

Monica Wofford

Clermont, Florida



Contagious Companies, Inc.

Learn about Florida Entrepreneur Monica Wofford:

For Monica Wofford, owner and CEO of Contagious Companies, Inc. improving the leadership abilities of her clients comes naturally. "It's part of who we are," she said. "It really is a joy to guide the develop of managers and leaders." Since 2003, Wofford has traversed the globe, training and speaking in more than 32 countries and all 50 states. Prior to Contagious Companies, she served as a Regional Training Manager for Cingular Wireless and was responsible for the training in five call centers in five states with a team of 22 trainers. Nicknamed "mamma duck", Wofford was notorious for keeping everyone's heads above water and calm, ensuring client needs were top priority and that no one was simply treading water.

After a second round of layoffs was announced at Cingular, Wofford approached her supervisor and did the most unimaginable thing. She

requested to be put on the layoff list. It was time to leave and start her own chapter. Less than a week later, she inked a deal as a contract trainer for a large corporation. She spent the next two and a half years on the road teaching 26 different curriculum topics and courses. "The fast pace of a new class and new audience each day was the ideal learning lab for starting and running my own training firm."

"Essentially, I worked the equivalent of two full-time jobs for two and a half years," Wofford said. "Conducting seminars in all 50 states, while at the same time developing my own brand, business model and marketing plan in the evenings. Oh, and I was also writing my first book that turns 15 years old this month!" The original name of the company was Presenters Plus, which became Monica Wofford International and eventually, in 2009, Contagious Companies, Inc. Wofford has been told by many that her level of energy and engagement is contagious. Contagious Companies was a natural description of not only the owner, but what happens to all the skills and attributes of leaders. They spread to those they lead.

In the early days, it was just Wofford. Today, her team looks a bit different. "We have five team members that provide more internal operational support," she said. "We also have six or seven trainers that contract with us to conduct our training and coaching programs. The whole team consists of about 15 people, including project based contractors. Our services are not simply based on my work along. We have an incredible team of strong, talented, and dedicated people."

Wofford thrives on guiding people to lead better at the office, in their daily lives and teaching others to improve their own leadership. "It is

such a privilege and pleasure to be able to share my authentic gifts for the benefit of others," she said. As an example, while preparing for a presentation in Singapore on how to 'Make Difficult People Disappear', the title of her most recently published book, Wofford was worried about how that culture would receive and interpret her message. The topic was developed for a more Western audience and the culture of Singapore is much more passive than aggressive. "When the presentation began, I was pleasantly surprised as the room was packed!", she said. "We had over 1,200 people with standing room only breakout session and a long line of participants who wanted to chat after the session. Part of the draw was the authenticity in which I met them where they were and they were willing and eager to tolerate a bit more Western approach, as a result."

Being authentic and doing great work is something Wofford places a heavy emphasis on. Just last week, she was contacted by a former client who's now a vice president with a different insurance company than he was with years ago. "We designed a corporate training university for him 13 years ago," she said. "Now he's requesting a similar service in his new organization." Another client in the pest control industry sold their company and asked Wofford and her team to come in and provide their services to the new larger company to which they were sold. Wofford estimates that nearly 85% of the business is from word of mouth, referrals, and repeat business.

We asked Wofford to share with us some myths, misconceptions and practical advice about public speaking and leadership. She began as a public speaker and now provides keynote addresses on leadership for small and large conferences. What she shared is "Nobody dies," she

said with a laugh. "You will survive your presentation and no, it does not help to envision everyone naked. What does help is acting like you're having a one on one conversation with each person in the room. Meet and greet the audience before you speak. It's important to know to whom you are presenting. Who are they? What do they do? What is their day like? The more you know, the more you will speak with them versus at them. Also, avoid the temptation to strive for perfection. Being human and authentic is more important. Then, practice and own 'the pause'. Pausing, when appropriate, draws people in and helps them to connect with your message. Lastly, focus on the audience, their needs and why they're there in the first place. They want you to be a good speaker as much as you want them to believe that about you and your presentation."

With regard to leadership, Wofford insists that no one at your office or home cares about your title. They care about how you make them feel.

Leading is about relationships, not directions. It's about emotional intelligence and influence, not people seen as line items on the budget. The budget requires management, yes, but it's important to know that being a manager and a leader are two separate roles. Each requires different skills sets and has different responsibilities. According to Wofford, emotional intelligence is also far more important now than it's ever been. This consists of the ability to control and express one's emotions, and to handle interpersonal relationships differently depending on the needs of the person to whom one is speaking.

Looking to the future, Wofford remains busy with a number of projects. She currently has 11 books in progress. She's also developing a number of celebratory, informational and educational offerings centered around the company's 15 year anniversary. She does desire to expand the

company's reach and hire more coaches and trainers. Wofford is also sharing her attention with a role in public service. As of September 2017, she became a candidate for the Florida House of Representatives seeking election in November of 2018. "It's time to contribute my leadership skills to the community in which my family, business, life and money are present. It will be a privilege to serve and to elevate the level of leadership in this region." she said.

Wofford has some great advice for aspiring entrepreneurs. "Don't be so hard on yourself," she said. "Very rarely are other people as hard on you as you are on yourself. I've learned to stop comparing my blooper reel to everyone's highlight video and that mentality helps, but it wasn't always what I thought when I was making comparisons. Also, when it comes to leadership, going it alone and learning through trial and error is far less effective and far more expensive than simply finding a guide and getting some business coaching. That's something I wish I had learned earlier."

An avid reader, Wofford also recommends a few books that include, Think and Grow Rich, E-Myth and The Entrepreneur's Playbook.

To learn more or contact Monica, go to www.ContagiousCompanies.com or call 1-866-382-0121.

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