

MIKE ABRASHOFF

Former Commander, USS *Benfold* and Author, *It's Your Ship*

TESTIMONIALS BY CATEGORY

AGRICULTURE

"We got fantastic feedback from everyone. I really appreciate the genuine sincerity you exude. Especially when you jumped into the mindsets of our people, suggesting for us to all stand and clap for Jeff Kish. That was a WOW moment that just highlighted how much of a good guy you are to so many people. Your real-time leadership shined through at that very moment. It's one of the reasons you have been so successful in helping others throughout your life. It must give you a good feeling knowing that you can continue helping others to help themselves since you left the Benfold. And, I'm sure you had those personal attributes long before you assumed command of that ship."

– Chief Operating Officer, Bartlett Tree Experts

"I felt he nailed the message we were asking him to present, a true home run for our evening. Mike truly has a commanding presence, yet he was perceived as talking with our leaders, not at or down to them. Our team was so dialed into his message with rapt attention that at one point I heard a piece of silverware dropped in the kitchen it was so quiet. Besides the power of Mike's message and leadership philosophy, we also wanted Mike because we felt he had the flexibility to be on the big stage, or in the more relaxed environment we had at The House of Blues. After his presentation, I appreciated that Mike took time for questions, then stuck around to personalize books and speak with our team. We only took two small boxes of his books back to the hotel as almost everyone wanted theirs immediately and wanted it personalized. I truly could not have been more pleased or impressed."

– Head of Strategy & Growth, Dealer Channel, Syngenta

AUTOMOTIVE RELATED

"As I expected, your message resonated with the team just as it did with me years ago. There are so many parallels to your leadership journey and the journey my leadership team has been on for many years, and the journey our GMs face every day. The feedback I received from all in attendance was that you stole the show!! It couldn't have been more perfect."

– Chief Executive Officer, Service King Collision Repair Centers

"Your talk spoke to both sides of my company - the leaders who set culture and the employees who drive the results and made them feel more like one. I'm confident that together our teams will grow and challenge the status quo and create more ownership in building our future."

– CEO, Cars.com

"Everything went great! Mike was an amazing speaker and really incorporated the theme of our conference into his talk. I heard nothing but praise afterwards!"

– Public Relations Manager, Zipcar

"Everyone loved Mike. He got a standing ovation. First time I've seen a keynote receive one in my history with ADESA."

– Automotive Dealer Exchange Services of America

BANKING/FINANCIAL

"HOME RUN!!!! Mike Abrashoff was a bases loaded home run! I believe he is the best that we have ever had. Wow!!!! Wonderful feedback from the members. All future speakers will be judged against a very high bar that he set!!"

– First Financial Resources

"It was a pleasure working with you – and it's always the best news when our audience responds so well to a speaker. Your average score over 9 meetings was 4.9 out of 5.0 – wow!"

– CoBank

"Mike has just been on stage and we were blown away, he was excellent. Already had lots of positive comments already from our delegates and sponsors."

– Communications and Development Manager, Cayman Alternative Investment Summit (CAID Ltd.)

“Your talk was spot on. Your message resonated with the audience and their comments were lighting up the app!! Thank you for focusing in on the retention theme as it is top of mind for all the leaders in the room. Now I know why Fidelity has invited you to speak so many times!”

– *Events Manager, Fidelity Investments*

“Our team enjoyed greatly what you had to say, and the way in which you told the stories. As you know, we are undergoing our own performance and culture transformation - it is an exciting time. And it is encouraging to hear the analogy from the experience that you and your crew shared.”

– *Head of Global Commercial Banking, Bank of America*

“Mike Abrashoff’s remarkable story regarding the transformation of USS Benfold was extremely well received and appreciated by our event participants, who found great inspiration and practicality in his remarks. These are challenging times for many and his perspective on leadership and leading during difficult times is timely as well as thought-provoking.”

– *California Bankers Association*

“Everyone loved Mike. He was a huge hit and his message certainly resonated with our team.”

– *Lesley Andersen, OMERS Private Equity, Inc.*

“Mike did an amazing job and much appreciated. Thank you!”

