

news

Author helping you to find your 'public' voice

You've got to deliver the speech of your life. A hush comes over the expectant audience as you stand and walk stiffly to the podium.

Your hands go clammy, your mouth dries up and you lick your lips as you try to relax. You've been addressing audiences all your working life. You do it all the time. You're good at this. You're used to it. Just relax, take a deep breath and -

"Croak!"

And you wake up in a cold sweat. Again.

Help is at hand for speechless teachers, lecturers and business people who risk wearing out their voices with lectures, lessons and presentations.

Sutton-based voice coach Richard Payne (pictured) has written a book full of techniques for people who frequently have to address audiences, showing how to speak clearly, audibly and without voice strain. "People don't want to spend years doing voice exercises

by Jamie Rowland

every day," says Richard. "They just want to do their jobs.

"That's where the book can help."

The Vocal Skills Pocketbook, published by Management Pocketbooks, has 108 pages of tips under headings such as Being Heard, Clarity In Speech, Microphone Technique and Voice Care.

Richard, now Managing Director of BSPS Training Consultancy in Sutton, has a varied professional background which has given him the experience and expertise to write this book.

Before specialising as a trainer and voice coach, Richard was both an actor and a teacher, spending years learning and discovering ways of projecting, and protecting, his own voice.

"I knew of two teachers who had to give up teaching because they wore out their voices," says Richard. "I started teaching presentational skills as adult educa-

tion classes.

"I tried to take my initial Performing Arts and teaching training, and through developing my own techniques tried to adapt my voice training to people's everyday working lives."

He outlines some of the most common faults people have when they stand up to speak: "Trying to use conversational techniques in front of an audience strains the voice and can be unclear.

"If you speak too quickly, an audience will just switch off. In conversation, we speak at about 200 words a minute. The recommended speed for public speaking is more like 120.

"Part of voice projection is articulation. You have to pronounce individual words very clearly."

The book came about when Richard contacted the publishers after having spotted a gap in their range of management books. There was a book about making presentations, but that contained little about the voice. "Do you ever get people asking for a little

more detail?" he asked.

They responded in the affirmative and Richard was commissioned to write the book, as 'the right person at the right time in the right place'. About 18 months later, The Vocal Skills Pocketbook rolled off the presses.

The book is simple straightforward and clear with a clean, attractive layout. It explains technical specifics like pitch variation and the correct use of the intercostal muscles without blinding the reader with science.

It could prove invaluable to anyone who has to spend a lot of time projecting his or her voice.

■ The Vocal Skills Pocketbook by Richard Payne costs £6.99 and is published by Management Pocketbooks. It is available from their website, www.pocketbook.co.uk.

It can be ordered through any bookseller by quoting the ISBN number, 1-903776-17-1. BSPS Training Consultancy can be found on the web at www.bspstraining.co.uk.

