither purports nor intends to be advice. Readers should not act on the basis of any matter in this publication without considering (and if appropriate taking) professional advice with due regard to their own particular circumstances. The author and publisher expressly disclaim all and any liability to any person, whether a purchaser of this publication or not, in respect of anything and the consequences of anything done or omitted to be done by any such person in reliance, whether whole or partial, upon the whole or any part of the contents of this publication.

CONTENTS

Preface	ix
Introduction	1
PART 1: POSITIONING	19
1. Develop your character	23
2. Lead your narrative	37
3. Build your credibility	47
4. Manage your reputation	59
PART 2: MESSAGING	71
5. Determine the value	77
6. Define your message	83
7. Deliver with impact	91
8. A few more things to consider	133
PART 3: DEVELOPING	141
9. Get better at thinking	147
10. Get better at investing	161
11. Get better at asking	171
12. Get better at failing	177
Where to now?	181
Appendix: A flight path example	185
About the author	191
Sources	193
Index	198
Let's continue the conversation	205

PREFACE

Have you noticed how many of our greatest achievements in life are born of moments of deep uncertainty? That sinking feeling you get as you stand at the base of the mountain. *Can I do this? Have I got what it takes?* For many, the fear of the climb pulls them back into the comfort and safety of the familiar. But I know this: only those who *decide* to challenge this uncertainty, to take that next step forward, experience the elation of a new perspective, the thrill of success and the joy of completion that are the rewards of conquering their mountain. And in time they look back at the mountain that once towered over them, and they wonder why they had hesitated even for a moment.

What has been one of your biggest achievements? Graduating from university, getting married and buying our first home would be strong contenders for me. One of my biggest achievements, though, occurred in April 2013. To understand this achievement we need to rewind to the middle of 2012. My wife Cassandra and I had just sat down for dinner in front of the TV (don't judge us). While I jumped right into the meal Cassandra sat there silently and gave me a look. We had been married for about four and a half years, so I was by no means an expert on marriage, but I did know what it meant when she gave me *that* look. It meant she wanted to talk about something important. Of course my instinctive response was to reel through all the things I might have missed, done or, worse, not

done. Did she get a haircut? Did I take the bins out? Oh gosh, what did I just say?

As I cautiously slipped in another mouthful she said, 'I think we should go to Paris for our fifth wedding anniversary...'

I felt relieved, excited and nervous in equal measure. Relieved that I hadn't done anything wrong, excited about the possibility of going to Europe and nervous for our poor little bank account.

'That's a brilliant idea. I'm all for it!' was my response. I knew better and should have let her finish.

'We should run the Paris marathon with your dad,' she declared.

I looked down past the crumbs on my stomach to the uneaten food on my plate and felt a formless sense of terror at the very thought of running a marathon.

'It's only 42.195 kilometres,' she laughed.

I discreetly dusted myself off and responded carefully, 'I'm more of a wine-and-cheese than a running kind of guy really'.

While she sat there dreamily imagining running through the beautiful streets of Paris, my mind couldn't help but jump to all the YouTube videos I've seen of runners losing control of their bodily functions and getting carried away by paramedics.

I'm not a runner.

I couldn't do a marathon.

Where would I even start?

How do you prepare for a marathon?

I'm tired out just thinking about it.

At that time I struggled to run for five minutes without medical attention and here was my wife expecting me to run for more than five hours.

Yet the concept excited me too. The idea of finishing a marathon inspired me, but the journey seemed utterly unattainable from where I was sitting.

Maybe you've decided you want to be an influential leader. You want to make a difference when you stand up to speak. You want to lead and mobilise your team around your vision, to navigate uncertainty, and to build and strengthen your culture. The concept excites you, but the journey to get there just seems beyond your reach from where you are right now.

You think about the last time you had an opportunity to speak and remember how you felt like you had lost control of your bodily functions: you started sweating and shaking, your heart pounded and you felt sick.

Have you ever said or thought:

I'm not a speaker.

I don't do public speaking.

I'm an introvert, so public speaking isn't my thing.

Where would I even start?

How do I get my thoughts down on paper? How do I prepare?