– *Victoria MacDonald, VP, Human Resources, Marketwired*

CONSTRUCTION

“Commander Abrashoff was our closing speaker. Despite the fact that it was late in the afternoon on the closing day of a 3-day conference, Abrashoff engaged and inspired the participants. As I coordinate these events, I tend to watch the crowd more than any individual speaker. Doing this tells me how the program is going based on how many faces are looking down at their phones or talking to the person next to them. The entire time Abrashoff spoke he had command of the entire room. Not a single set of eyes was anywhere but on him.”

– *United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America*

“Mike was absolutely wonderful. Loved listening to him and he was a “Big hit” with our audience!! Our crowd is pretty quiet and hard for them to sit still (construction guys who are movers); but they thoroughly enjoyed listening to him and nothing but “positive” feedback from our group. He did a fantastic job, very charismatic, down-to-earth, and great message - which really resonated with them.”

– *Vice President, Kokosing*

“Mike Abrashoff’s address to our group in Denver was spot-on. It was quite evident that he had worked to include information regarding our company, our markets and in particular, our Project Managers Forum objectives and attendee backgrounds into the content of his presentation. Several people commented to me that they found his story inspiring and relevant. As I mentioned earlier, this was the third time I heard Mike tell his story. It seems that each time I pull something more from the information he shares.”

– *Facilities Manager, URS*

“Abrashoff killed yesterday!!! Awesome!!!”

– *CEO, Iron Union Group*

DEFENSE/SECURITY SAFETY

“He was fabulous! A big hit and hit the nail on the head with our meeting theme- was the perfect end to the week.”

– *VP of IT, Underwriters Lab*

ENERGY

“You set the tone for the meeting and hit a home run with our group! The feedback was extremely positive. I had my meeting today at 17:30 and it took us 1 minute to report a job very well done! Thank you very much for starting the program on such a great note and providing the momentum for another very successful conference! It made my job as director for this conference a pleasure over these two days!”

– *Conference Director, American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers*

“The feedback was overwhelmingly positive! I personally have never listened to a better speaker. Your message was tailor made for my team and I look forward to discussing future opportunities with you. Thank you so very much Mike.”

– *VP, TransCanada Energy Operations*

"[Mike Abrashoff] was fantastic! He was extremely generous with his time, and he was absolutely the right person for what we wanted to accomplish."
– *BP Exploration, Inc.*

"Mike just finished speaking to our group and I wanted to let you know what a positive impact he had on all who are here. He did a great job and took the time to speak with everyone and even signed books! He made all of us feel so comfortable. What a great guy!!! We look forward to inviting him to speak again in the future to a larger leadership team."
– *Columbia Pipeline Group*

ENTREPRENEURS

"Conference ended today with a bang. You were by far the best presenter!"
– *CEO / Managing Partner, Detroit Venture Partners, LLC*

GOVERNMENT

"I wanted to let you know what an amazing speaker and presentation Mr. Abrashoff gave! It was a pleasure listening to him."
– *Program Analyst, SAO East*

HOSPITAL/MEDICAL/DENTAL

"Mike's personality and message was both inspirational and educational. Several conference attendees have told me that he was the best speaker we've ever had. He certainly was the best way to close out our Symposium! I think we were all ready to take on the world after that address! Thank you for also recognizing those in the audience who had served in the armed services. It meant a lot to them."
– *Director, Public Relations, Mercy Health*

"You hit it out of the ballpark! Doctor feedback was overwhelming.... "best conference ever" was a common theme. I realize you have been on the speaking 'circuit' for some time - its easy to take yourself for granted - please understand, your message resonates, its pertinent and it's important!"
– *Prosthodontist, Vice President of Clinical Affairs, ClearChoice Management Services*

"Your presentation was amazing! This crowd talked about it for the rest of the meeting and made reference to your comments frequently as we discussed other topics. It was truly an inspiring day!"
– *Executive Director of Strategic Programs, McKesson Connectivity & Analytics*

"A standing ovation again!! Every time I use Mike he has received a standing ovation."
– *Senior Vice President, Strategic Resources Group, Team Health*

"THANK YOU for visiting City of Hope! Our team of leaders was inspired by your sessions and many have emailed me or stopped me on campus to share how they can apply relevant learnings. We have ordered another 100 books and many will be taking the time to read the book in larger teams. We are creating an internal blog where leaders can share with others how they are creating organizational transformation through grass roots managerial efforts. Thank you again for helping us drive organizational change and evolving our efforts to build a more accountable culture!"
– *Chief Human Resources Officer, City of Hope, Duarte, CA*

