

Q & A with 2010 IWLA Annual Convention Keynote Speaker Barry Wishner

The 119th IWLA Annual Convention will be held March 7-9, 2010 at the Hotel del Coronado in San Diego. A keynote speaker at the event, Barry Wishner, has become a trusted advisor and partner to the world's most admired business leaders. Barry is President and CEO of ProFormance, a California-based business consulting firm that focuses on leadership development, skills and performance. As a speaker and consultant to business leaders, he encourages innovation and business execution. His IWLA Annual Convention keynote presentation will explore the timeliness in execution of great business ideas. In Barry's words, "70% of all plans fail for one simple reason – they were never implemented."

IWLA recently engaged Barry about his research and about his keynote address at IWLA's Annual Convention.

Q – Please share with our readers a little about yourself and your business research.

A – I am a real business person coming from real-world experience. I am not just a professional speaker. I grew up in Brooklyn, obtaining street smarts along the way to survive and fight for what I believed in. From those humble beginnings, I obtained scholarships to the Pratt Institute and then-graduate school CCNY (alma mater of Intel CEO Andy Grove and Colin Powell) to obtain an MBA. After working for large organizations such as Saga and Marriott, I started my own business, ProFormance, a management consulting firm with over \$50 million in revenues. This company has owned and operated a variety of businesses, and provides management consulting to the health care industry and an innovative and award-winning restaurant in Santa Monica, California. The company also designs, builds and operates retirement communities in California and Nevada. Since the inception of ProFormance, I have conducted personal, in-depth interviews with more than 350 Fortune-500 CEOs, plus another 2,000 interviews with high-powered business leaders, news-making entrepreneurs, and ground-breaking innovators.

Q - What are some of the companies and media outlets with whom you have worked?

A – My roster of past clients includes GE, IBM, Microsoft, Oracle, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, General Mills, 3M and scores of other household-name companies. They are not the only companies with whom I've work, however. I frequently conduct programs for trade associations like IWLA, as well as for large retail chains, telecommunications companies, hi-tech sales groups, health insurance groups, hospitals, and financial institutions. I am frequently featured in *USA Today*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and CNN and on CNN Financial News.

Q - What value can attendees at IWLA's 2010 Annual Convention take with them from your keynote?

A – My presentation may take IWLA members by surprise, if for no other reason than the title itself, "*Will the Spectators Please Get off the Field?*" This is not a canned speech. It has been tailored specifically to IWLA's unique membership. The presentation is based in part on interviews I've conducted with several IWLA members. Just a few things that attendees will take with them:

- Learn why some companies thrive in a down economy, while others merely stay afloat.
- Find out what separates "great" leaders from "good" leaders.
- Learn how to turn "crisis" into "opportunity".
- Gain "ammunition" to help you and your company emerge from this tough economy.

Q - In today's economy, it is more difficult than ever to execute a successful business plan. What are some things IWLA members can do to avoid having their business plans become part of the "70%"?

A – Implementation and execution are paramount. Remember the following:

- 71% of CEOs fail because of their inability to make a decision and then **act** on it.
- 70% of all change initiatives fail due to people issues.
- 66% of corporate strategy is never implemented.
- Fewer than 30% of projects finish on time, within budget and on spec.
- 70% of projects fail outright or are significant disappointments.
- Only 13% of people who attend a conference do something differently when they go back home.
- Planning a strategy gets you 10% of the way; the other 90% is in the execution.
- 95% of people in business say the right thing, but only 5% **do** anything.

Q – Anything to add that will entice our members to attend your session and IWLA's Annual Convention?

A - I would ask those who attend the session to bring plenty of ideas. My presentation is very interactive. My goal is to turn bold ideas into remarkable results. The 2008 Conference Board Study outlined the Top 10 challenges facing CEOs in the United States and global markets. The #1 challenge is excellence in execution, and #2 is consistent execution of strategy by top management. My goal is to help session attendees meet these two challenges head-on. I will bring plenty of ammunition to target the needs of IWLA members, their customers and vendors. Last, but not least, remember that success is in the "doing".