

# Jeff's

## Super Awesome Free

### e-book

*Thoughts on Leadership, Customer Service, Sales and Whatever Else I Thought Of.*

Jeff Havens



***Jeff's Super Awesome Free E-Book!:  
Thoughts on Leadership, Customer  
Service, Sales and Whatever Else I Thought  
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## ***Hello, intrepid reader!***

And welcome to Jeff's Super Awesome E-Book! Here you will find a collection of some of the articles I've written over the past several months for various publications on various topics – sales, leadership, customer service, communications, conflict resolution, presentation skills, and some other topics so super and awesome that I am saving them for a surprise.

I'm assuming you've signed up for my blog, (because if you haven't then you've obtained this

super awesome e-book illegally and are a thief and will probably end up in prison someday) which means you've already expressed an interest in improving your business without being bored to tears. And collected here are some of the tidbits of awesomeness that you might have missed.

So enjoy!

## ***Presentation Skills: Helpful Tips for Creating a Horrible PowerPoint***

Hello, and welcome! Today you will learn how to create and deliver the kind of lackluster PowerPoint presentation that will make even the most courteous members of your workforce tune you out completely. You'll have undoubtedly seen some of these techniques in presentations you've had to suffer through, so this should be a fairly easy lesson.

Your first step is to make sure that your presentation is created by somebody with

absolutely no expertise in graphic design. Perhaps you're thinking, "Why should design matter? It's not the way it looks but rather the material being presented that's important." And if that's what you're thinking, congratulations! Not only have you already mastered this step, but you've done so in a way that runs contrary to every natural human instinct. You probably live in a house completely devoid of color and decoration, wear the same ill-fitting clothes every day, and would have been perfectly happy if you had never laid eyes on your spouse prior to the day of your marriage.

But I digress. After you've created an unappealing suite of fonts and backgrounds, you next need to figure out how to display all your information. The answer is simple: in paragraph-sized chunks. It is an unspoken rule among professional speakers – and by 'unspoken' I mean 'widely and freely publicized' – that every click of your wireless pointer should add no more

than six to ten words of text to a given PowerPoint slide, and that a full slide should contain no more than six lines of text. But I see no reason to listen to people who deliver animated and engaging presentations for a living. So display 50 words at a time! If your slide has six major points, don't display each point as you plan to discuss it – display all six points at once! The best of you will actually reduce the point size of your text in order to cram more information into a given slide, which will make it impossible for the people sitting in the back to actually see whatever it is you're displaying. In addition, most of us automatically read whatever we see, and most of us can read a given paragraph much faster than the average person can say it aloud. As I'm sure you know, the act of reading a paragraph at one speed while somebody else says it aloud at a slightly different speed is just plain annoying, and you'd be foolish to overlook such a golden opportunity.

And the final step: provide printed copies of your PowerPoint to everyone in attendance before you start talking. A good leader might provide an outline to his or her audience at the end of a presentation, which has the undeniable benefit of helping to reinforce the major points that have just been presented. However, if you want to suck like a champion, you will give your audience as many ways to ignore you as possible. And while you might think it helpful to provide an outline of your upcoming presentation before you start talking, a printout actually causes people to believe that everything that might be even slightly important will be printed right there for them. Most audience members will quickly scan through a printed PowerPoint presentation, absorb what they believe are the main points, and then tune out for the duration of the actual presentation itself. Plus, providing people with stacks of papers gives them something to draw on when they're bored – how thoughtful of you!

There are other techniques to consider that will help you ruin what could otherwise have been an interesting and productive PowerPoint – talking for an hour in the soul-crushing monotone that Ben Stein uses to such delicious effect, attaching audio samples to the wrong slides, forgetting to change the batteries on your wireless clicker before you begin, overusing animation and other special effects, displaying too many charts and graphs at the same time, using any puns whatsoever, etc. – but this should get you started.

Now, get back to work!

## ***Fun Ways to Bore and Annoy Your Audience!***

Hello, my aspiring professional speakers! I don't know if you knew this, but I speak at about 60-75 conferences a year. I just got back from one actually, and the people who hired me were

kind enough to invite me to their opening lunch where I had an awesome meal and also got the opportunity to listen to their afternoon keynote speaker.

And thanks to that incredible hour, I come to you today with all kinds of helpful tips to make sure that your audience turns as quickly as possible to whatever games they're currently playing on their cell phones.

Open Your Speech By Talking About Yourself and Your Own Problems! – You're supposed to be providing motivation, information, ideas, or something of value to the people you're addressing. Which is why you should spend your opening five minutes talking about your enormous home and how you hope that Hurricane Irene doesn't damage it too badly. I don't know about you, but nothing makes me feel more connected to a speaker than the feeling that they'd rather be anywhere but speaking to me.

Pause Often When You Say the Name of

the Group You're Speaking To! – I've seen this one a lot. "Hi, everyone! It's great to be here today, speaking to...um...whoever the hell you are." I – freaking – love – this.

Have No Unifying Theme! – The best speeches are organized around a small number of central themes and address those themes in a small number of interesting, relevant, or unique ways. Your speech, on the other hand, should wander from place to place as though you're not sure what you're going to say before you start to say it. This will also give you the opportunity to circle back to talking about yourself, since that will be your default if you're not really sure who you're talking to or what you wanted to say to them in the first place.