"I have received a ton of anecdotal feedback, people bringing up how much they liked you and your speech and message. One thing that came across was that you were very "real" and very down to earth - that is important to our audience. I think your ability to interweave the hospital and healthcare environment into your speech went a long way toward connecting with the audience."
– *Managing Director, Lincoln Healthcare*

"Over the years, I've attended all kinds of management seminars and organizational development courses – some of which I've found useful; some less so. I have just recently purchased and read "It's Your Ship" and wanted to tell you that it was like a light going on in my head. I found it incredibly insightful. You have eloquently put into words a lot of what I aim to achieve – like seeing "the ship through the eyes of the crew" and the way you talk about getting the most from your crew and learning not to micromanage. Everything you talk about translates perfectly for clinical work teams. In fact, I've been driving my wife crazy by reading her excerpts at home."
– *Theatre Manager, The Horder Center – Horder Healthcare*

HOTEL/HOSPITALITY

“We received great feedback on your presentation from the attendees at our convention - both franchisees and members of our Board of Directors. Several franchisees told me afterwards that they found your talk authentic and down to earth - which fit nicely with our broader message. Many also told me they related to your story because they have been handed a bad situation at some point in their careers and had to overcome it. You clearly connected with them! Thanks for making our convention a success.”

– *Executive VP and Chief Operating Officer, Choice Hotels*

“Everyone loved your keynote; I think what surprised everyone was the simplicity of your message and how it spoke to the very basics of what being a great leader is all about! It was fantastic and people are still talking about it!”

– *Director, Organizational Development – Human Resources, Outrigger Enterprises Group*

“Everything went great! Mike was probably the best speaker we have ever had at one of our events!”

– *Fugate Enterprises*

“We hired Mike last year to speak to our managers in December. It was my third time hiring Mike to speak to a senior group of managers. His presentation last year was outstanding. He connects with our managers with his uncomplicated method of asking for their feedback ... ‘what would you do?’ Sounds simple and basic however we all know how hard it is to do and follow up and that when we do sincerely and consistently is the key to unlocking the door. In the close to four years I have been here Mike’s presentation was widely recognized as the best by far. He spoke for 75 minutes ...no notes... no overheads.... No podium...right out front. His Q/A was outstanding... our managers appreciated that we brought in someone that good. He does not try to impress people with any gimmicks or trendy expressions. I will call on him again and trust him with our most valuable asset...our people.”

– *Chief Operation Officer, Atlantis Paradise Island, Bahamas*

HUMAN RESOURCE RELATED/PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

“Mike - Your scores were almost flawless (save for one single 1-point deduction from an audience member), and the highest I’ve ever seen in my tenure at Evanta. Audience feedback included: ‘Wonderful Presentation - Very appropriate for senior IT Leaders;’ ‘Excellent! Very Motivating;’ ‘One of the most inspirational speeches I have ever heard. Outstanding selection;’ ‘Very inspiring and thought provoking speech;’ ‘Michael was incredible! Dead on target;’ ‘Awesome! Loved Michael’s talk and can’t wait to read his book.’ As far as constructive feedback goes, there wasn’t any – only glowing reviews were left on the evaluation sheets. Again, thank you so much for speaking! We were lucky to have you on board for the Houston CIO Executive summit.”

– *Content Director, Evanta*

INFORMATION/TECHNOLOGY

“It went fantastic. Full house and everyone raved. He is one of the best speakers on leadership and management I have seen in a very long time.”

– *Senior Manager, Event Services, Ingram Micro*

“Mike was extraordinary – by far the best part of the event. He’s a great guy and low-maintenance to work with.”

– *North State*

INSURANCE

“Mike was a great fit for our program and we are getting overwhelmingly positive ratings on our post-summit survey. Thank you!”

– *Executive Director, Meetings & Events, Marshberry*

MANUFACTURING

“Mike, you hit it out of the park, as I knew you would. Your message was on point and was exactly what I was looking for. It emphasized some of the things we were already working on and provided a good foundation for us to build on. All the best and if you ever need a strong referral, send them my way.”

– *President/CEO, Empire Caterpillar Southwest*

“You were amazing!! Kicking off the convention with a standing ovation is a home run. So many people told me how inspired they were by you and I know you’ll get repeat business. I only wish we would have offered your books. Everyone is buying them now on Amazon. Congratulations!!”