You aren't alone. Around 74 per cent of people experience some form of speech anxiety when it comes to speaking in public. A study undertaken by software company Prezi found that 75 per cent of respondents wanted to get better at presenting and 70 per cent said it was critical to their job.

We know this matters, but let's be real, that doesn't make it easy.

I've delivered many workshops on this topic. Early on I ask people to write a list of as many answers as possible to the

question ‘What scares you about speaking in public?’ I’ve heard some interesting responses. Do any of these sound familiar?

What if I look like an idiot or make a fool of myself?

What if I forget what to say or go blank?

What if people laugh at me?

I feel sick in my stomach, can’t stop sweating and my hands keep shaking.

But when we take time to dig a little deeper, what people are really saying is:

What if I lose the respect of my leadership, peers or team?

What if people think I’m not very good at my job?

What if people think I’m not a good leader?

What if people think I’m just no good?

In all the workshops I’ve delivered I have yet to hear a response to this question that shocks or even surprises me. I’ve heard them all and have found they can all be boiled down to two main obstacles:

- lack of confidence
- lack of clarity.

It’s normal to lack confidence if you haven’t had the opportunity to speak regularly. When was the last time you felt confident at something from the first time you did it? It’s also perfectly normal to lack confidence if you have tried something and it didn’t work the way you expected.

I have been working hard my entire life to get past my fear of flying. This last year I have had to fly more than 60 times, which has helped. And while I have mostly dealt with my lack

of confidence with flying, every now and then I have an unusually bumpy flight that shakes my confidence and I feel like I'm back at the start. The key is to not stop flying!

If you're like me and are situated towards the introverted end of the spectrum, it's also pretty easy to get caught up in the self-fulfilling prophecy that robs our confidence. A research report titled 'The Effects of Speaker Personality on Anticipated Reactions to Public Speaking' explores this idea:

'Introverts appear less willing to speak and are more prone to public speaking anxiety. They also expect more negative evaluations from the audience and show greater fear of generating a negative opinion of themselves among the audience members. This may lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy because those who are more reluctant to speak are generally evaluated less favourably by audience members.'

(Macintyre & Thivierge, 1995)

For some people I work with, confidence isn't an issue (and they are the first to tell me so). They have no issues standing in front of a crowd, big or small. What I often hear these people say is they want to connect more. They want people to 'get' what they have to say. They want to say more in fewer words and say something that people actually remember. Their main issue is they can't get clarity on where to start, how to do it and how to get the whirlwind of thoughts racing around in their head organised enough to communicate to others.

Our world is changing rapidly. We are in the middle of the greatest technological shift since the industrial revolution. Recently I watched an online video of Google's personal assistant making a phone call to a hair salon to book an appointment on a person's behalf. The future is wildly unpredictable and exciting, but one thing technology will never be able to

replicate is the value of soft skills like communication and personal connection. That said, I've learned that it takes a lot of effort to make something look effortless. Those soft skills are actually hard work.

Just as the ballerina makes leaping gracefully through the air seem effortless and the golfer drives a ball 350 metres with what looks like barely a touch, don't be tricked into thinking that those who deliver with precision, clarity and poise do so without a depth of preparation, dedication and discipline.

Sitting on the couch, listening with muted horror as Cassandra unveiled her plan for us to run the Marathon de Paris in a little over six months, all these thoughts were running through my head, which if you boiled them down had the same two sources as people's fear of speaking in public: (1) A complete lack of *confidence*. I had never run anything like a marathon before. My last running experience hadn't been that great and didn't instil in me much confidence going forward. (2) At the same time, a total lack of *clarity*. How do you even prepare to run a marathon? Do you just go out and start running and hope for the best?

So I called my dad. The fact that he had completed at least one more marathon than I had made him my obvious go-to expert on the subject.

'Dad, Cass and I have decided to run the marathon with you next year, but I have no idea where to start the preparation.' He reassured me that if we were willing to do the work it was quite possible for us to run the marathon in six months. I should make it clear that I wasn't training to win, just to finish (ahead of my wife).

The next day Dad sent me an email with a running plan attached. It wasn't like any running plan I had seen before. It had a column of dates, counting down to the marathon, and a column of times. That was it.

I was confused. Where were the distances? How far was I supposed to run? I thought he might have sent me the wrong file, so I called him up to ask what was going on.