Sound Bored! – I'm sure you'll manage to find a few minutes of impassioned rhetoric to hammer home to your spellbound audience, but those brief flashes of inspiration will only accentuate the fact that the rest of the time you

sound like you're rehearsing in your basement. This will be even easier if you wander aimlessly across the stage and never look any of your audience members in the eye.

But maybe I'm making too big a deal out of these things. I mean most audience members are way too polite to actually stand up and walk out of something they're not enjoying. So odds are you'll never know that you're irritating the crap out of the majority of the people you're talking to. And what you don't know can't hurt you.

Now if you'll excuse me, I have to give a talk in about three hours. I think I'll stand with my back to everybody this time. Or maybe I'll go into detail about the new motorcycle I just bought. So many options...

## ***Tips on Surviving Your Next Public Speaking Engagement***

I'm going to take a bit of a departure from my ordinary routine in this article. Normally I'll sit here and tell you how to do something badly. And don't worry, I'll be doing plenty more of that in subsequent articles. But this afternoon I spoke to an audience of about 1,100 people in Nashville, and just before I got on stage one of them asked me to give him a 10-second lesson in how to handle the pressure of speaking in front of a large audience. It was obvious that he was occasionally required to deliver presentations and other public addresses to various audiences, and it was also obvious that it made him nervous. And since I'm guessing that there are thousands of other people just like him, I thought it might be nice to offer some straightforward ideas about how to survive what many people consider to be the most difficult and stressful thing in their professional lives.

The following is by no means a complete list, but it should be a decent start on surviving

your next encounter with public speaking.

Avoid eye contact – That's not to say that you shouldn't look at your audience, but there is a huge difference between looking at people and meeting their eyes. Many public speakers will change their focus constantly so that they never catch any one person's eyes for more than half a second, because doing so can throw off the rhythm of even the most well-trained speaking professional. If you need something to focus on, look at people's foreheads, and keep your eyes moving around the room.

Hide behind furniture – If the idea of standing in front of an audience unnerves you, protect yourself by standing behind a podium, table, microphone stand, or any other piece of furniture. It's not much, but it will create a subtle barrier between you and your audience that many people find comforting. A lot of musicians will tell you that their instruments function like a defense against indifferent or hostile audiences,

and a podium or microphone stand can do the same for you.

If you lose your place, don't say anything – The biggest mistake nervous people make when delivering a speech is to tell their audience that they're nervous. If you get flustered, just stop. Don't say, 'Um,' and definitely don't say, 'Sorry, I'm a little nervous.' Just stop. A moderate pause doesn't bother your audience, and it can actually make your speech seem more studied and considered than if you fly right through everything. Pay attention to the news anchors that you listen to; odds are you'll never hear them say 'Uh...' or 'Let's see here....'

Overload your PowerPoint – This is not my favorite technique, as it can easily be done poorly, but for those of you who are truly terrified of speaking to an audience, the PowerPoint or Keynote can operate like an excellent mnemonic to ensure that you never lose your place. Just don't print a paragraph's worth of information

on a single slide. It won't kill you to create three slides to get the same material across, and doing so will help make sure that your audience pays more attention to you than to what you've written.

Of course, practice makes perfect, and there's really no better way to get over your fear of public speaking than to do it a few hundred times. But until that happens, these ideas will hopefully help you survive your next presentation.

Hope that's all useful. And I promise my next article will help you lose your job and credibility. I'd hate to disappoint you.

## ***Sales: How to Not Sell Anything to Anybody!***

So you're a salesperson. My condolences. As something of a salesperson myself, I know you only got this job because you weren't qualified for anything better. But college was hard, your

fastball tops out at 57 mph, you were thoughtless and ended up falling in love with someone who isn't independently wealthy, and you couldn't find anything better.

But just because you happen to be a salesperson now doesn't mean you have to remain a salesperson forever. There are several techniques you can employ that will help you fail to meet your quota. I've experienced each one of these in the last week, and I am proud to say that they work really well, because I haven't bought anything.

And with any good luck, you're doing at least one of these already!

Tell a new customer that you consider them a friend! Nothing says insincerity quite like offering me a special deal because you feel like you know me. You and I are kindred spirits? We should hang out sometime? I wonder if you'll still think so if I don't buy whatever you're selling.

Follow up before your scheduled follow-

up! I know we agreed that we'd reconnect next week, but I was probably lying. What I really want is for you to ask me to make my decision before I told you that I'd make my decision. My request for a little time was probably just a rude stalling tactic rather than an honest need to discuss things with my other team members and review our budget. And I can guarantee that your early request for information will in no way make me think that you're desperate for my business. I probably won't see if I can get a better deal than you originally offered. After all, why would I do such a thing to one of my good friends?

Ask if I'll buy before I've seen your product! Who would do such a thing? Associations seeking additional members, that's who. I just attended my first conference for an association that I'm considering joining, and I think I was asked about a dozen times before the conference began if I was going to become a member. I like that style! They knew that I am way too stupid to make up

my own mind. And the constant badgering is just your way of letting me know that you really care about me. Thanks!