– *CEO, Material Handling Equipment Distributors Association (MHEDA)*

“You were great. Our attendees loved your keynote.”

– *Vice President, Special Programs, GAF Corporation*

“Mike was excellent and surpassed expectations. He was on time, hit home with the group and stayed almost an hour after to chat with our team and sign books. He was perfect and delivered a great message – our team absolutely loved it.”

– *President, Accent-Fairchild Group*

“Years ago, I placed a young manager in a struggling plant. Not long after he got there, the plant began to improve faster than I expected it would. When I asked him what he was doing, he told me he had read your book and it inspired a fresh approach to his leadership. That young manager is now our COO leading plants around the country.”

– *CEO, PalletOne*

“Thank you very much for speaking at our event. You were amazing to listen to!! As much as we have spoken prior to the event and even reading your book ahead of time....I found myself on the edge of my seat listening to your stories. My team also thought you were amazing!”

– *Manager, Sales Operations, Tenneco*

“He knocked it out of the park. He was so good and on point that it almost looked like we wrote his script. The group loved him and the parallels to managing a ship and mill are remarkable.”

– *Public Relations and Communications, International Paper*

“I received excellent feedback from both the panel discussion and broadcast speech... Your leadership style and personal values appear to be similar to what we are attempting to achieve and hence I am very interested in your leadership toolkit. Let me know the best way to learn more.”

– *General Manager, Human Resources, ArcelorMittal Dofasco*

“Thank you, Mike! Your presentation was fabulous, and hit very close to home for me. Many of our members were very moved and impressed with your talk. Thank you so much! And signing the books was an extra fine touch.”

– *Acting Executive Director, Independent Lubricant Manufacturers Association (ILMA)*

NON-PROFIT

“Your insightful leadership guided us through a thorough, engaging and thoughtful examination of our current “state of the union” as well as our visions and expectations for the future. We have been inspired by your call for collaboration and are excited to bring your teachings forward with us into the future.”

– *Laurence Gumina, CEO, Ohio Presbyterian Retirement Services*

“Mike – Your presentation was an absolute home-run and we have the survey responses to back it up. Not only would I recommend you without hesitation, I have already done so.”

– *President & CEO, The Lancaster Chamber of Commerce & Industry*

PHARMACEUTICALS

“Any audience that cares about leadership, culture, change management, performance and teamwork would benefit immensely from your presentation. Our group enjoyed not only your message, but also your presentation style. Needless to say, you received very high ratings in our post-conference survey.”

– *Vice President, Industry Affairs & Member Relations, National Association of Chain Drug Stores*

“Thank you for making sure that your speech ‘connected’. The way you were able to make your points align with the roles of the sales reps/ field trainers was spot-on. I suspect this will not be the end of your relationship with Teva.”

– *CNS Training Specialist, Teva*

RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL SERVICES

“Our group really enjoyed and appreciated your presentation! The COO at Terminix and I were discussing the next day about how your message was most on point with what he needs to be communicating to his field leaders.”

– *President, Franchise Services Group, ServiceMaster*

RESTAURANT/FOOD SERVICE

“Your talk was inspiring to our sellers and your message clearly resonated with the group. The feedback from the meeting was overwhelmingly positive and we couldn’t have done it without your involvement and enthusiasm.”

– *Aramark, Chief Growth Officer*

“Mike was super! He was a great storyteller, funny, and tied the message to our business throughout. It was so relevant to exactly what our org needs right now--leadership at the GM level-- and I have received nothing but rave reviews. In fact, several of our vendor suppliers and audience members from other companies have asked me for info about Mike to possibly speak for their organizations. It was awesome!”

– *SVP Marketing/Creative Director, Houlihans.*

“We have asked Mike Abrashoff to speak to our team twice now and he is in high demand for a third appearance. His message and coaching around leadership is perfect for every level of management in our organization ranging from the General Managers of our stores right up to our CEO. Mike provides practical advice sprinkled with some entertaining stories from his days as Captain of the USS Benfold. Our time spent with Mike has been invaluable and we look forward to working with him again.”

– *Sam Chamberlain, Chief Operating Officer, FIVE GUYS*

RETAIL

“I didn’t get a chance to say goodbye after your presentation to our franchisee group. You did a terrific job – we heard nothing but rave reviews on your stories, your leadership ideas, your style, the lack of PowerPoint slides, etc. Well done! We have other meetings on our annual calendar so we’ll definitely keep you in mind as a future speaker.”

