Golden Gavel Goes to Marcus Buckingham

Leadership expert and best-selling author Marcus Buckingham has been selected as the 2005 recipient of Toastmasters International's Golden Gavel Award.

Buckingham, 39, a Cambridge-educated Brit who now lives in Beverly Hills, is well-known for his three books on business leadership and individual success (First, Break all the Rules; Now, Discover Your Strengths and The One Thing You Need to Know). He travels the globe speaking to large audiences of corporate clients, sharing insights he has gleaned from spending 17 years researching the world's best leaders and managers for Gallup Organization.

The Golden Gavel is the most prestigious award offered by Toastmasters International, a worldwide organization devoted to teaching public speaking and leadership skills. The award has been presented once a year since 1959 to a distinguished individual in the fields of communication and leadership. Past recipients include celebrities such as Walter Cronkite, Earl Nightingale, Rev. Robert Schuller, Anthony Robbins, Stephen Covey, Debbi Fields and Tom Peters.

While Buckingham now is known as an unusually talented public speaker, he grew up with a debilitating stammer that threatened to destroy his self- confidence. But one day, while giving a much-dreaded lesson during chapel at his school in front of 300 students, 12-year-old Buckingham discovered that his stammer vanished when speaking to large audiences. He learned to control his stammer by visualizing a large audience when speaking to friends one-on- one. "My friends think it's the funniest thing in the world that I speak for a living," Buckingham says.

Buckingham is a great storyteller with many stories to tell -- stories of specific people in real companies struggling and achieving. In his latest book, The One Thing You Need to Know, and in his speeches, he shares what he's learned about great managing and leading: True leaders have a unique ability to make things simple and specific; they have a laser-like focus and clarity of vision and communication. In Buckingham's view, mission statements, leadership theories and corporate structures take a back seat to The One Thing: "In leadership, it always comes back to how clear we are ... Are you clear about where you are headed?"

Toastmasters International has helped more than four million people become better speakers since the organization's founding in 1924 at the YMCA in Santa Ana, Calif. Today, Toastmasters International has more than 200,000 members in 10,000 clubs in 90 countries.

SOURCE: Toastmasters International

Web site: http://www.toastmasters.org/