So get to work, salespeople, and start driving your prospects away. Because I don't know if you've heard or not, but these days the government's unemployment benefits last, like, forever.

## ***How to Become an Insufferable Salesman!***

I know, I know – you're wondering about the word 'become' in the title. You're thinking, "People don't become insufferable salespeople. Salespeople are inherently insufferable." But that isn't true. Truly awful salespeople are made, not born. And I'm about to teach you how to make yourself into the kind of salesperson that will make customers actually walk past

your establishment instead of going in to get something they already know they want.

And before you ask – yes, every single one of these has been done to me. All of them. A lot.

Never Stop Talking! - Like most people, I need a little bit of time to think about what I'm interested in buying. I like to receive information, process it for a few moments quietly, and then come to a decision. So please, talk my ear off! Start the second I walk in, follow me around the store like a hungry animal, and constantly tell me about features I've already told you I don't care about. Yours is an interesting approach; since you obviously know that what you're selling is something no reasonable person would decide to purchase without massive encouragement, you've chosen your nonstop verbal barrage because you don't think I'll be rude enough to walk out on you mid-sentence. But oh, how wrong you are.

Complain About the Deal You've Just Agreed To! – I'm sure it's not just car salesman

that do this one, but they're the ones I'm thinking about right now. Really, car salesman – are you really selling this to me for less than you paid? Am I really taking food off your children's table? Well, I certainly don't want to be responsible for your kids starving to death, so I guess I'll just take my business elsewhere.

Try to Sell Me A Warranty On Things That Have No Business Requiring a Warranty! – Two instances come to mind here. A Best Buy clerk tried to sell me a 2-year warranty on a \$20 land-line phone I purchased several years ago (note to Best Buy: if my cheap land-line phone breaks in 2 years, I'll just have to buy another one!), and about eight months ago a salesperson attempted to sell me warranty insurance for my couch. I have yet to discover what I could possibly do to my couch that would be covered under a normal warranty, but I am excited to find out.

So get out there, salespeople, and start making us shiver at the sight of you. For myself,

I'm off to a buddy's house right now. He just bought a new chaise lounge and got a top-notch warranty package with it. I'm bringing my chainsaw over, and he's going to pepper it with semi-automatic bullets. Looks like somebody should do a little more research before they go and offer chaise lounge warranties to everyone who wants to buy a chaise lounge.

## ***Management and Leadership: Clever Ways to Show Your Team How Little You Actually Care***

Jeff Havens here again, giggling behind my hand at how stupid your employees are. They continually tell themselves that you're interested in their welfare, that you view them as more than simply a piece of easily replaceable machinery. They read uplifting books and buy Successories posters and attend support groups, all in the vain

hope of convincing themselves that they've been misinterpreting your behavior all these years. Mwah ha ha!

And what behaviors am I talking about? Dozens, but here are some of my favorites. Or more specifically, here are some of the ones I happen to remember right now.

Ask your secretary to buy her own flowers for Secretary's Day! I love this one, and you have no idea how many times I've heard it. Nothing says, 'Being nice to you is an inconvenience' quite like telling somebody to give themselves a nice gesture on your behalf.

Invite someone to an expensive dinner, then don't offer to pay for them! Unless the rules have changed in the last 18 minutes, if you invite somebody to a business dinner, you should pay for everything unless you have specifically discussed other arrangements ahead of time. But please, don't have that discussion. Because it will deprive you of the stunned and resentful look on

your guest's face when he or she is presented with their half of the bill. And the more expensive the restaurant you 'take' them to, the better!

Give Your Employees the Same Per Diem that You Used in 1978! Inflation? I don't know what you're talking about. Do you mean like filling tires or something?

I tell you what, folks, I'm glad so many of you are doing so many of these things. Otherwise these articles would be virtually impossible to write.

## ***Ways to Protect Your Company From The Thieves You're Forced to Employ!***

Today's article is for all the long-suffering bosses out there. Because let's face it – the people you've hired are criminals. If there were any way at all that you could have avoided putting them

on the payroll, you'd have done it. They are not to be trusted, and the second you turn your back on them they are going to rob you blind. It's a wonder you're able to sleep at night knowing how evil your employees truly are.

Fortunately, there are several things you can do to let them know that you're onto them. Today's article was inspired by a conversation I overheard yesterday while I was shopping for a new phone. But I hardly think the cell phone companies are pioneers here. Perhaps you've witnessed some of the following where you work:

Not Allowing Employees Access to the Equipment They'll Need in Order to Handle Customer Complaints! If you're not careful, your employees might start to take care of customers' problems without consulting you. Who knows? They might even offer an unauthorized discount or throw in a tiny perk at no extra charge, thereby earning a new loyal customer at a small unexpected expense to you. Heresy!

Force Customers to Deal with Multiple Customer Service Representatives to Solve Ordinary Problems! This is the one I saw yesterday. A customer was attempting to replace his lost phone with an identical phone and was told that doing so would increase his monthly payment, which he felt was a violation of his contract. The manager at the store, however, had been forbidden from addressing his particular concern – ‘company policy,’ she told him, specifically to prevent her from taking advantage of her unholy power. So he was going to have to talk to a different company representative about his contract, even though the people at the store he was in were the ones who had given him his original contract. If you’re confused by what I’ve just written, that’s OK. I am too.

