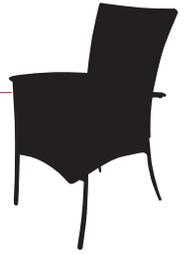


On the Hot Seat with PDX:

Christine Richards

By Jason Keyes & Via Hersholt



Christine Richards is a “personal development professional.” Having spent more than 20 years on the front lines of sales and management, she has helped thousands of people take their business from start-up to success and assisted numerous bosses in turning their nightmares into dreams. Recently we caught up with Richards for a little business 101.

PDX: I understand you have an interesting story about your start in the business-training field.

CR: Yes, I was managing a hotel in central London back in the '80s and my staff at that time didn't like my leadership so they all decided to go on strike. Of course, at the time I was sure that it was not me, so the staff was let go and we hired a whole new team. Two weeks later they all walked out. Then somebody wrote me an anonymous note saying, “You should take the Dale Carnegie: How To Win Friends and Influence People program.” I took the program and decided right there and then that training was the field I wanted to work in. I recognized there was an easier way of managing a business and people if you just had the right skills.

PDX: So, now that you're in this field, what about it keeps you personally motivated?

CR: What keeps me personally motivated

is seeing business owners and employees learn new skills and strategies that they are able to use in their business and personal lives. I receive regular emails from people letting me know how it's helped them increase sales and productivity. That's what keeps me excited about going to work every day.

PDX: That must be a very gratifying feeling.

CR: It is, because sometimes you're not sure about what kind of impact you make. But when clients come back and tell you, then it's like, “Yeah, I'm in the right field.”

PDX: What do you say to the skeptical business owners who feel they already have all the answers?

CR: Well, if their business is going the way they want it to go, sales are good, employees are happy and they are leaders in their market, then I say, “That's great! Maybe you do have all the answers.” However, I would say the majority of business owners that I meet have issues with employees, sales are down and they sometimes feel overwhelmed. So, what I do is come in and meet one-on-one with the business owner or manager to find out exactly what challenges they are experiencing and then provide customized solutions to overcome them. Every business and individual I have worked with is different.

PDX: Ok, can you explain briefly a few of your course offerings and how they can benefit people?

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Where we dined: Manzana Rotisserie Grill (305 1st St Lake Oswego 675-3322, manzanagrill.com)

What we ate: French Dip w/ seasonal fruit, Southwestern Chop Slad, Tanqueray Martini

CR: Well, the main program that businesses are looking for in this current climate is called Seven Secrets to Double Your Sales Immediately! I'm told on a daily basis from owners and managers (especially in the last six months) that they are concerned about the economy, sales are down and they are afraid of what's going to happen in the next four, five or six months. I hold sales training programs two to three times a year for small to mid-sized businesses to improve selling skills and build a better rapport with employees and customers. The second program that is consistently requested is Beyond Wishful Thinking. This program looks at how to achieve your dreams and goals using the strategies and tactics of the martial arts.

PDX: What makes you different from other sales consultants and trainers?

CR: I believe I'm different because my training and coaching is for the individual. For example, in the sales program, each person leaves with the sales language and conversation needed for their personal style and business. Even if two people come from the same business, the sales conversation may be different. In the coaching arena, individuals are profiled to understand their skills, values and behavioral preferences. Finally, I have seen more requests from business owners to act as their temporary sales manager. Since all the work I do is customized, I usually have no more than four to five clients at a time.

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If your business could use a boost, contact Christine at Black Belt Business Solutions (697-8563, blackbeltbizsolutions.com).