‘All I want you to do is follow the process and get out on the road and start running,’ was his response. ‘Fifteen minutes today, twenty minutes tomorrow and so on.’ It didn’t make much sense to me. It wasn’t what I was used to, but once I got out on the road and followed the plan, I soon found I was actually getting better at it.

It was the intersection of *process* and *practice*.

When I work with clients in my practice, I tell them that their two main hurdles – lack of *confidence* and lack of *clarity* – can best be addressed by *practice* and *process*.

For lack of *confidence*... *practice*. You get better when you’re out on the road running. You get better at speaking in public when you get out there and do it. Volunteer to speak at conferences, town halls and team meetings. Give speeches at weddings, birthdays and funerals. Every time you speak, you learn and grow.

For lack of *clarity*... *process*. You’ll find a lot more clarity when you have a process to follow. Something to show you where to start, where to go and what to do. It doesn’t need to be the process in this book (although I have no doubt you’ll find it valuable), but find something that works for you. Treat it like scaffolding around your opportunity to speak, or training wheels on a bike. Keep using it until you feel confident to ride without it.

In *Lead the Room* you’re going to find the balance between *process* and *practice*. I’m going to explore concepts and ideas that will give you a *process*. But the *practice* decision is up to you. The opportunity to get out on the road and start running using these concepts is a decision you’re going to need to make for yourself.

Six months after that first conversation about running the marathon we were in Paris standing at the starting line alongside more than 50,000 other runners from around the world. The energy was palpable, and the crowd let out a huge cheer as the race began. At the 35-kilometre mark I glanced at Cassandra and mumbled words to the effect of, 'If you've still got any energy left in the tank feel free to run on ahead – no need to wait for me', thinking in my head she would stay with me. She did not.

After more than five hours of nonstop running through the Parisian streets and parks I approached the finish line to see Cassandra and my father standing there waiting and cheering me on. It was an emotional moment when I crossed the line and completed a goal I had so recently thought impossible.

It wasn't that I was anything special. I wasn't a natural-born athlete. But I had decided to follow the process and do the work, getting out there and putting in the practice.

That's something anyone can do. Including you.

INTRODUCTION

DON'T JUST SPEAK. LEAD.

You don't need another book on presentation skills. I get that, and that's not really what I'm here for. My goal in writing this book isn't to help you become a better speaker. I want to help you become a more effective leader. I'm happy if this book helps you nail your next presentation, but I'd much rather equip you to leverage your platform to lead and mobilise your team. In the process of helping you do that, I hope you will become better at public speaking too.

When people hear the words 'public speaking', their thoughts tend to race in all kinds of directions. Usually starting with something like 'I hate public speaking' or 'I really need to get better at that'. Then the questions start rolling in:

How do I get better?

How do I project my voice more?

How do I structure a presentation?

How long should I speak for?

How do I deal with nerves?

How can I influence decision-makers?

How much should I practise?

How do I tell great stories?

All of these are valuable questions, some of which I may even address in this book. But do you notice something that all of them have in common? It's that first word.

How.

We want to know the tips and tricks, the tactics and tools to help us become more confident communicators and leaders. We want the shortcuts to success because, let's face it, we are pretty impatient.

Can you name this painting? And the artist? Would you visit a museum to see it? Probably not.



The danger in looking for quick-fix solutions is we often miss the bigger picture. Zoom out and you get the context of what you are looking at.



My goal is to do the same for your leadership and the way you communicate. To think bigger than the idea of presentation skills training. To think holistically about how you can communicate and connect more effectively to build and leverage your leadership platform to lead at scale. This is less about public speaking than about *platform leadership*.

When people ask *how*, I often find they are looking at a small part of a much bigger picture. And in my opinion it's one of the least important parts.

A few years ago, I was attending a conference in Melbourne where I had spent some time working with a couple of the people presenting. I decided to sit in on one of the other sessions. There was a speaker who was generating some great buzz around the conference hallways and I wanted to hear what all the hype was about.