Install Security Cameras Above Your Employees’ Desks! It’s one thing to do this at a casino or bank or anywhere where a bunch of money is lying around waiting to be stolen. It’s

quite another, though, to do it in the breakroom of your run-of-the-mill insurance company. Stay away from my leftovers, you filthy animals!

I'm telling you what, they can't make robots fast enough to start replacing the degenerates we're all coerced into hiring. But since we don't have a choice, the least we can do is let our employees know how little we trust them. Are you with me or what?

Anyone?

Anyone?

## ***Why You Should Avoid Your Employees Like the Plague***

Jeff Havens here again, hoping that by now you're starting to get the idea. If you've been taking the advice in my articles up to this point, you've probably learned how to position yourself above your subordinates. Now it's time

to operate above them as well. As a manager, you are the brains of your company or division, the animating force behind everything good that happens. Your employees (to continue the anatomical analogy) are the feet, the engine that powers your company or division. And your brain doesn't have to see your feet in order to tell them what to do, does it? Of course not. In fact, your brain is located in your head specifically so that it can stay as far away from your feet as possible.

I think I've made my point. Your employees are like feet. Disgusting, stinky feet. So take a page from your brain's playbook, and stay away from your employees as much as possible. Because no good boss ever, ever smells like feet.

For most of you, this will be a significant departure from what you've read in other business management articles and books. The vast majority of leadership literature sings the praises of knowing your employees, the supposed benefits that accrue from creating a culture

where managers and their employees spend time together. They'll cite ridiculous statistics such as the following:

- In a 25-year Gallup study of 80,000 employees and managers, the single greatest determiner of an employee's longevity and productivity was found to be the employee's relationship with his immediate supervisor.

- A study by the Anderson Consulting Group's Institute for Strategic Change found that the cumulative stock price of companies that were perceived to be well led grew 900% over a ten-year period, versus 74% in companies that were perceived to be lacking in effective leadership.

- A Dutch survey found that the average life expectancy of all businesses is 12.5 years, and one-third of companies registered on the Fortune 500 in the 1970s had disappeared by 1983. Arie de Geus, author of *Living Company*, blames such rampant failure on the focus of managers on profits and the bottom line rather

than the human community that makes up their organization.

- According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the most common reason people leave their jobs is because “they do not feel appreciated”.

Those would be compelling statistics, if I were inclined to pay attention to them. I am not so inclined, however. Because if there’s anything a good tyrant needs to understand, it’s that an overwhelming body of well-researched evidence should never get in the way of you doing what you want to do.

The prosecution rests.

## ***Collection of Fun Facts!***

Congratulations, my devoted readers! Today you’re going to learn some fun facts about the ways in which your lack of effective leadership can impact the morale and productivity of your

workforce. Ready? Let's go!

### ***Fun Fact #1:***

Routine work represents approximately 80% of the average person's working day.

This is an important statistic, because it means that most of your employees' or coworkers' workday is already determined for them, so you don't have to tyrannize their every working moment. You just have to influence that 20% that has the potential to make their day special and glorious – or tedious and unbearable.

### ***Fun Fact #2:***

In a study of 500 managers in North America, 75% of them reported knowing employees within their company whose unique knowledge would

be lost if they left the company.

What does this mean? Quite simply, it means that your poor leadership has the capacity to thoroughly cripple your company's ability to compete in the marketplace. But don't think of it that way. Think instead of how all those people with their 'unique knowledge' could someday become a threat to you. It's definitely better to see them move to another company than stay around, unique knowledging their way into a position of influence.

***Fun Fact #3*** (The Funnest of Them All!!!):

One study of healthcare workers found that employees who worked for a boss they disliked had significantly higher blood pressure than their peers. Boss-induced hypertension could increase the risk of coronary heart disease by one-sixth and stroke by one-third. And

employees who work for bad bosses for four years or more are 64% more likely to experience a serious heart problem than employees who work for good bosses.

Is that freaking amazing or what? Your poor leadership can actually hasten the death of your employees! I know you've dreamt of wielding such power before, but I'm sure you despaired of ever acquiring it. But now, it can all be yours!

So now you know why being a terrible leader is so much fun. If you want to know how to do it, though, you'll have to keep reading. I'm a wealth of information, people. Stay tuned!

## ***3 Ways to Make Your Employees Hate You***

I'm on my way to Philadelphia right now, and I've never been there. I'm planning to steal the Liberty Bell, but I'm afraid it might not fit

into my carry-on luggage. If not, maybe I'll just take a picture next to it. I'll probably just take a picture next to it.

Anyway, the only reason I'm telling you this is because I have now failed three times to strike up a conversation with my seatmate, who quite obviously couldn't care less about me. And he has reminded me of things you can do at your office to make your employees shudder at the sight of you. Thank you, sports agent from Philly! You're the reason the Eagles are tanking this year.

Respond to questions as though they are a terrible inconvenience! – Your employees probably think that they're asking you questions in order to learn something useful or get their tasks accomplished more quickly by basking in your wisdom. But you know the truth: their questions are an obstacle to you getting anything useful done today. Many managers roll their eyes, but the best of you will avoid eye contact

entirely, as if the very sight of the person asking you a question is too much for you to bear.

