

TONY JEARY

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Jeary is a Dallas-based author and “executive coach” who’s worked with the heads of top companies like New York Life, Ford, Wal-Mart, and AMR Investments, as well as with the city of Irving. His latest book is titled *Strategic Acceleration: Succeed at the Speed of Life*.

1 What’s the No. 1 reason CEOs come to you for help?

They really want to expand their clarity. That’s more important than ever.

2 How do you get to be the boss if you don’t have clarity to begin with?

We work with people who are already great, people who are already at the top. But they want to go to the highest level. So they’re looking for the very best practices.

3 What does “clarity” mean exactly?

It’s primarily related to their vision: What do they want to accomplish? Especially in today’s uncertain economic climate, I’ve found that people want to get sharper. They also need to be able to get their top five or 10 executives around them to have clarity as well.

4 You’ve worked with several local companies. What do you do for Hillwood, for example?

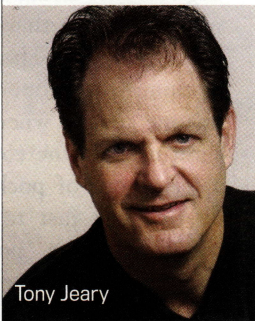
Over the years, I’ve gone in and worked with their top people—their entire group, including their executive assistants—so they could be more efficient and effective in how they focus their time.

5 How do you accomplish that?

With each CEO I work with, it’s different. For instance, I’m also working with the CEO of OraMetrix, which works with orthodontists to help them reduce the amount of time that a kid needs to have braces, from about 24 months to like 12 months. They’ve asked me to help refine their whole presentation and communication strategy, and then to help the docs communicate it to their patients. So it’s kind of a cascaded effect.

6 What did you do for Joe Popolo Jr., CEO of Freeman?

We have an annual arrangement where I work with his really top executives and his top salespeople, on how they best communicate their value proposition. For years Freeman has been known mainly as a “pipe and drape” company—or logistics company—and yet they are so much more than that. They bring a lot of strategy and a lot of creative to the table. They’ve asked me to help them present that more effectively.



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7 From your vantage point, have the key talents of successful CEOs changed over time?

There are so many opportunities and possibilities for information today, being able to deal with that influx of information and stay focused is probably a bigger deal now than ever before.

8 Are you more in demand these days, given the tough economy?

Not overwhelmingly so, but yes, we are. People in the mutual fund arena, for example, are calling me up and saying, “Our people have to be able to present more effectively, period, so that people will still do business with us.” It’s just become a top, top priority.

—GLENN HUNTER

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