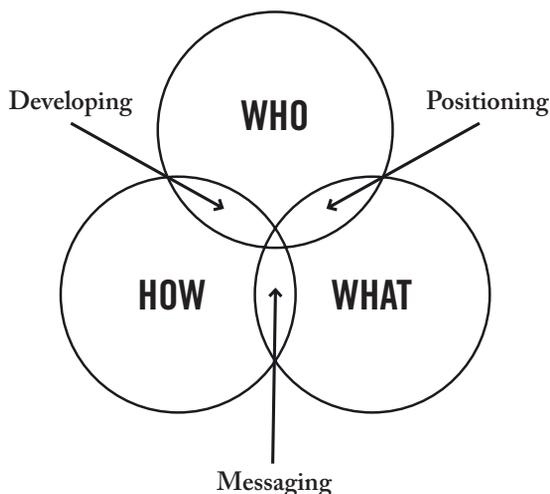
The MC introduced the speaker, who made her way on stage and began to share her journey. It was an extremely powerful story of overcoming obstacles and personal resilience. I try not to overanalyse keynote presentations, but I couldn't help but pick up on a few things. Mostly that she was *doing everything wrong*... technically. She was reading heavily from notes, dropped in a few cuss words, didn't have a lot of stage presence, didn't hold her hands the right way or have dazzling PowerPoint slides. And yet everyone in the room was hanging on her every word. When the presentation finished people gave her a standing ovation and waited in line to speak with her until she had to leave.

Contrast this with another speaker I watched recently, who did everything as though he had written the book on presentation skills. He had the hand gestures, the slides, the projection and the humour down pat. He didn't need notes and he showed just the right amount of vulnerability. Yet I looked around the room and people didn't seem to connect in the same way; they

applauded politely and moved on. It was like he was getting everything right and wrong at the same time.

Why? There is so much more to *leading a room* than being a great speaker or delivering a polished presentation. When people ask a question that begins with *how*, I often tell them they are missing two-thirds of a much bigger picture (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: The Lead the Room model



Who – *who you are*

I have learned that it's not just what you do but also who you are that is important. When people hear your name, what do they think and feel? What kind of reputation have you built? Do they find you credible? What have you done that has helped position you as someone they think is worth listening to? When you stand up to speak, do you feel comfortable in your own skin or are you busy comparing yourself with other people in the room? Are people seeing the real you? Who are you when no-one is watching?

What – *what you say*

There's a difference between saying something and having something valuable to say. When you stand up to speak, have you taken time to understand the value of what you are saying to your audience and not just to you? Do you have a clear, memorable and succinct message to communicate? Do you know how to deliver that message in a way that cuts through to and connects with the people you are speaking to?

How – *how you say it*

Do you know how to get better at delivering your message in a way that connects? Are you learning, growing and improving? Are you using the tools available to you to get your message across better? Are you dealing with the anxiety of speaking in public and getting feedback from others to help you improve?

If you want to *lead the room*, you need to think much more broadly than just *how* you deliver a presentation.

Imagine this. You're sitting at home and there's a knock on your front door. You weren't expecting visitors. You open the door and standing before you is a person you've never met with a set of keys in their hand.

'Hi there, sorry to interrupt you. But would you mind getting in my car so we can go for a drive.'

You'd have to be a pretty trusting person to say yes. If you're like me, your response is going to be, 'It's not happening, buddy'.

'But I'm a really good driver. I've been driving for over 20 years. I even know how to parallel park.'

The parallel parking thing is impressive, but that's not enough to get me into the car. It just isn't enough that you know *how* to drive. I'm asking much bigger questions: 'Who are you?' and 'Why?'

Communication is an incredibly powerful vehicle for change. It helps move people from where they are to where we need them to be. It's like having a giant bus to get your employees where you need them to go, not only faster but a whole lot easier. But if we want to get them on the bus, they need to trust the driver (you), they need a compelling reason to get in the car (your message) and they'll want the experience to be enjoyable (your delivery).

I have some friends who are not the best drivers. For privacy reasons I won't say who they are, although I'm very tempted to name and shame. That said, it doesn't mean I avoid them. I'm usually just a little cautious about getting in the car with them. You don't need to be a master presenter for people to follow you or to be an influential leader, but it does help to create a much smoother journey.

MOMENTS THAT MATTER

In the moments that really matter, leadership really matters.