Never say thank you! – Receiving recognition for good work is consistently in the top ten most important elements listed in job satisfaction surveys. But honestly, why should you thank people for doing their job? Isn't their paycheck thanks enough?

Impose rules you yourself don't follow! – My personal favorite incarnation of this is disallowing the use of cell phones during meetings and then checking yours throughout the meeting you yourself called. The best of you will do this immediately after asking somebody a question, thereby letting your people know that nothing they say could possibly be more important than the text you're sending to your golfing buddies.

So there you go. Do any of the above, and your employees will do everything in their power to hasten the day of your retirement. Although I don't see why that should faze you. If you're doing

any of these things, chances are you don't even think of them as employees. You think of them more as vassals or peons, or perhaps troglodytes. Maybe you should start calling them by one of those names. "Hey peasant! Where's my status report?"

Hmmm. Maybe I should have titled this article *4 Ways to Make Your Employees Hate You*. Enjoy!

## ***Teambuilding:***

### ***3 Ways to Make Your Bosses Hate You!***

I don't know if you read my recent article, '3 Ways to Make Your Employees Hate You!' You should have, since it was the best article ever written. Someday it will be enshrined behind glass right beside the Declaration of

Independence, assuming anybody ever bothers to print it out.

Anyway, I feel like it's only fair to give employees a few things they can do to make their managers wish they'd never hired them. I'm sure you're doing some of these things already, but hopefully you'll get at least one new idea out of here.

Show up to work with the same punctuality that you displayed in college! – I deliver my 'How to Get Fired!' presentation on college campuses all the time, and I cannot remember the last time we started on time. Why? Because college kids are always 5-10 minutes late. And I see no reason why you should change your habits just because you're now considered a full-fledged adult. Besides, how else will people really appreciate your contribution to each meeting unless they all have to turn and stare at you when you open the door 10 minutes after everything's gotten started?

Post a new Facebook status every 45 minutes! – Not only does this indicate a chronic inattention to your job, it's also adorably self-absorbed.

**9:17:** 'Just got into work today – traffic was terrible!'

**10:25:** 'Data entry is so tedious!!!'

**11:15:** 'About to head to lunch. I'm thinking tacos. Yum!'

Seriously, I almost fell asleep just writing those things.

Ask for approval for every decision you make! – Good bosses want their employees to be at least partially autonomous, able to make decisions and run with them without having to

ask all the time if everything is OK. Which is why you should always make sure to run everything you ever think to do past your boss. The more you bombard them with questions about minor details, the more they'll appreciate that you are truly incapable of handling even the smallest amount of responsibility. You'll soon find yourself cut out of any decision-making opportunities, and then...voila! You're home free, baby.

So come on, employees! You know you only took your job because you couldn't find anything better. It's time to resume the search for your perfect line of work. Myself, I'm just writing these articles until I can finally pursue my dream of being a piranha wrangler. Trust me, loyal readers: someday, I'm gonna wrangle me some piranhas.

***Breakroom Etiquette!***

Etiquette. That's a weird word. It sounds stately and dignified, almost like you're obliged to take other people into consideration. Which is ridiculous, because from what I can gather, nobody is taking anybody else into consideration when it comes to the breakroom. Indeed, breakroom battles have shaped the course of our nation's history. For example, the Revolutionary War started after a British general drank the last cup of coffee in a Boston breakroom and didn't refill the pot. A lot of people don't know that, but it's true.

So in order to help you create a similarly martial and violent working environment, here are a few key points to keep in mind about your company's breakroom.

The breakroom will clean itself! I don't know how it works. Scientists are still conducting experiments to try and understand the particulars of this modern marvel. But the truth is, if you leave the breakroom alone for long

enough, it will eventually clean itself. Seriously. Give it a shot sometime and see!

The breakroom fridge is **YOURS!** Do you see the all caps that I used for the word ‘**YOURS**’? That’s because I was shouting at other people who made the mistake of thinking that they could put their lunch in my refrigerator. Yes I know I have fourteen pieces of Tupperware in there right now, each containing a different kind of food that I have no intention of finishing. So what? I’m doing research. I’m trying to see what the different decay rates are for lasagna, Mexican takeout, leftover chicken, and some other things that I forgot what they were. It’s science; it’s going to benefit humanity somehow. So back off. And anyway, I shouldn’t have to explain myself, because as I said at the beginning of this paragraph, **THE BREAKROOM FRIDGE IS MINE!!!! GET BACK YOU FILTHY ANIMALS!!!**

The breakroom is an extension of your office! It follows that if the breakroom fridge is

an extension of your kitchen, then the breakroom itself is basically an extension of you. Which means you should use it whenever and however you please. So lay out your latest designs specs on the breakroom table. Set up a forward command center right by the coffee maker. Conduct long and loud business calls beside the microwave. And do all of these things while your colleagues are attempting to decompress. Take away their refuge; they don't deserve to relax.

So there's a good start. This list is by no means complete, though. I didn't even touch the idea of fiddling with the thermostat. It's estimated that eleven office workers are killed in thermostat-related brawls each year. I think I'll save that one for another article.