– *President, Great Clips, Inc.*

“Mike Abrashoff recently spoke at our annual Summit and we have had many, many, amazing reviews from our franchisees. Mike customized his presentation to hit a bull’s eye around our learning objectives. We have been challenged with helping our team with knowledge, skills and actionable tools to connect with the wide range of generations we have in our system. Though Mike’s core message was about extraordinary leadership, he really drove home key learnings on how to connect with anyone – regardless of their generational viewpoint! He was amazingly easy to work with and we all loved how low-key he was. Mike’s message is great for everyone and he gave our coaches many actionable items to take back into their studios. We LOVED working with Mike and would definitely hire him again!”

– *Events Manager, Orangetheory Fitness*

“Mike was everything we had hoped for when we booked him. He had instant credibility with our attendees due to his background and accomplishments. He did a great job of relating how the leadership skills he honed in the Navy translate to leadership in the business world. He does it all through a very laid-back style of speaking that is authoritative without being didactic.”

– *President, Pet Industry Distributors Association*

“Your message to the team was spot on! I received a lot of feedback from the team and universally they felt your message helped them think about leadership differently and help put them even more firmly in the Ownership Mentality. I thought you nailed it and helped 1) land the message of Own It 2) help them focus on their Leadership and 3) Help them think about managing through change. I am so glad that you were our speaker and I think it helped us at this critical point in time.”

– *Executive Vice President, Retail, Office Depot, Inc.*

“Captain Abrashoff, I wanted to take the opportunity to say how much your words today inspired me. I would have to say that I believe I have a pretty good team working for me now. That being said there is always room for growth. I especially like how you reached out to that young cadet’s mom, informing her how much you appreciate having her son in your command and how well he has been working for you. That really struck a cord with me and that is something that I would like to do for my fellow coworkers, obviously it should be spontaneous, so I will keep that in mind for the next time. It is the little things that you take and learn from that can make you, me a great leader. And for that I thank you.”

– *Retail Manager, Wireless Zone*

“Once again, it was a pleasure meeting you, and hearing you speak to the GameStop Leadership team. Your presentation continues to have impact, in both my executive and personal approach to Leadership. Your delivery, (by not using a lot of “buzz words”, or “leadership speak”), echoed what is possible from any individual placed in a leadership role, delivered from someone who has been in our shoes. Thank you again for your time and insight.”

– *Regional Vice President, GameStop*

SOFTWARE INFORMATION/SERVICES/TECHNOLOGY

"I just wanted to send a note and thank you for the very inspiring and humbling presentation you shared with us yesterday. I was in the audience in Oregon, so not there in person, but of all of the professional speakers I have seen, you by far were the most inspirational. Your experience and story are well worth sharing, and I plan to pick up your book this weekend. All the best to you."

– *Finance & IT Staffing Manager, Intel*

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

"The "day after" is over and the impact is reverberating throughout the organization. ." I truly appreciate the effort you obviously made to incorporate our issues and to position the call to action for them as leaders of teams. The feedback was clear -- your presentation ranked #1 for most valuable . . . count me a fan."

– *Head of Marketing and Corporate Affairs, North America, Nokia Siemens Networks*

"Your presentation in New Orleans was outstanding. Not only was it the highest rated of the week (4.95 out 5), it was timely, inspirational and informative. Your accomplishments represent the pinnacle of achievement through the belief in and entrustment of people."

– *Sales Trainer, Nexstar, Inc.*

TRANSPORTATION

"You did an exceptional job of connecting with the audience and reinforcing that leadership in safety matters, and is in fact the very cornerstone of our future success in safety and in general at BNSF. I told someone, who agreed with me, that if you were to speak to a group full of high school seniors, and then set up a recruiting booth outside the door for the US NAVY, there would no doubt be a long line of future potential sailors signing up! Everyone I talked to agreed that the key note you delivered, was the highlight of the day and had a tremendous impact on them."

– *Director, Transportation Safety, BNSF Railway*

UTILITIES

"We have never had such positive feedback so you very much exceeded our expectations. You were quoted numerous times throughout the remainder of the conference which says people took your message to heart and will put it to work in their everyday jobs – exactly what we aimed for!"

– *Director of Staffing, Employee Relations & Development, Denbury Resources*