Ask anyone old enough to remember September 11, 2001, and it's likely they will be able to recount in vivid detail exactly where they were and what they were doing on the morning news broke of a cruel, coordinated and catastrophic terrorist attack on the United States involving four passenger airliners. The attack, which killed nearly 3,000 people and injured over 6,000 more, changed the security landscape of air travel and remains a painful moment etched into human history.

While people around the globe sat together glued to their television sets, attempting to process and make sense of the unspeakable tragedy unfolding before their eyes, news outlets and journalists were working overtime to keep up with the breaking news. And yet, with the wealth of information

available to viewers on every channel, newspaper and online outlet, people across the United States and the world were not just waiting for someone to *inform* them. In that moment, they were looking for someone to stand up and *lead* them.

That night President George W. Bush faced the television cameras and delivered what would become a history-making Presidential Address to the Nation and the world. Irrespective of your political views (and many would criticise him during his two terms), few would argue that this speech and these words were what America needed most in that moment.

'A great people has been moved to defend a great nation. Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America. These acts shatter steel, but they cannot dent the steel of American resolve. America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world. And no-one will keep that light from shining.'

In your own leadership journey you are unlikely to be required to deliver an address of such weight and gravity, but you will face opportunities to communicate and lead in moments that matter to you and your organisation. Whether in a television interview or online video, a town hall or your weekly stand-up meeting, the nature of leadership means you will find yourself standing in front of a group of people at a moment that demands you do more than just speak – it compels you to *lead*.

Every opportunity to speak is a moment either to build or to burn your leadership platform. James C. Humes, speech-writer for five American Presidents, said it this way:

'The art of communication is the language of leadership. Every time you speak, you are auditioning for leadership.'

Take a moment to think about the last presentation you gave or the last opportunity you had to communicate an important message to your team. How did it position you as a leader in the organisation? Did you use the opportunity to leverage your leadership platform?

What about the opportunity to speak that you thought was better delegated to someone else? How did *not* speaking in that moment limit your potential and rob you of the opportunity to lead from your platform?

When it comes to leading an organisation, every leader fundamentally understands the consequences of a poor leadership approach to finances. We understand the consequences of a poor leadership approach to processes or change management. But how many leaders are fully aware of the consequences of a poor leadership approach to communication?

The impact of ineffective or non-existent communication is felt throughout the organisation. It shows up in higher turnover, absenteeism, negativity and stress; and it perpetuates lower engagement, morale, innovation and productivity. A report from SIS International Research in partnership with Siemens Communications found that an organisation with as few as 100 employees could be leaking over half a million dollars every year as a result of communications barriers and latency.

In a 2013 article, Glassdoor for Employers listed the top five reasons 'Why Employees Love Their CEOs'. It wasn't surprising to read that employees want a leader who is visible both inside and outside the company. Seeing their leader leveraging their platform externally increased pride felt by employees. Hearing regularly from their leader internally, whether they are walking the corridors, writing notes or holding regular town hall meetings, created a culture of accessibility and boosted morale.

There are no unimportant moments to speak, because every moment you stand in front of your team or organisation is an opportunity to lead. It's an opportunity to leverage your platform to accomplish collectively in a moment something that might have taken weeks or months to accomplish individually.

Think about some of these examples of *moments that matter*. Whether you're ready for them or not, as a leader you'll need to know how to communicate effectively and lead your way through them. You'll need to be ready to communicate a message that counts.

Moments of pioneering – *implementing change*

It has been said that *change is the only constant*. As a leader you can be certain that you will be required to help guide your team through complex change and transition. Some of that change will take you into unfamiliar territory as you pioneer in new spaces. You will need to paint a picture of your desired future, while at the same time intentionally shift fixed mindsets and dysfunctional thinking that causes people to stay where they are.

Moments of sensemaking – *creating clarity*

You will experience moments of uncertainty when the narrative is open to interpretation. It is in these moments that leaders distinguish themselves. If you cannot tell the story, your people – or worse, someone else – will do it for you. Great leaders view people and circumstances differently and need to help others do the same. You will be required to make sense of uncertainty and chaos and to control the narrative through clearly articulated and compelling messaging.

Moments of confronting or reinforcing – *shaping culture*

Every time you speak is an opportunity to reinforce and shape your desired culture. By culture, I don't just mean what you

want people to do but who you want people to be. The stories you share, the behaviour you confront and the behaviour you reward paint a picture of your culture and reinforce the way things get done here.