Now, get back to work. And remember, stay the hell out of my fridge.

## ***Change Management: Resisting***

## ***Change – Sentences of the Terrified!***

Jeff Havens here, excited to help you become a horrible manager, odious coworker, and whatever the opposite of a ‘people pleaser’ is. Today we’re going to delve briefly into some of the things you can say to let everyone know how much you hate change. And you should, because change is evil. Change is the thing that turns beautiful babies into gangly teenagers. It’s the thing that turned my 401K into the financial equivalent of a steaming turd. And it’s something you need to resist with every ounce of energy you can muster.

I’ll probably revisit this topic in later articles, but today I wanted to share with you just a few of the sentences that have become the most popular in the annals of change-averse managers and employees everywhere. Any one of the following is sufficient all by itself, but the best of you will use each of them at least once a

week, with an eye toward squeezing them all in once a day.

- “I don’t think that will work.” Notice I don’t want you to say why you don’t think it will work. In fact, it would be best if you don’t even let the other person finish talking before you hit them with this zinger. Simple, out-of-hand rejection is what we’re shooting for here.

- “That’s not how we do things around here.” That’s right: coming up with solutions to problems or streamlining inefficient methods is not how your company should operate! Besides, things have always been the exact same at your company forever, haven’t they? Since the days of its founding by a single individual or small collection of partners – perhaps in a rented garage, perhaps in a toolshed, perhaps in somebody’s basement or living room – nothing at all has changed in any way. So why start now?

- “That’s not part of our culture.” Anybody noticing a theme here?

- “Don’t rock the boat.” This one’s a little more aggressive, which of course is why I like it. And never mind that boats are designed for rocking. Never mind that rocking is one of the most soothing motions known to our species. The point is, SHUT YOUR MOUTH!!!!

And last, my personal favorite:

- “Think like that again and I’m calling security.”

Your goal is to reject ideas, as many as you possibly can. And once you have, congratulations! Your coworkers will finally begin to realize how rigid and inflexible you are, and they’ll eventually stop pestering you and find somebody else to share their silly little thoughts with. The watchword is ‘business as usual,’ right? I mean, Blockbuster hasn’t changed its delivery model in pretty much forever, and they’re still around.

OK, maybe that was a bad example.

## ***Everything is Exactly the Same!***

Geoffrey Havens-smith here, and top of the morning to you. It has come to my attention that many of you have been deluded into the belief that the times are changing. I've heard murmurs – whisperings about town, at the saloon and such – that things today are a mite different than they used to be. Well, I am here to assure you that no such abomination has taken place. The United States of America is the same as it has always been – 36 states all told, just like it was when my grandpappy was born. So I see no reason for you to even be considering the pernicious idea of changing how you operate your business.

Case in point, my fine reader: the piece you're reading is part of a weekly series, published just down the street in one of Benjamin Franklin's marvelous presses. Our relations with the British and French are on an even keel as always, if you can ignore that strange anomaly back around '76.

Your customers are the same petticoat-wearing ladies and rough-and-tumble cowboys that mine are, and they require the same accoutrements that men and women in every age have always required: bit, bridle, spurs, china, linens, lumber, and the occasional pair of spectacles or bolt of fine lace. We're all watching the weather to see what kind of crop to expect come fall, and we're all a tad concerned about smallpox.

So relax, fine friends. Things are as they've always been. No reason to worry yourself over anything, and certainly no reason to even consider changing how you've always gone about your business.

Now if you'll excuse me, I have to head into town for some medicine, and by medicine I mean whiskey. Granny's got the whooping cough something awful, and the pigs are showing signs of the flux. I should be back to the farm by nightfall, as long as my horse doesn't throw a shoe. She's apt to at times.

## ***Conflict Resolution: How to Prolong and Exacerbate All of Your Conflicts!***

Jeff Havens here, fresh off a marathon session of arguing with somebody. It felt great. Seriously, I feel like my insides have been scraped clean away. If I close my eyes I can almost picture myself as a giant cantaloupe stripped of my delicious orange flesh by a colossal serrated melon baller. It's an experience we should all be lucky enough to have.

But it occurred to me that some people race through their conflicts, so eager to find resolution that they fail to appreciate the value of a torturous journey through a hellscape of pain, anger, and endless recrimination. So today I thought I'd share just a few tips that will help you turn your every conflict into the longest and most excruciating process imaginable. These

techniques will not only work around the office but also with your family and friends – which means everybody can share the fun!

## ***Blame Your Adversary for Thinking Whatever They're Thinking!***

Trying to see where other people are coming from is far too rational and easy. A much more effective strategy is to attack your opponent for having different thoughts than your own. Whatever conclusions they've come to are stupid and erroneous, and every unflattering interpretation they make of your own comments is obviously a shallow and pernicious attempt to gain the upper hand. The nice thing about this approach is that it generally leads into an endless cycle of 'Well if I'm wrong about X, then you're wrong about Y' as both parties attempt to drive the other into the ground.

## ***Speak in Absolutes!***

Most conflicts are a result of occasional lapses. But you should always think in terms of always and never. Examples include, 'You never listen to me,' 'Every time I do X you always do Y,' and the like. Oh, and don't forget to use isolated incidents as proof of an irreparable trend! We're supposed to forgive and forget other people's occasional mistakes. But why forget them when you can use every one of them as ammunition for your next conflict?

## ***When Possible, Conduct Conflicts Via Text!***

The most difficult phone calls rarely last longer than two hours. An email exchange can take days but only occupies perhaps an

hour of your day. Even old-fashioned letter-writing doesn't take that much time. But texting combines omnipresent connectivity, a 5-10 minute turnaround time, and the ability to say no more than two complete sentences at a time. Put that all together, and you have the recipe for a conflict that can make you and others miserable for 16 hours. Hurray for technology!

Enjoy, my little cantaloupes. Now, time for me to see if I can find a nice place to curl up in the fetal position.

## ***Profiles in Tyranny : (and occasionally Awesomeness)***

### ***Profiles in Tyranny – John Henry Patterson***

Jeff Havens here again, excited to help you become the kind of boss that make other people

wish that voodoo dolls really worked. Today I'm going to initiate a segment that will be recur periodically during my article-writing life: the Profile in Tyranny, in which I will showcase the lives and careers of various brutish, conniving, immoral, megalomaniacal, and otherwise tyrannical leaders. It is the intention of each Profile in Tyranny to provide you with at least one concrete example of a specific tyrannical leadership technique, so that you can better hone your abilities through emulation. For those of you who enjoy history, many of these Profiles in Tyranny will be both a nostalgic remembrance of things past and a collection of stories that should make you wonder how civilized humanity ever managed to survive as long as it has.

And for those of you who don't enjoy history, read this anyway.

Today's subject is John Henry Patterson, a man you've probably never heard of. After purchasing a pair of cash registers from the

National Manufacturing Company (NMC) to improve the bookkeeping for his coal supply business, Patterson and his brother bought NMC in 1884 and renamed it the National Cash Register Company. The company grew, and Patterson became renowned for firing people for the most trivial and capricious reasons – for example, he fired one executive for not riding his horse properly. He also adopted the habit of repeatedly firing, re-hiring, and re-firing employees in order to break their self-esteem. He is perhaps most famous for firing Thomas Watson, Sr., who went on to become the President of IBM. I'm not sure why he fired Watson, but I'm guessing it's because Watson had tied his tie improperly one day. Patterson was actually known to have fired at least one employee for that very reason. Seriously.

But wait, there's more! He also had a habit of banning unhealthy foods from company premises and having all employees weighed and

measured every six months. He was convicted in 1913 of antitrust violations (standard operating procedure for any really successful tyrant), which included the hiring of 'knockout men' to encourage store owners not to purchase products from NCR competitors. That little affair ended up with him and 29 other NCR executives in prison for a year. But he didn't outsource all of his violence, though, and seems to have frequently choked people, especially women. Now we know where Bobby Knight got it from!

The point, my too-gentle readers, is that good tyrants are multi-talented. Patterson didn't simply resort to choking his subordinates into submission. But it sure does the trick when you need to shut somebody up!

So there you have it. If somebody bothers you at work, you have several options: threaten them, fire them, or throw something sharp at them. I'll leave it to you to decide which course to take. As for myself, I finally know now what I

can do with this stupid paperweight that's been sitting on my desk for the past couple years. Should throw just like a baseball. They'll never see it coming.

## ***Profiles in Tyranny! - Anonymous TSA Agent at New York's JFK Airport***

Hello, everyone! I just flew into JFK for a thing in New York tomorrow. I usually fly through LaGuardia, so it's my first time coming through this airport. And hopefully it's my last. Because I just saw something that should leave a bad taste in my mouth for the next several days.

In order to get to baggage claim at JFK, you have to walk through an acrylic door manned by a single TSA agent. When I arrived at this door, the TSA agent was standing between a woman on my side of the door and her husband, who was on the other side. The couple was Hispanic and spoke poor English, and it was quite obvious

that the husband, thinking that he needed to go through the door in order to get to his gate, had accidentally stepped through. How do I know this was an accident? Because one of his feet was still in the doorway. And he had done this in full view of the TSA agent posted immediately beside this door.

Now here's where it gets fun. The couple was terribly distraught in the way that all couples get distraught when they think they're going to miss their flight. However, instead of forgiving the man's easily-made mistake and letting him back through to join his wife and continue on his day, the TSA was adamant that the man could not re-enter but instead had to go through security again. The TSA agent actually went so far as to say, 'If you come back through this door you'll get arrested.' I even attempted to intercede on the man's behalf, to absolutely no avail. Rules are rules, and they cannot be broken.

So let me get this straight, TSA agent. You

saw him walk through. You know he'd already been cleared by security. But because he'd made an understandable mistake of a single step, you now consider him to be a potential threat. This side of the door – perfectly harmless. One wrong step – possible terrorist.

Congratulations, anonymous TSA door watchman! Not only have you ruined one couple's travel plans at a possible cost of several hundred dollars to them, you've also ensured that I will do everything in my power to avoid flying into JFK as much as possible.

But that shouldn't bother you a bit. After all, you were just doing your job. And the man was probably a drug lord or something. I'm sure you saved our entire country.