Moments of bonding – *building connection*

Every moment you have to speak is an opportunity to build and strengthen trust and connection with your team, and trust is a foundation for growth. John Maxwell writes, 'Teams that don't bond, can't build'.

Moments of mobilising – *casting a compelling vision*

Do you have a compelling vision or a common purpose to rally around and move towards? Do you know how to communicate it? In his book *Amplifiers*, Matt Church writes, 'It's been said that when Caesar spoke men wept, but when Cicero spoke men marched'. For a leader, to inspire people is valuable but to mobilise people towards action is better.

Moments of influencing – *strengthening commitment*

Do you have great ideas? Do you want people to buy into those ideas? Do you need something from people? The ability to influence people by articulating and communicating the value of your ideas is a critical leadership skill.

Moments of steering – *navigating crisis*

There is a challenge and then there is a crisis. As a leader you will be required to navigate both. Like an airline pilot, you will be the calm voice of authority coming over the intercom while steering the organisation through turbulent weather. You will be the steady adviser and voice of reason in seemingly unreasonable circumstances.

Moments of translating – managing complexity

Can you apply your high-level strategy in low-level situations? Can you turn your ideas into strategy and communicate that strategy to generate action? Can you articulate complex information in a jargon-free way that is useful for your team and organisation? In moments that matter, you need to be able to communicate a message that counts. It's the difference between a person who speaks and a leader who leads.

In 1997, Apple was on the ropes. According to an article in *The New York Times*, 'The Silicon Valley pioneer was being decimated by Microsoft and its many partners in the personal-computer market. It had just cut a third of its work force, and it was about 90 days from going broke.'

Steve Jobs, when he returned to Apple 12 years after being forced out, faced a *moment that mattered*. His team had gathered for an internal staff meeting that in hindsight would become a pivotal call to arms for the staff at Apple. Look up this staff meeting on YouTube and you can hear the language of his presentation. This wasn't just any internal meeting. It was a compelling moment when Jobs stepped out in front of the crowd and pointed to a desired future: a return to the core values of Apple. It was a quest for the organisation and its team to become truly great again.

'We've got some incredibly exciting product announcements coming up soon. Some incredibly exciting things in general are going to be happening over the next 90 to 120 days. And I really deeply appreciate all of the commitment that's in this room and with the people not in this room for turning this company around. This company is absolutely going to turn around. As a matter of fact, I think the question now is not "Can we turn Apple around?" I think that's the booby prize. I think it's "Can we make Apple really great again?"'

I'm not suggesting it was this meeting alone that transformed Apple into becoming the first trillion-dollar US publicly listed organisation, but it does give a glimpse behind the curtain to a leader who wasn't afraid to step out front and be visible in the important moments; a leader people would get behind and follow to the promised land that awaited them.

Will you be that kind of leader? What kind of leader do you want to be?

WHAT KIND OF LEADER DO YOU WANT TO BE?

A couple of years after completing my undergraduate marketing degree I found myself back on campus. No longer a student, this time I was employed in the division of marketing focusing on student recruitment. It was a full-circle moment and an exciting time to be part of the team as we navigated a significant rebranding exercise and launched the university's most coordinated marketing campaign ever.

The campaign centred on the message 'Be What You Want to Be'. The university wanted to highlight graduate outcomes and success stories, and to show prospective students that if they chose the pathway through tertiary education, they could find themselves in the place they most wanted to be. In essence, we said, if you're ready to do the work you *can* be what you want to be.

What kind of leader do you want to be? What is the pathway that will help you be that leader, and are you ready to do the work to get you there? If you are, then this book is for you.

Working with leaders and teams across Australia, I have found that most leaders want to influence those they lead in a positive way. They want to make a difference. They want to lead and mobilise their team around a common purpose or vision.

Unfortunately, many don't realise that their current pathway or actions won't get them to that place.

In my practice, I'm passionate about helping leaders find a pathway that will help them get where they want to be. It starts by being honest with where they are right now.

Imagine this pathway as a ladder to becoming the leader you want to be (see Figure 2). Where are you on this ladder right now? What kind of leader are you?