Now, somebody get me out of this airport.

***Profiles in Awesomeness –  
Anonymous Delta Pilot***

(from Atlanta to Myrtle Beach on October 13, 2011)

I begin with an apology. I know that you have come to expect a certain kind of article from me – namely, an article that details various ways you can become a more annoying and less effective manager, employee, student, family member, and person in general. But yesterday I had a Delta pilot display the kind of easy competence that literally changed the mood of an entire planeload of frustrated passengers, and I feel compelled to share the experience. Not that I want you to follow in his footsteps or anything. I mean seriously, if everybody acted the way he did, I'd be out of a job.

Yesterday I flew from JFK in New York (the worst airport in the world by the way: read my Profile in Tyranny about that if you'd like to know why) to Atlanta, and then from Atlanta to Myrtle Beach. As often happens at the world's busiest airport, my flight to Myrtle Beach was

delayed. And, as usually happens when a flight gets delayed, people were whining about it. People were sighing , muttering, rolling their eyes, groaning, and doing that explosive snort thing with their nose and mouth that always makes me want to shake the person doing it until they can't breathe anymore. Needless to say, the general mood was poor.

After our flight got delayed, it got delayed again. More groaning and explosive snort things. Then we got told to board, and then we were told to wait another 10 minutes. Guess what – more explosive snort things! By the time we got onto the plane we were an hour and a half late, and everybody was in a thoroughly crappy mood.

Our pilot, however, was eminently aware of this. So, in the middle of his apology and explanation for the delay, he said this single sentence over the intercom: ‘We are going to fly this plane like we stole it and get you to Myrtle Beach as fast as we can.’

That was it. One out-of-the-ordinary sentence. But everybody heard it, everybody laughed, and in five seconds the general mood of the passengers had skyrocketed. OK, maybe not skyrocketed – we were still late – but you could tell that everyone had gone from thinking, ‘I hate flying, this always happens, they’re never on time,’ to something like, ‘Oh well, these things happen, no reason to get too bent out of shape.’

One sentence. One. Five seconds. That was it.

And now I’ve shared this profile in awesomeness; something compelled me to write this, and I have obeyed the summons. But please, don’t share this with anybody. Because if people ever figure out that you can please your customers and improve the morale of your workforce with a single five-second gesture, I have no idea what I’m going to do with myself. Seriously, I have no other marketable skills. And yes, I know I could be a human test subject for pharmaceutical

companies, but I don't like needles . Please don't make me get poked with a needle every day. Please?

## ***Last but Not Least...My Favorite Conference Attendee EVER***

Guess what, everyone? I'm at another conference. I love going to conferences, and not only because I often get free buffet food (today's lunch: turkey sandwiches and a wealth of different mustards!). I love them because I get to see some of the finest specimens of the human race, people so glorious and worthy of emulation that it pains me to realize how much worse I am than they are.

Here's an excellent example. I'd just finished giving a presentation (which didn't end with a standing ovation but also didn't end with people rioting) and was sitting in on the

session after mine. I can't honestly say if it was interesting or not, because I was unable to focus on it. Instead, all of my attention was drawn to a man sitting at a table by himself.

What was so amazing about him? It wasn't that he was sitting as far from the stage as possible. It wasn't that he had his laptop open and was catching up on work in a clear disregard for the woman leading the session he was attending. It was that he was sitting in the back, and working on his laptop, and listening to his iPod.

Sheer brilliance. I've seen people at conferences catching up on work, but I've never before seen somebody flat-out refuse to listen to a single word that a presenter might say. I know a lot of people only attend conferences because they have to, but I've never seen anybody so blatantly willing to let the entire world know that he is only here to collect his CEUs.

At the risk of sounding obsequious, this man is a genius. Obviously. He's chosen not to

listen to a single useful thing at the conference he's attending, because he knows there isn't a single useful thing he doesn't already know. If only the world had leaders like him, America wouldn't be in the difficult position we're currently in.

So when the next election comes around, vote for iPod-listening-laptop guy. I don't know his name, but you won't have any trouble figuring out which candidate he is. He'll be the one who isn't listening to anybody else and who already thinks he knows everything worth knowing.

Hmm. OK, well maybe you will have some trouble figuring out which candidate I'm talking about.

***THE END!***







# ***About Jeff Havens***

One of the most dynamic and original voices in modern business, Jeff Havens is a regular guest on Fox Business News and has been featured in Business Week, the Wall Street Journal, CNBC, AOL, and Bloomberg News.

His basic message? Helping people succeed by telling them how to do things really, really badly. And for the last decade Jeff has been bringing his unique combination of entertainment and high-level business content to General Electric, Ford Motors, and hundreds of other companies and corporations across the United States (and Canada!).

Whether it's communication, leadership, change management, career development, professional etiquette, generational issues, or anything else, Jeff will show you the path to success in part by showing you exactly what not to do. Because as he likes to say, improving your

business doesn't have to be boring.

A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Vanderbilt University, Jeff currently lives in the Midwest but hopes not to someday. Not that there's anything wrong with it, of course. It's where he grew up. It's just...well, there are other places, you know?

Visit ***JeffHavens.com*** to learn how Jeff can speak to your organization!