Avoid

The Invisible Leader – people disconnect

If you're this leader, chances are you feel sick at the very thought of standing up to speak in front of a group of people. Maybe you've done it before and had a negative experience or watched someone else have a negative experience. Your confidence may have taken a hit or two. If it isn't a lack of confidence, maybe it's just not a priority for you right now. You have plenty on at the moment, and the last thing you have time for is preparing to speak at a town hall. Why not just pass this one on to your HR or Comms leader? That's their role, right?

What I commonly hear when I speak with teams is that they feel *disconnected* from this kind of leader. They say things like:

'I never hear from him.'

'I don't even know what we are working towards.'

'She doesn't communicate.'

'There's no vision or direction here.'

This often shows up in staff engagement surveys as low scores in 'communication', and that's a fair criticism. As I often tell the leaders I work with, you can't follow an invisible leader. If you aren't visible, then you can't be leading.

Figure 2: Platform leadership ladder

		THE RESPECTED LEADER		
		FOCUS	RESULT	EFFORT:IMPACT
BUILDING PLATFORM ↑		INFLUENCE	People <i>Change</i>	1:10
		CONNECT	People <i>Trust</i>	1:6
		COMMUNICATE	People <i>Engage</i>	1:3

BURNING PLATFORM ↓		SPEAK	People <i>Listen</i>	1:1
		RESIST	People <i>Disengage</i>	8:1
		AVOID	People <i>Disconnect</i>	10:1
		THE INVISIBLE LEADER		

Resist

The Indifferent Leader – people disengage

The indifferent leader doesn't want to be there any more than the people they're speaking to. You can see it in their eyes that they don't want to be doing this and can't wait for it to be over. They'll say yes, but then look for every opportunity to get out of it if they can. They likely don't think a lot about investing in the skills to improve their communication because it's not something they want to do more of.

What I commonly hear from their teams is that they feel *disengaged* every time their leader speaks. I hear them say things like:

'Our leader is boring.'

'I have no idea why he spoke or what he was talking about.'

'She never prepares for opportunities to speak.'

When I talk to these leaders, they blame the audience:

'Every time I speak, their eyes glaze over; they don't focus.'

'I say the same things over and over and nothing seems to stick.'

'These people just aren't getting it.'

Every time you speak and people find themselves disengaging you reinforce your reputation, making it increasingly difficult to engage people when you speak on future occasions.

Speak

The Typical Leader – *people listen*

Most people I work with locate themselves at this stage of the pathway. It's like being in neutral: there's a lot of noise but no movement. It's the mindset that says, 'I'll speak, you listen'. They tend to be less concerned about whether people are getting what is being said and more concerned about making sure they get out everything they want to say. They usually aren't any more confident than the people lower down the ladder, but they deal with the occasion as they would rip off a bandaid: grin and bear it and hope it's over quickly.

When I talk to their teams, I hear things like:

'I felt like I was being talked at rather than communicated with.'

'It was just a big information/brain dump on us.'

‘There was a lot covered, but we don’t actually know what we’re supposed to do with it.’

Operating as this kind of leader isn’t going to kill your career, but neither will it set you on a forward path to leading and mobilising people. You’re not going to be the kind of leader people line up behind and say, ‘We’re with you, let’s go’.

Communicate

The Inspiring Leader – people engage

When I work with leaders and teams my goal is to shift them to a place where they operate above the line of limiting potential, a place where they learn how to communicate in such a way that people want to engage with them. When they speak, the way they deliver a message ensures that people not only show up; they switch on to what is being said. You can see the lights go on around the room. You watch as people lean forward in their seats in anticipation for what comes next. It’s a room where people put their phones away and start to hang on the words you’re sharing. It’s the kind of communication that engages and inspires teams. It feels more like a dialogue than a monologue, because people aren’t just listening to you – they become part of the conversation.

Connect

The Credible Leader – people trust

Imagine, as you stand up to speak, feeling the weight of support from people in the room. What would it feel like if you knew that the people you were speaking to were with you and trusted you? Effective communication breaks down the barriers to trust. As in any great relationship, trust is foundational to building a strong team. It is the currency of organisational

commitment. People don't just want to go somewhere; they want to go *with* someone they trust.

Influence

The Respected Leader – people change

The goal of every great leader is to be deeply respected by those they lead. Only then will their words have weight and result in real progress and change. These are the leaders who don't just share an idea; they mobilise people around a cause. When they stand up to speak, people listen with respect and gratitude. They don't just take on board what has been said; they carry those words and apply them to see change happen and momentum build.

Throughout this book my goal is to help you move up this pathway to become the leader you want to be, the leader who operates above the limitation line, who leverages their potential and builds their leadership platform. I want you to become the respected leader who makes a difference to those you lead, to connect and build trust and engage those you speak to.

THE THREE BIG OBSESSIONS

In the three parts of this book we are going to explore what I teach my clients as the 'Three Big Obsessions of Great Communicators', which lie at the intersections of these three ideas.

1. *Positioning* – the intersection of WHO you are and WHAT you say
2. *Messaging* – the intersection of WHAT you say and HOW you say it
3. *Developing* – the intersection of HOW you say it and WHO you are.

These obsessions are treated separately here, but that doesn't at all mean they are separate. You don't progress sequentially from Positioning to Messaging to Developing, nor do you ever really 'arrive', so to speak. The goal is progress, not perfection. As a leader, when you deliver your messaging you are simultaneously thinking about your positioning. As you deliver your messaging you are also thinking about how you can be developing. None of these activities holds greater weight than the others; each is important and potent.

When writing this I hesitated for a moment about using the word *obsession*. It is a strong word to use and I didn't want to give the impression of this as the aggressive pursuit of perfection, because that isn't the case. When I think of an obsession, I think of the way you might fall in love with an idea. The way that idea is always rolling around in your head and you can't help but think about it. Like an entrepreneur starting a new business or two people falling in love, you can't seem to get the idea out of your head. That's my vision with these three obsessions. You fall in love with the ideas and think about them all the time. When you're preparing to speak, you think about them. When you're having a conversation with a colleague, they sit in the back of your mind. When you get feedback that is designed to help you grow, you think about them.

So let's get started.

LET'S CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

This book is a beginning not an end. It's an invitation to begin a conversation that continues beyond the pages you hold in your hand. If you have found this book valuable in any way there are a number of ways to continue the conversation. I would love you to share your story with me. Whether it's a few lines or a few pages, I would be honoured to read how this book has impacted you or helped you become a better leader. You can email me directly at contact@shanemhatton.com.

I write regularly on leadership and communication as a helpful resource to an incredible tribe of people. You are invited to be a part of that tribe. You can join easily by visiting www.shanemhatton.com. There you will also find more information about my programs and ways we can do great work together. Finally, if this book has helped you, why not invest it into the life of a colleague, team member or friend and start a conversation with them.

I can't wait to continue the conversation with you.

In the moments that really matter, people don't just look for something to inform them, they look to someone who will lead them. They don't just want a speaker, they need a leader. This is a book about making those moments count. If you struggle with public speaking or presenting this book will help, but the real purpose aims higher than that. This is a book to help you become a more effective leader, to help you build and leverage your leadership platform to lead and mobilise your people.

"At the heart of great leadership is great communication.

In Lead The Room, Shane brings this truth into the spotlight with infectious energy and enthusiasm... no matter where you are in your leadership journey, you can't help but learn from it."

Tim Costello, Chief Advocate, World Vision Australia

"In a noisy world where people are constantly challenged with how to grab attention to deliver important messages to gain essential engagement and positioning, leadership matters more than ever. Don't delay – study this [book], action this and lead the room powerfully."

Christina Guidotti – CEO, Leading Women

"We don't need more eloquent speakers we need more authentic communicators. We need to give more focus to our character and content than we do our form and delivery. Thank you, Shane, for providing a tool to encourage that."

Daniel Flynn, Co-founder Thankyou and best-selling author of Chapter One



Shane Hatton is a leadership and communication expert who helps leaders to build and leverage their platform to lead and mobilise their people. A self-described 'charismatic introvert', Shane blends his experience at the intersection of people, leadership and communication along with his studies in business and psychology to help leaders face the fear of public speaking and embrace the potential of platform leadership.



eBook available

 **major st**
PUBLISHING

RRP \$29.95 | LEADERSHIP

ISBN 978-0-6484795-2-9



9 780648 479529